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Explaining the emergence of ESDP: From Amorphous Networks to Politico-Epistemic Communities?

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From amorphous networks to politico-epistemic communities? In search of an ESDP model

1. Introduction

In this paper I try to locate the geopolitical milieu in which ideas are generated and flourish. In order to achieve this I will provide a framework which locates ESDP actors who act as the 'carriers' of the EU strategic culture. The chapter on the theory of strategic culture demonstrates that each 'political community' has its own strategic culture. Based on this assumption I analyse three different models which are strongly related to the idea of 'community-like' driven groups of policy such as security communities, politico-epistemic communities and policy networks.

The chapter begins as a decoding exercise of the geopolitical milieu of the EU which consists of the EU security community plus the pressures, threats and crises from the external environment. The notion of security community is analysed in detail. It is suggested that two different types of networks characterise the functioning of the security community: Policy Networks and Politico-Epistemic Communities (POEC). These formations emerge within institutions but also outside or between different institutions. The explanatory framework which is developed in this chapter takes into account: (a) the external pressures that emerge in the geopolitical milieu thus affecting the nature of the EU security community, (b) the creation of com:munity/networks formation, (c) the institutional framework within which these formations are manifested (or the absence of it).

The idea of security communities is further developed by suggesting that policy networks and communities play a vital link in maintaining it active. Furthermore, the literature on policy communities/networks is enriched by the creation of a new notion which emerged after the merging of two models (policy communities, epistemic communities) into one inclusive definition. The chapter also concludes by combining different theoretical elements in order to construct a measuring model of the strategic culture of the EU. It is argued that the 'maturity' of the EU strategic culture depends on the nature of the inter-institutional links (which exercise functions similar to these of veins for the human body). If policy networks tend to be more dominant then one expects a less cohesive and sometimes weak strategic culture. However if networks consolidate their position and evolve into policy communities then the nature of strategic culture changes into a 'thicker' one.

2. Constructing an inclusive framework of analysis

Table 1. The geopolitical milieu of the EU security community
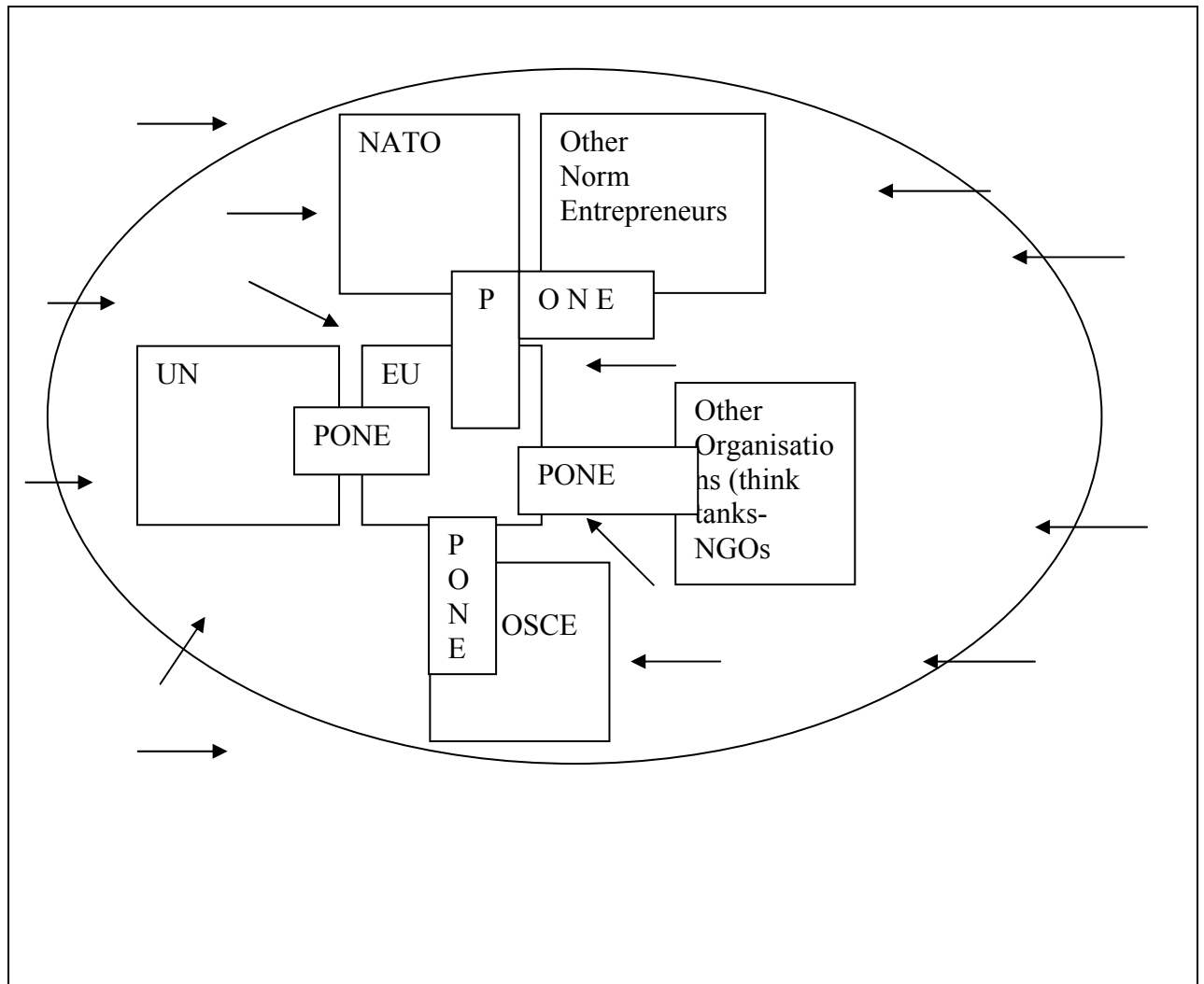
I suggest that the EU functions within a complicated framework which I call the 'geopolitical milieu'. Within this geopolitical milieu exists a circle which includes the different elements that make up the security community of the EU. The geopolitical milieu is open to many different pressures (manifested in the diagram as ⟶) emerging from geopolitical changes, crises and the new security demands of the post Cold War period (ethnic cleansing, violence, instability, authoritarianism etc). These pressures penetrate the environment of the EU security community and consequently influence the way EU players perceive the world. The EU security community

consists of EU institutions which interact with other important players such as international organizations and NGOs. Due to the frequent interaction amongst the various security actors of the EU community a complex network of relationships is established. These relationships are maintained through the social interaction of actors who establish patterns of cooperation through the creation of policy networks (named as PONE in the table). Policy networks are important for the maintenance of the security community mechanism of the EU. Without them no such community could have existed.

The notion of security communities has been introduced by Karl Deutsch. Deutsch argues that the North Atlantic states were successful in creating a pluralistic security community in which the use of force between members was almost unthinkable (Deutsch et al 1957). A security community, furthermore, is a group of countries, which has become "integrated". By integration 'we mean the attainment, within a territory, of a "sense of security" and of institutions and practices strong and widespread enough to assure…dependable expectations of "peaceful change" among its population. By sense of community we mean a belief...that common social problems must and can be resolved by processes of "peaceful change" (Karl Deutsch et al 1957: 5). In addition, 'security communities are characterised by the absence of war, and the absence of significant organized preparations for war such as military contingency planning. Competitive military build-ups or arms races between members of the claimed security community should also not be present' (Nicholas Khoo 2004: 38). A security community can be either an amalgamated security community or a pluralistic one. Karl Deutsch suggests that an amalgamated security community exists whenever there is the "formal merger of two or more previously independent units into a single larger unit, with some type of common government after amalgamation." (Deutsch b: 1969: 6). On the contrary, the notion of pluralistic security communities implies that separate governments cooperate within an established framework.

ii. characteristics of a pluralistic security community

Deutsch, Adler and Barnett mention the existence of 'pluralistic security communities'. According to Adler and Barnett a pluralistic security community is defined 'as a transnational region comprised of sovereign states whose people maintain dependable expectations of peaceful change' (Adler and Barnett 1998: 31). Adler and Barnett suggest that a pluralistic security community has three characteristics: 'First, members of a community have shared identities, values, and meanings. […] Secondly, those in a community have many-sided and direct relations: interaction occurs not indirectly and in only specific and isolated domains, but rather through some form of face-to-face encounter and relations in numerous settings. Thirdly, communities exhibit a reciprocity that expresses some degree of long-term interest and perhaps even altruism; long term interest derives from knowledge of those with whom one is interacting, and altruism can be understood as a sense of obligation and responsibility.' (Adler & Barnett 1998: 31). The pluralistic version of security community which fits the EU is that of a no-war community, a community of states that have developed a considerable level of trust which is manifested in the absence of military clashes between states which belong to the community. Although states have different interests it is argued that these interests will be influenced by group interaction. Even if interests among states diverge there is still a process of

gradual abandonment of the use of military force in order to settle disputes. It should be added that a group of states that depends heavily on enforcement mechanisms is not a security community (e.g. the Warsaw Pact).

Adler and Barnett suggest that a formation such as the EU is an uncontested security community and is organised around three tiers: '(1) precipitating conditions; (2) process variables (transactions, organizations, and social learning) and structural variables (power and knowledge); and (3) mutual trust and collective identity.' (Adler and Barnett 1998: 17). Other scholars who characterise the EU as a security community directly imply that the above conditions have been met (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2005, Cornish and Edwards 2001, Adler and Barnett 1998). Geographic proximity and the new technologies on communications are factors that contributed to the creation of an EU security community. However geographic proximity and technology do not necessarily lead to a security community. For instance, the conditions for a security community are not present in other areas such as the Asia-Pacific region because the region: 'encompasses a diverse mixture of rival great powers, thorny territorial disputes, unresolved historical memories, competing political ideologies, painful economic transitions, shifting military balances and diverging cultures.' (Ikenberry and Tsuchiyama 2002: 69)

The process of building a security community is a gradual one. According to Deutsch the whole process first starts with the allocation of small modest tasks to the security community. If the security community is successful it then receives more important tasks and consequently is upgraded to a community of overall amalgamation (Deutsch 1978: 246-247). The 'internal behaviour' of security communities is analysed by Deutsch (1978). The process of integration includes a process of 'habit breaking'. It is suggested that a new attractive 'way of life' has to emerge (in the EU case the idea of European integration). This new way of life will give rise to expectations of a better future which will render common collective expectations credible. Expectations will provide national populations and their political elites with a sense of unity, new interests and new ambitions. Second, the existing sense of unity has to be supported by the emergence of an external challenge which requires some new and joint response. Finally, a new generation will assume the earlier degree of common interest for granted, and treat it as the starting point for new political actions. The third occurs roughly every 15 years. (Deutsch 1978: 248).

It is important to mention that security communities succeed through a combination of closure and creativity. Part of the process involves phasing out all different competing proposals and alternatives, so as eventually to channel all political attention towards their preferred solution(s). This is possible because security communities are characterised by means of the originality and resourcefulness. (Deutsch 1978: 250). It is also important to notice that the external environment influences the process of community building. The spread of intellectual movements and traditions favouring integration and preparing the political climate for it are important necessary elements in order to maintain a community active (Deutsch 1978: 251).

However, the creation of a pluralistic security community does not automatically guarantee its existence for the years to come. A security community is likely to have setbacks and failures. According to Deutsch there are certain conditions which are

likely to make for a disintegration of a community (Deutsch 1978: 244). These conditions are presented below:

1. any steep increase in economic, military, or political burdens on the community or on any participating unit
2. A rapid increase in social mobilization and political participation, faster than the process of civic assimilation to the common political culture of the community
3. A rapid increase in regional, economic, cultural, social, linguistic, or ethnic differentiation, faster and stronger than any compensating integrative process
4. A serious lag of decline in the political or administrative institutions and capabilities of the government and the political elite, relative to the current tasks and burdens with which they have to cope
5. A relative closure of the political elite, slowing drastically the entry of new members and ideas, and giving rise to hostile counter-elites of frustrated potential elite members
6. A failure of the government and the elite to carry out in time needed reforms and adjustments wanted or expected by the population or failure to adjust in time to the imminent decline or loss of some privileged or dominant minority position (e.g. the white minority in the former Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland).

In the EU case there have been certain challenges to the ESDP security community that can be linked to the framework mentioned above. For instance, the modernisation of the armed forces is a prestigious but expensive task that poses a challenge to the restrained budgets of many EU member states (condition 1). The experiment of enlargement can be also seen as 'a rapid increase in political participation that goes much faster than the process of civic assimilation (condition 2). Although there has not been a decline in regional transactions it is noteworthy that the belief in nationalism has not died out and that national political elites continue to support intergovernmental methods of transaction (condition 3). However, there have been no signs of institutional decline as new institutions emerged through the creation of ESDP. Therefore, ESDP can be seen as a case of institutional regeneration rather than institutional decline (condition 4). In terms of elite interaction it is hardly evident that ESDP is not open to new elites. For example, East European member states have their ESDP representatives and fully participate in ESDP structures. There has been no particular problems with the arrival of the new states and the idea of constructive abstention allows 'difficult' members (e.g. Denmark) to abstain rather than boycott the process. Finally at the level of reform/adjustment (condition 6), ESDP has been created to address the new security challenges thus it is a project of reform itself. Therefore, although challenges do exist (condition 1, 2, and 3), the role of elites and institutions as well as the relative success of ESDP operations serve as balancing acts to the disintegration of the EU security community.

In addition, each security community is also characterised by three phases of development: the "nascent", "ascendant" and "mature" phase. The EU is combines elements from both the second and third category (Webber forthcoming)

Phase I The Nascent phase

The nascent phase is the initial phase in the formation of the security community. Early in the course of the integrative process, a psychological "no war" community often develops. War among the prospective partners comes to be considered as illegitimate. Even when some of the prospective partner countries find themselves on opposite sides in some larger international conflict, they try to avoid opposing each other (Deutsch 1978: 246). In this phase governments do not explicitly seek to create a security community but they mostly understand that they share similar interests that would be better achieved through common action. The process of building a security community is encouraged by exogenous forces such as a change in technology, demography, economics, the environment, the development of new interpretations of social reality and the emergence of external threats.

Phase II Ascendant Phase

This phase is characterised by 'increasingly dense networks: new institutions and organizations that reflect either tighter military coordination and cooperation and/or decreased fear that the other represents a threat; cognitive structures that promote "seeing" and acting together and therefore, the deepening of the level of mutual trust, and the emergence of collective identities that begin to encourage dependable expectations of peaceful change' (Adler & Barnett 1998: 53). At this particular level one can see that the multiple channels that existed in the nascent phase are extended and intensified. This is an interesting period because one sees the first cognitive changes in the notion of national self-interest. In terms of discourse 'Europe' penetrates the national vocabulary thus leaving its mark on the notion of national identity. This is a very important element because it helps the process of change. According to Weaver: 'a re-assertion of national "self-interest" will be less problematic when the self has changed to a less narrow form. In this case, in a direction, where the national "self" contains a narrative with Europe as required component.' (Waever 1998: 94). Therefore, getting closer to a particular security community (in our case the EU) and approaching it through the process of 'Europeanisation' is seen as a new national aim. A new kind of 'Europeanised' knowledge, new transactions amongst players and the participation in EU organizations lead to social learning. One has to take into account the fact that 'the security community paradigm is therefore a socially based phenomenon, which is premised on shared knowledge, ideational forces, and a dense normative environment' (Ngoma 2003: 19). Gradually, the actors who are involved in the process begin to transform the environment in which they are acting. A security community thus may bring changes in attitude which can lead to further cooperation among states.

Phase III: The Mature Phase

In this period one sees the implementation of the necessary conditions of dependable expectations of peaceful change-mutual trust/collective identity. The more interaction and institutionalisation of the community takes place, the more war amongst security community states becomes less probable. As the threat of war among member states of a community is avoided and cooperation is intensified then a type of commonly owned foreign policy emerges that periodically expands thus encompassing new

issues leading the member states to assume a common identity. Further integration leads to the consolidation of this process thus attributing an element of maturity to the community. Mutual aid becomes a matter of habit and threat no more comes from the insiders but from the outsiders. This leads to changes in military planning as community states are not perceived as threats any longer by the other states of the community. In addition, a common definition of the external threat and a new security discourse emerge which begin to dominate the language of the community (Adler & Barnett 1998: 56). Still, it is worth mentioning that this transformation can take a long time as 'identification of friend or foe, the social basis of trust, is a judgement based on years of experiences and encounters that shapes the cultural definition of threat.' (Adler & Barnett, 1998: 46). One of the major outcomes that characterises this normative change is the process of 'othering'. Adler and Barnett also suggest that one of the basic elements of security communities is the development of a 'we-feeling' amongst the members of a community as well as the feeling of mutual trust. This process is vital to the creation of the 'other'. In this stage security communities can be branded either as 'loosely-coupled' or tightly coupled ones. The characteristics of tightly coupled security communities are: cooperative and collective security, a high level of military integration, policy coordination against "internal" threats, free movements of populations, internationalization of authority. In addition, 'security communities can be categorised according to their depth of trust, the nature and degree of institutionalization of their governance system, and whether they reside in a formal anarchy or are on the verge of transforming it.' (Adler & Barnett 1998: 30).

Due to the complex relationships that emerge within the geopolitical milieu of the EU many different networks are created. However not all of these networks exert the same influence. Different elements of the security community are bounded together either by institutionalised links (e.g. the EU-NATO relationship) or non-institutionalised ones (e.g. the personal relationships between EU actors and other NGOs/think tanks/national leaders). These relationships are strengthened by the creation of networks that can be categorised as policy networks or policy communities. Policy networks can evolve into policy communities. The table of the EU geopolitical milieu demonstrates that policy networks are vital for the functioning of the EU security community because they bring different actors together by facilitating communication. By acting as the official or unofficial links between different players policy networks galvanise the functions of institutions. Without efficient policy networks the security community system could not have functioned properly and it could have even collapsed. The next session of this chapter deals with the issue of policy networks and policy communities.

3. Policy Networks

The idea of policy networks has been used to describe transnational dealings of actors. For example the idea of a 'Global public policy network' is a term used to identify policy networks which consist of policy actors who are simultaneously operating within the structures of their states as well as above (supranational structures). These networks are 'alliances of government agencies, international organisations, corporations and elements of civil society that join together to achieve what none can accomplish alone…and give once ignored groups a greater voice in international

decision making' (Reinicke, 1999/2000) [1]. The organisation of the network relies on informal patterns. Networks tend to cohere around international organisations when governments group together to discuss certain issues.

<u>i. definition</u>

A policy network can be described as a loosely constructed group of individuals including many different actors (professionals, scholars, NGO activists, officials, politicians, national leaders etc) who meet in order to exchange views on certain issues and policies. Contacts between the network members fluctuate in frequency. Members might share similar beliefs and ideas but these do not necessarily affect policy behaviour because the network relies on a sense of personal freedom. Therefore, frequent differentiation from the 'core' is not punished and actors retain their autonomy. There may be no clear agenda to follow and no clear aim to achieve. However, different network actors might join forces from time to time in order to achieve common aims. Certain unwritten rules of behaviour within the network constrain actors. Those who do not abide by the rules are likely to be gradually 'cut off' from the process of mainstream interaction.

<u>ii. characteristics</u>

A basic characteristic of a policy network is that it has a consultative (sometimes benchmarking) character. It lacks much of the community spirit that characterises policy communities. For those actors who are active in a policy network their participation seems more of a zero-sum game. Networks have usually a larger membership than policy communities as they are looser formations and therefore more accessible to those actors who want to join in. According to Marsh and Rhodes each member of a policy network: 'deploys its resources, whether constitutional/legal, organizational, financial, political or informational to maximize influence over outcomes whilst trying to avoid becoming dependent on the other players' (Marsh and Rhodes 1992: 11). This is very different from the sense of community feeling that exists within a policy community where members share ideas and values and where these ideas can act as norms. In such policy community members have access to equal resources and even create a 'common ownership' feeling amongst themselves. On the contrary, the policy network model reflects the fact that its members have unequal resources. However, not all networks are the same: there are tight policy networks and loose policy networks. The differentiation between them lies in the fact that: 'tight policy networks persist in large part, because they are characterised by a large degree of consensus, not necessarily on specific policy but rather on policy agenda' (Marsh and Smith 2000: 6). Rhodes distinguishes between different types of networks along two dimensions: first according to the pre-eminence of the interests that constitute the network, and second, according to the cohesiveness of the group. On one hand, there are large atomized networks, with no close professional, producer or governmental relations which are 'issue networks'. On the other hand, as it will be demonstrated later in the chapter, there are closely knot networks, characterised by stable relations and restrictive memberships named 'policy communities'. (Marsh and

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[1] Analysis of Reinicke in Stone, D. Maxwell, S., Keating M., 'Bridging Research and Policy', Warwick University, 16-17 July 2001, http://gdnet.org/pdf/Bridging.pdf
Accessed on 20/10/2005

Rhodes 1997, Adshead 2002: 16). More loosely and single-minded networks are named 'issue networks.' (see table 2). However, it is important to say that there is always the possibility of 'network evolution'. It is quite possible that certain networks will evolve from being uninstitutionalised policy networks to institutionalised policy communities. Thus , networks can be perceived as a proto-community, an early stage in the process of a community formation.

Table 2: Marsh and Rhodes typology of networks (Source Rhodes (1997: 44)

Dimension	Policy Community	Issue Network
No. of participants	very limited number (exclusion)	Large
Type of interest	economic /professional interests	a range of interests
Integration		
Frequency Of integration		
	Frequent, high quality, interaction of all groups on all maters related to policy issue	Contacts fluctuate in frequency and intensity
Continuity	Membership, values and outcomes persistent over time	access fluctuates significantly
Consensus	All participants have resources And accept the legitimacy of the outcome	a measure of agreement exists but …….. conflict is ever present
Resources		
Distribution of Resources within Network	All participants have resources, basic relationship is an exchange relationship	some participants may have resources, but they are limited and basic relation-ship is consultative
Distribution of resources within participating organizations		
	Hierarchical, leaders can deliver members	Varied and variable, distribution and capacity to regulate members
Power	There is a balance of power among members. Although one group may dominate, it must Be a positive-sum game if the community Is to persist	Unequal powers reflecting unequal resources and unequal access. It is a zero-sum game

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Scholars (Richardson 2000, Adshead 2002, Kohler-Koch 2002) suggest that policy networks seem to be the right approach to the study of the politics today. According to Richardson: 'the relative decline of the term 'policy community' from political analysis and its displacement by policy networks might seem to be an appropriate reflection of the shift from government to governance: 'there has been a movement from the central control of policy by a core executive to more diffuse forms of co-operation among a variety of actors' (Richardson 2000, 1007). Adshead also suggests that: 'Multi-Level governance analysis is based on three main assumptions. First,

decision-making competencies are shared by actors at different levels rather than monopolized by state executives. Second, collective decision-making between member states implies some loss of control by individual state executives. And third, political arenas are interconnected rather than nested.' (Adshead, 2002: 5) Elaborating from this point one can therefore argue that the EU multi-level governance framework is ideal for policy networks to emerge. This is happening because the multi-level system of governance provides many opportunities for actors to get involved in different stages of the EU planning in order to influence the final outcome. ESDP is no exception to the rule. The creation of policy networks is a historic process which has been manifested at the early stages of the predecessor of ESDP: 'The CSFP has induced policy networks, generally very loose and sometimes only nascent during the EPC era, to become more cohesive.' (Peterson and Bomberg 1999: 246).

However, the involvement of actors in policy networks does not leave their identities unaffected by the transactions that take place on a frequent basis.[2] Persuasion, pressure from colleagues, the idea of being left behind or being cut off from a major new project and the fear of isolation all play an important role in changing actor preferences.[3] Therefore, it is important to say that policy networks are based on personal relationships between known and trusted individuals who share similar beliefs. It is the position and roles which actors perform which are crucial. Therefore, according to Marsh and Smith: 'The relationships within the networks are structural because they: define the roles which actors play within networks, prescribe the issues which are discussed and how they are dealt with; have distinct sets of rules; and contain organizational imperatives, so that at least, there is a major pressure to maintain the network.' (Marsh and Smith 2000: 5). It is also evident that network participants want to be 'milieu shapers' and do not want to be left behind when it comes to new initiatives. This may also lead policy networks to a kind of 'sociological functionalism' performance, a functionalism that is not based on pure policy expansion because of the natural interrelated nature of policies but on the case that policy actors are sociologically inclined to 'invent' new policies. Therefore, it is worth examining the process of functionalism from a sociological point of view. However, one must also take into consideration the fact that since a network consists of an unstable pattern of relations amongst its participants it is not going to be always an influential and innovative policy mechanism. Sporadic peer pressure and weak forms of persuasion in a network might have limited effects and the phenomenon of 'sociological functionalism' might indeed be limited or even non-existent in many policy networks who have a limited range of policy implementation.

I expect that the study of the immediate post Cold War period would have led to the formation of **'amorphous policy networks'**. Amorphous policy networks are

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[2] As Marsh and Smith suggest: 'Networks involve the institutionalisation of beliefs, values, cultures and particular forms of behaviour. They are organizations which shape attitudes and behaviour. Networks result from repeated behaviour and, consequently, they relieve decision makers of taking difficult decisions; they help routinize behaviour. (Marsh and Smith 2000: 6)

[3] In this point it is important to mention Krahmnann's experiment. Krahmann conducted a survey on external/peer pressure on actors in order to demonstrate that belonging into a network will affect the actors behaviour. As Krahmnann suggests: 'As multilevel network theory suggests rational actors should not, and, as the case studies confirm, do not ignore the policy preferences of the majority of actors to whom they are linked in their network, regardless of their motives or strength of their convictions.' (Krahmann 2003: 151).

amorphous groups of national individuals of foreign ministries and of sections of organisations (e.g. NATO). These groups of individuals interact sporadically by exchanging opinions. This interaction might lead to alliance formations but also to the formation of groups that compete with each other. Members of the policy network have similar belief-systems (although not identical) and share perspectives on a number of foreign policy issues. During times of high uncertainty networks can be influential in forming the agenda by promoting certain policy options. Amorphous policy networks can from time to time act united in search of a common solution but their interaction is still taking place under an 'intergovernmental' framework. The network is characterised by a volatile nature, unstable relations, non-permanent, sporadic action, low levels of integration, non-institutionalised rules and open membership to those who comply with the commonly accepted ideational criteria. The notion of 'amorphous ESDP policy networks' will help us decode the first and the second phase of interaction (nascent and ascendant phase). However, according to Richardson if policy networks are becoming weak other forms of alternative venues of influence will be created (Richardson 2000).

4. Politico-Epistemic Communities (POECs)

Much of the literature on policy and epistemic community overlaps thus leading the reader to a confusion on what constitutes a policy/epistemic community and where are the limits of the distinction between the two notions. In his analysis of the definition Haas suggests that it is not so much the name which is important but rather the functioning of these communities. Following from this point the section combines various elements of the literature on policy and epistemic communities in order to provide a cohesive framework of what constitutes a political community. Elements from both notions of epistemic and policy community are merged into a new version of community group which is named Politico-Epistemic Community (POEC). The aim of this exercise is to unite useful elements from both theories into one in order to construct an inclusive model of a policy community. The second important element is that areas of overlap in both theories are only mentioned once thus allowing the research to focus on the strong points of the theory and avoid useless repetition.

i. introduction

Peter Haas used the concept of 'epistemic community' in order to describe a group of actors 'who come to share a common interpretation of the science behind a problem and the broad policy and political requirements in response to it' (Gough and Shackley 2001: 329-345). According to Haas an epistemic community is 'a network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue area.' (Haas 1992: 3). The term 'community' was chosen deliberately to reflect the intimate relationship between groups and departments, the development of common perceptions and the development of a common language for describing policy problems (Richardson 1993: 93). Epistemic communities are usually made of professionals, researchers and scientists who share similar policy ideas and seek to influence decisions in their specialist policy domain. The members of an epistemic community are bound together by shared beliefs, ideas and possibly worldviews.

Therefore, scientific knowledge is the glue that keeps actors committed and can be used as a trump card against opponents of the epistemic coalition (Gough & Shackley 2001: 329-345). Although an epistemic community may consist of professionals from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, they are bound together by common norms and practises. This is happening because they share (1) a shared set of normative and principled beliefs, which provide a value-based rationale for the social action of community members, (2) shared casual beliefs, which are derived from their analysis of practices leading or contributing to a central set of problems in their domain and which then serve as the basis for elucidating the multiple linkages between possible policy actions and desired outcomes, (3) shared notions of validity-knowledge in the domain of their expertise, and (4) a common policy enterprise-that is, a set of common practices associated with a set of problems to which their professional competence is directed, presumably out of the conviction that human welfare will be enhanced as a consequence (Haas 1992: 3). According to Ruggie, epistemic communities may be said to consist of 'interrelated roles which grow up around an episteme; they delimit, for their members, the proper construction of social reality' (Ruggie 1975: 569-70).

Although the notion of epistemic communities is a useful one it still suffers from certain weaknesses. The EU geopolitical milieu includes a variety of other actors (e.g. media, policy makers, NGOs). Therefore the cross fertilization of epistemic communities with policy communities is necessary. Although professionals and scientists are important when it come to policy formulation they are not the only players on the block. Politicians, national elites, parliamentarians members of the high echelons of diplomacy also form part of the EU geopolitical milieu. The notion of policy communities directly deals with the way policy-makers behave in order to reach a decision. According to Stone et al (2001): 'Policy Communities are stable networks of policy actors from both inside and outside government, which are highly integrated with the policy-making process. These are based on common understandings of problems or of the decision-making process within a given policy domain'. Therefore, policy communities can be seen as: 'a special type of stable network, which has advantages in encouraging bargaining in policy resolution. In this language the policy network is a statement of shared interests in a policy problem: a policy community exists where there are effective shared 'community' views on the problem. Where there are no such shared views no community exists' (Jordan 1990: 327).

Politico-Epistemic Communities emerge and consolidate around specific policy fields or subsystems and evolve around relevant institutions such as specific ministries or government agencies. A politico-epistemic community (POEC) is 'a transnational coalition of various players within and outside the policy process who try to influence the policy decision mechanism by promoting the diffusion of a particular 'knowledge'. By performing this task politico-epistemic communities introduce policy alternatives, thus influencing the selection of policies, and promote the building of national and international coalitions in support of their chosen policies. By pointing out which alternatives are not viable on the basis of their causal understanding of the problems to be addressed, the POE community members can limit the range of alternatives under consideration. Actors within a politico-epistemic community share many views and ideas. The sharing of a 'common normative

framework can lead to the creation of a strong sense of solidarity which might in turns lead to the establishment of a common identity amongst the actors involved.

The issue of common identity of members is the great distinction between networks and politico-epistemic communities. Due to a common identity policy communities are to shape the debate and move decisions away from the lowest common denominator. This is contrary to what is taking place within EU networks: to discuss problems and find a lowest common denominator solution. The transformation from network to communities will occur when long-term changes in the relationships amongst the participants can indicate a permanent transformation of the policy process within EU policy networks. It is expected that much of the work of the actors who before the establishment of ESDP participated in policy networks will now take place within ESDP institutions. If this is not the case then the problem of 'competing networks' should be taken into account as it might pose major challenge to the development of ESDP.

ii. characteristics of Politico-Epistemic Communities

The idea of politico-epistemic community is based on the notion of community. Being member of a community implies that one shares strong personal relations with the rest of its members as most of the members know each other and share with them long parts of their lives. A consequence of frequent interaction is that a mutual understanding is shaped amongst the members of a community. In all forms of community, special ties exist amongst its members who prefer to co-operate with each other rather than with alien outsiders. Consequently, community members share affective relationships of mutual support. One of the very fundamental communal elements of any social system is a sense of solidarity (Clark 1973). Communal solidarity reinforces the idea of belonging to a group and increases the internal cohesion of a community. Respect for the other members of the community is also a vital rule for co-existence.

A Politico-Epistemic Community represents a 'negotiated' order achieved through a process of pragmatic improvisation and accommodation that must be continually 'worked at' (based on Richardson and Jordan 1979: 101). Therefore, the process of drafting common positions is important because this is when the improvisation and ideational accommodation takes place. A politico-epistemic community is characterised by a balance of power among its members. Although a certain group of individuals may dominate the group there is still room for all the other members to express their concerns and interests (a positive-sum game). In terms of institutionalisation politico-epistemic communities display a consensus on policy principles and procedures to approach policy problems. A politico-epistemic community can be thus perceived as a type of sub-government 'that is a stable, tight and continuing arrangement'. (based on Grant Jordan and William Maloney 1997: 559). Politico-epistemic communities may be 'ad hoc' and not outlive the policy issue which formed them, or be more constant and aim at a broader impact on 'dominant social discourses (based on Haas 1992: 371).

The membership of a politico-epistemic community is not open to all and is restricted to those who can fulfil certain professional or educational standards. Grant enriches

the basic model of policy communities by offering his version of a 'closed policy community' whose aspects can be used when it comes to politico-epistemic Communities. Wallace and Wallace also mention the phenomenon of closed policy communities which characterises much of the EU dealings: 'By and large the definitions of relevant networks suggest that they have an open and inclusive nature, thus admitting access to those who can find an entry-point. The growth of rather more closed policy communities in the fields of monetary, foreign, and home affairs may need some adjustment of the argument about policy networks.' (Wallace and Wallace 2000). The closed politico-epistemic community concept has the following characteristics: First of all the absence of sustained public interest in the policy arena considered by the policy community, a low public profile (visibility of decisions) and low party political attention level. Second, technical expertise and professional knowledge is regarded essential and thirdly it is important to achieve broad public satisfaction with the quality of the service the community provides (Grant 2005: 301-316). In order to construct a closed policy community a consensus is necessary about the nature of its tasks. The use of public sector resources must be relatively low (not a high spender) and the task is often perceived to be 'technical', thus not raising issues of political concern.

However, even if a POEC is a 'closed' community this does not mean that interaction takes place only within the community itself as POEC members do not underestimate the importance of cultivating relations with other influential actors. The members of a politico-epistemic community will do whatever possible in order to convince other actors that their ideas are important. This is happening 'through production of policy/research papers as well as actively lobbying the other important actors. (based on Gough & Shackley 2001). Members of politico-epistemic communities can also consolidate their power by occupying niches in advisory and regulatory bodies. This is how they exert direct influence on national governments and international organizations. (based on Haas 1992: 30). The process of influence in international/transnational epistemic communities is similar to that of the nationally based epistemic communities. According to Haas 'ideas may take root in an international organization or in various state bodies, after which they are diffused to other states via the decision makers who have been influenced by the ideas. As a result the community can have a systemic impact'. (Haas 1992: 17). The more a politico-epistemic community can consolidate bureaucratic power within national/international organizations, the more possibilities it has to institutionalise its influence and insinuate its views into broader international politics (Haas 1992:4). According to Haas: 'It is the political infiltration of an epistemic community into governing institutions which lays the groundwork for a broader acceptance of the community's beliefs and ideas about the proper construction of social reality' (Haas 1992: 27). In practice this can be interpreted as the forging of short-term alliances based on common research and concerns between members of the community and other professions (Haas 1992: 19). However, it is expected that as policy actors are socialised within particular structures on a permanent basis certain forms of stable alliances will also be part of the game.

The 'core' of the politico-epistemic community consists of policy makers and related professionals but its 'communication network' may involve interaction with many other players such as academics, lobbies, movements, political parties, community leaders and think tanks. Integrating various actors into a common project is one of the

tasks of the POE community. A politico-epistemic community can come to exert considerable political influence by including a wide range of policy actors who could (otherwise) disrupt policy development (based on Gough & Shackley 2001). However, it is not only policy makers who are influenced by POE communities but it is also possible that the opposite effect will take place. Therefore, constructing a wide and effective network of support is an important task for the future of the community because in order 'to influence policies, transnational actors need, first, channels into the political system of the target state and, second, domestic partners with the ability to form winning coalitions. Ideas promoted by transnational alliances or epistemic communities do not matter much unless those two conditions are met' (Risse-Kappen 1994: 185-214). A politico-epistemic community is obliged to operate within a given political culture and a particular set of institutions. When it comes to issues which are negotiated at both international/national level it is argued that 'the internationally articulated consensus has to be translated into response measures which make sense nationally.' (Gough and Shackley 2001: 334). The response options that emerge from this process will vary according to the characteristics of the national political culture. New opportunities to influence decisions will arise during periods of crises. These periods are the 'windows of opportunity' for a politico-epistemic community. Haas argues that uncertainty can reinforce the influence of an epistemic community because a decision has to be made quickly and policy makers are disoriented but in search of a solution that will liberate them from their dilemmas. Second, due to their experience and know-how POE communities can clarify the nature of the complex interlinkages between issues and warn actors about the dangers of staying inactive. Third, POE communities can help define the self-interests of a state or factions within it. The process of elucidation of the cause might lead to the redefinition of preconceived interests or to the identification of new interests. (based on Haas's analysis of epistemic communities 1992: 15).

The study of politico-epistemic communities focuses on the process through which consensus is reached within a given domain of expertise and through which the consensual knowledge is diffused and carried forward by other actors. The aim of the research is to demonstrate the levels of political influence that a politico-epistemic community can have on collective policymaking, rather than the correctness of the advice given (based on Haas 1992: 23). In order to analyse the processes leading to policy coordination in a specific area scholars describe the membership and shared beliefs of an expert community, trace the community's actions, and discuss its impact. (based on Haas 1992: 5) However, it is not always easy to pin down all the elements that make a politico-epistemic community as certain communities are characterised by a closed and secretive structure.

In terms of working practices, politico-epistemic communities have common causal methods, professional judgement, notions of validity, their own vocabulary and consensual knowledge (based on Adler & Haas 1992). However although members of an epistemic community might share similar views this does not exclude the emergence of debates on what solution is best to a given problem. Debates on which policy path is the right to follow are common within politico-epistemic communities. However, although differences may arise members are bounded together by an element of solidarity. The sense of solidarity amongst members of an epistemic community derives not only from their shared interests, ideas and cosmopolitan beliefs but also from the fact that they have common objectives. The structure of each

politico-epistemic community and the degree of interaction amongst its members plays an important role in determining what bonds of solidarity are built amongst its members.

As it is the case with the epistemic communities, the role of ideas is very important in politico-epistemic communities as well. Ideas can be used as 'policy viruses' thus altering the policies of a policy community. Therefore, new ideas can be also perceived as a threat if they pose a challenge against the 'ideational acquis' of a particular community. (Richardson 2000: 1017-18). Policy communities can adopt many different reactions to new ideas which will have an impact on the future of the community itself: 'first they (policy communities) could accept their own demise in the face of the new 'virus'. Secondly, they could adapt or 'mutate' the virus itself. Thirdly they could themselves mutate in order to survive.' (Richardson 2000: 1019). This is also the case for the politico-epistemic communities. However ideas need their 'ideational entrepreuners' (Checkel) in order to become part of the discourse of the politico-epistemic community.

One should notice that a politico-epistemic community can be constructed but this does not mean that it will survive the challenges of its times neither that it will always be able to influence policy-making. A group of various actors (policy officials, elites, political leaders, government institutions, scientists) which had once shown an interest in a particular question can become disinvolved for some reason. On the other hand it is also evident that the interest that has united different actors in a community might also fade away and this will mean the end of the community (based on Baumgartner and Jones 1993: 8). In addition, politico-epistemic communities can also get the blame if a policy they have supported proves wrong. A wrong policy choice may thus lead to the weakening of the epistemic community or even to its final demise. Due to government change and different political systems within the EU member states one cannot underestimate the power of fluidity and change that can prove lethal to the influence of an EU politico-epistemic community. A possible change in government, a reshuffle, an electoral defeat of an politico-epistemic community-friendly party might bring changes to ministerial posts and departmental expertees and thus diminish (or increase) the influence of this particular POE community.

Problems can also emerge from the level of success of a particular politico-epistemic community. For instance, the success of policy communities can result in what Richardson calls 'overcrowding' as other autonomous players demand entry to the policy community. As a result, 'policy communities and networks may become linked in a rather messy and unpredictable chain of actors, who do not know each other well and who do not speak the same 'language'' (Richardson 2000: 1008). The idea of forming short term alliances is also put under the spot when Richardson suggests that: 'Promiscuity not only begets more promiscuity – it also breeds mistrust between actors. The sheer number of actors, and the enormous diversity that they bring to Brussels, makes it unlikely that the kind of policy community politics which often characterised post-cold welfare states can be established, except where highly specialised and detailed technical issues are being resolved.' (Richardson 2000: 1015)

It has been suggested that strategic culture can be measured in 'thin' and 'thick' versions (Meyer 2005). If one applies the idea of 'thin' and 'thick' culture to networks and communities it is expected that single issue networks and loose policy networks

will fit the first category. On the contrary tight policy networks and politico-epistemic communities seem to have a thicker culture and will be categorised in the second level. If the ESDP mechanism is dominated by 'thin' networks then a thin strategic culture is expected to be developed. On the other hand if 'thick' communities are part of the game then it is expected that a 'thicker' version of strategic culture will emerge.
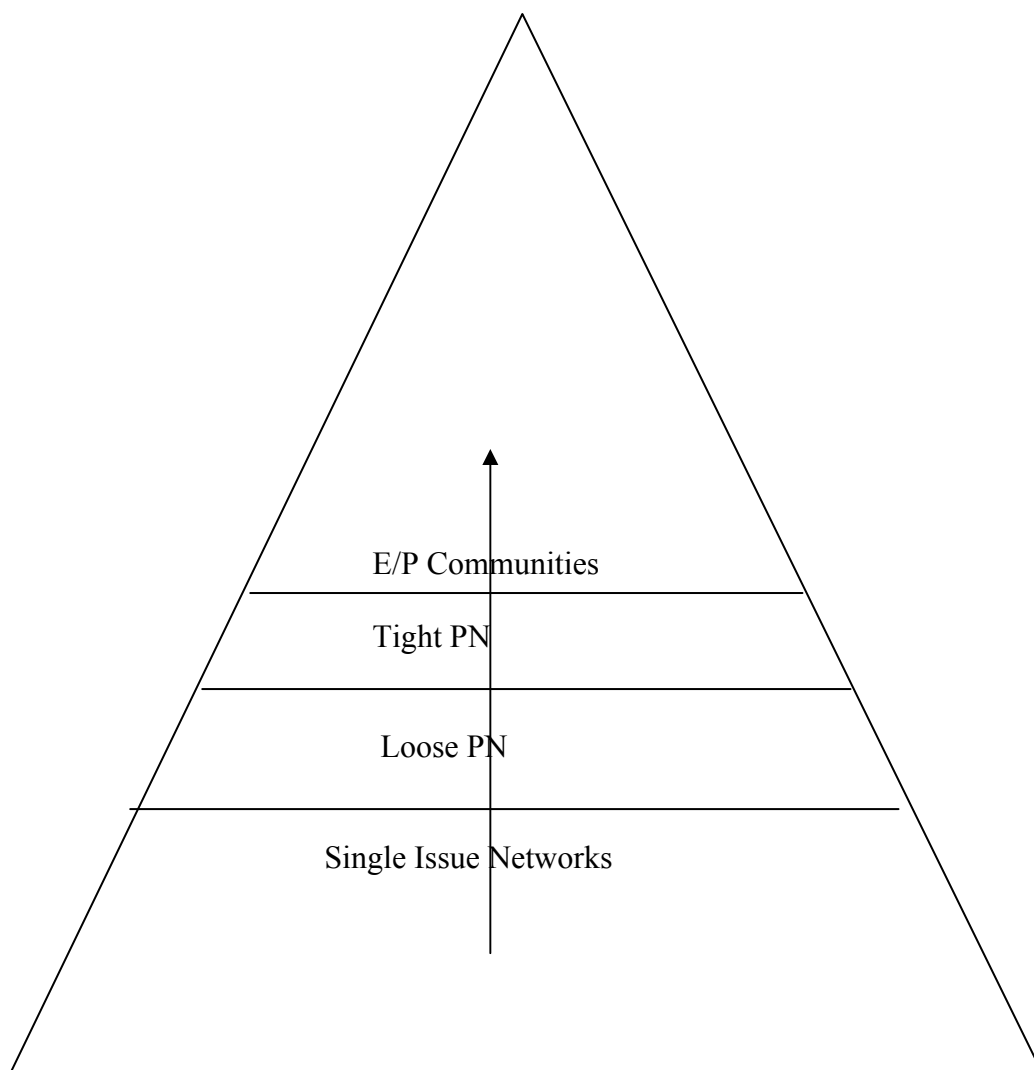
'thin' strategic culture	'thick' strategic culture
Single issue networks, loose policy networks,	Tight policy networks, EPOCs

6. Communities, networks and measuring strategic culture

The paper examined the importance of policy networks/communities and institutions in the geopolitical milieu of the EU. In the beginning of this paper I have suggested that the point of departure is that of security community. Without the construction of a 'no war' community any other development in the field of security and defence would have been an impossible mission. So far it has been argued that the whole process of ESDP policy formulation takes place through the creation of different policy networks which are characterised by a fluid and unpredictable nature. The influence of these networks should not be underestimated as they are capable of shaping the outcomes of decision-making. Furthermore, policy networks/communities contribute to the institutionalisation of beliefs, values, cultures and particular forms of behaviour. However, offering a mere description of network activities does not provide answers to the development of ESDP. According to Adshead: 'Critics argue that the difficulty with networks is that once they have been used to characterise the policy process, their explanatory utility is exhausted. (Adshead 2002:19). The way to get out of a vicious circle of a mere description of actors activities in a network is to study its full-term evolution within a wider framework of institutional interaction. If the network has evolved in a politico-epistemic community then the policy outcome identified is more important than a simple intergovernmental elite transaction. The main aim of studying the EU policy network is to see to what extent it has acquired the characteristics of an integrated politico-epistemic community.

It is expected that there is a process of evolution in the life of networks. (see table 3). Debates and policy issues might lead to the formation of single issue networks or loose policy communities. As cooperation within loose networks intensifies it is expected that networks will acquire a 'tighter' nature and will be upgraded to tight policy networks. If a common identity within actors of a network is consolidated it is possible to talk about the creation of a politico-epistemic community. The process of upgrading resembles to that of a pyramid where at the lower end single issue networks are located. In a bottom-up mode networks are transformed into thicker versions of cooperation.

Table 3.

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                  /     |      \
                 /  E/P Communities \
                /——————————————————\
               /      Tight PN       \
              /————————————————————————\
             /        Loose PN          \
            /——————————————————————————————\
           /      Single Issue Networks      \
          /——————————————————————————————————\
         /_____\
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