

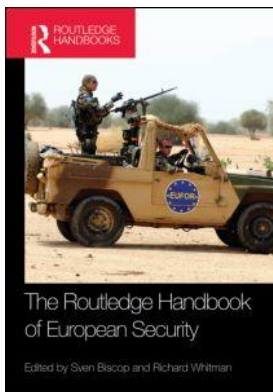
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Liberal, Constructivist and Critical Studies of European Security

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3

LIBERAL, CONSTRUCTIVIST AND CRITICAL STUDIES OF EUROPEAN SECURITY

Knud E. Jørgensen and Åsne K. Aarstad

The aim of this chapter is to review studies of European security that are informed by liberal, constructivist or critical theoretical orientations. The selected studies belong to the part of the literature that has proved to be of some consequence by setting research agendas, contributing innovative theoretical perspectives, providing comprehensive and significant new insights or reaching important or perhaps counter-intuitive conclusions. While briefly outlining the main characteristics of each of these theoretical perspectives, the main part of the chapter is devoted to critically reviewing the research that each of the three perspectives has produced, including their strengths and weaknesses. While allowing for a few historically significant excursions, the chapter focuses on research produced in the period 1990–2010, i.e., since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the East–West division of Europe.

All three perspectives have delivered path-breaking research on European security. Within the liberal perspective, one of the most precious topics is the construction of Europe itself, significantly contributing, according to liberal arguments, to European security. The construction of Europe is seen as being based on three key liberal features: interdependence, peace-loving democracies and extensive institutionalization of (European) international politics. Moreover, liberal perspectives have been applied in studies of the EU's high-profile promotion of democracy and human rights. This inherently liberal internationalist political agenda has a strong security dimension, not least because the agenda promises to extend the global zones of peace, strengthen the institutionalization of international politics and deepen the dynamics of interdependence. Within constructivist perspectives, the identity–interests–policy axis has functioned as the backbone of scholarship. Put differently, policy-making has been explained by reference to the dynamics of European identity formation and derived processes of interest formation. The transformation of Europe has highlighted change to such an extent that constructivism has widely been seen, to some degree wrongly, as a predominantly change-oriented perspective. Moreover, novel or reinvented approaches such as security communities (with a constructivist twist) and cultures of national security have emerged, documenting the highly innovative features of the perspective. Within critical perspectives, much attention has been directed towards the politics of securitizing various fields of European policy areas and as such questioning who determines the European security agenda. A further significant theme has been the focus on individual security and emancipation, which underscores the conception of human security.

Three theoretical perspectives and four junctions

Most people agree that red, green and blue are different colours. However, when it comes to liberal, constructivist and critical perspectives, such common understandings tend to entirely evaporate. Some do not see any significant difference between the three approaches, for which reason they are lumped together under some common label (Mearsheimer, 1995a). Others believe that all three perspectives are substantive perspectives, for which reason it makes sense to compare and perhaps determine, in the manner of a beauty contest or gladiatorial combat, which one is the best, the winner or just the most beautiful (Jervis, 1999). Still others do not see crucially important differences *within* liberalism, *within* constructivism or *within* critical security studies, for which reason they mix and stir incommensurable assumptions, propositions and meta-theoretical positions, after which they pour a drink that is more muddy than clear and less than applicable in empirical research. In order to avoid such misleading understandings, Figure 3.1 shows that liberal, constructivist and critical perspectives both exist independent of each other, yet also overlap or intertwine. Moreover, had the figure been in 3D, it would have depicted the three perspectives at different levels of analysis.

In addition to visualizing our understanding of how liberal, constructivist and critical perspectives operate – alone or in combination – Figure 3.1 represents a stark contrast to those visualizations of the IR field that present various perspectives as exclusively categorically distinct and, often, as mutually exclusive (Barkin, 2010). These categorizations, however systematically beneficial, do not capture the multitude of combined theoretical perspectives that guide scholarly research. In order to present a comprehensive review of liberal, constructivist and critical studies of European security, it is thus important to acknowledge that the field is marked *both* by theoretically distinct perspectives, as well as combined perspectives.

To start with the former, clusters 1, 2 and 3 in Figure 3.1 are not characterized by any junction with competing or complementary perspectives. First, a major part of research informed by one or more of the main currents within the liberal tradition has little or nothing to do with constructivist and critical theoretical perspectives. Such research is based on different assumptions and subscribes to other epistemological commitments, including positivism and rationalism. Second, research informed by constructivism focuses on the dynamics of social

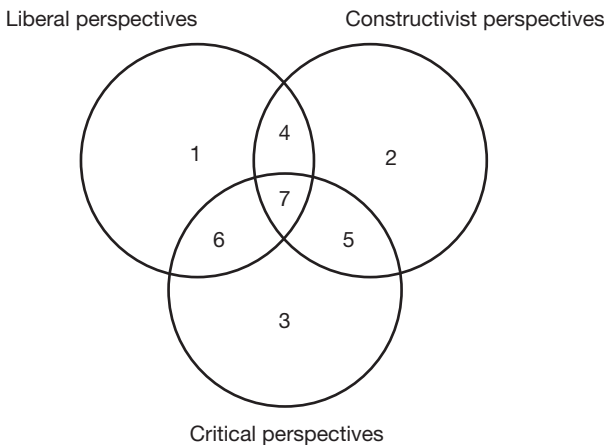


Figure 3.1 Liberal, constructivist and critical perspectives.

reality, hence the importance of exploring the boundary between social and material reality (Searle, 1995; Sørensen, 2008). Importantly, constructivist epistemological commitments do not necessarily necessitate subscription either to liberal assumptions or critical aspirations. Thus, alternative options include shaping or complementing realism (Barkin, 2010; Nau, 2002). Third, research informed by critical perspectives constitutes a further theoretical perspective, characterized by its own distinct assumptions and commitments. In contrast to the two aforementioned perspectives, critical perspectives can be seen as distinctively and deliberately *political* by acknowledging the political nature of political enquiry (Manners, 2006a; van Munster, 2007; Huysmans, 2002).

With reference to the latter overlapping perspectives, four clusters of research (4–7 in Figure 3.1) have been identified. Some liberalism-informed research is based on constructivist commitments and other clusters of liberal research have critical aspirations. We have termed these perspectives ‘constructivist liberal studies’ and ‘critical liberal studies’ respectively. In a similar way, some critical studies are based on a constructivist edifice, and thus constitute what we have termed ‘constructivist critical studies’. Finally, cluster 7 refers to ‘most mixed-perspectives’, studies characterized by several theoretical overlaps.

If the theoretical perspectives seemingly constitute a maze, the notion of European security fares no better. Although there are very strong competitors, the notion of ‘security’ is among the most vague or underspecified notions one can imagine. While during much of the Cold War ‘security’ was understood as denoting military defence, the 1970s oil crisis extended the meaning to also cover a state’s *economic* security, including its access to raw materials. During the late 1980s and up until today, broad notions of security have been introduced and cultivated to such an extent that linkages to defence are almost forgotten. The result is that contemporary notions of security have moved far beyond the security of the survival of the state, to also include security of the individual and the (local/global) society. Examples of the latter are the terms ‘human security’ and ‘environmental security’ respectively. As argued by Frédéric Mérand, Martial Foucault and Bastien Irondelle, ‘European Security is no longer what it used to be’ (2011: 3). The notion of European security has been a moving target and scholarship reflects this dynamic feature.

The following sections of the chapter have been structured by the above understandings, yet they focus foremost on how theoretical understandings have informed research on European security.

Liberal perspectives on European security

Liberal theories can best be collectively described as drawing on a set of assumptions about how the world works, ranging from an optimistic belief in human reason to the perceived positive effects of institutions in moulding anarchy or mitigating conflicts. It follows from this that liberal perspectives on European security are diverse, and come in many forms and shapes. Various liberal perspectives on European security proliferated in the first decade after the end of the Cold War, as orthodox approaches to security were found increasingly unsuitable to grasp the new reality on the Continent. Commercial, ideational and republican liberal theories seek to explain the nature of national preferences (Ikenberry and Moravcsik, 2001). From these perspectives, peace (security) is largely seen as a quality stemming from the liberal state in itself, through its commercial and political organization, and the interdependence between similarly organized states.

John Ikenberry and Andrew Moravcsik (2001) argue for a qualitative distinction between liberal theories of institutional delegation, design and compliance, and liberal theories of

underlying preferences of states that motivate policy. The former – liberal institutionalist theories – focus on the ways in which variation in the distribution of information can stimulate incentives to cooperate, and as such reduce the likelihood of conflict. This branch of liberal theories can be seen as sharing many assumptions with the traditional branch of realism, as it assumes that state preferences are a given. In contrast, the latter seek to explain variation in underlying preferences themselves and direct focus towards norms and ideas. We therefore deal with these contributions in the ‘constructivist liberal’ section.

One of the first major liberal studies to appear immediately after the Cold War was Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye and Stanley Hoffmann’s influential *After the Cold War: International Institutions and State Strategies in Europe, 1989–1991* (1994). The application of core components of neoliberal institutional perspectives to the domain of security is a novel feature of this volume, as such applications had previously been restricted to issue areas where the dangers of defection were seen as low, such as economic or environmental cooperation (Martin and Simmons, 2001: 6). During the 1990s, a range of liberal scholars such as John Duffield (1996), Robert McCalla (1996) and Celeste Wallander (2000) applied the neoliberal institutionalist framework to explain the endurance of NATO cooperation after the end of the Cold War. In *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions through Time and Space* (1999) Helga Haftendorn, Keohane and Wallander make the claim that NATO successfully transformed from a threat-based military alliance to a risk-based security management institution, largely due to its permanent institutional assets aimed at dealing with instability and mistrust.

While Moravcsik’s *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (1998) does not focus directly on European security, its theoretical framework is nonetheless relevant for such studies. According to Moravcsik’s liberal intergovernmentalist framework, the dynamics of European cooperation, in the realm of security as well, can be explained by processes of domestic preference formation within EU member states and by strategic bargaining among the governments of EU member states. The states are seen as the ‘masters of the treaty’, and integration is the outcome of processes of domestic preference-formation, bargaining and the pooling and delegation of sovereignty. Wolfgang Wagner (2003) draws on Moravcsik’s approach when explaining why the CFSP is likely to remain intergovernmental, rather than ‘communitarized/Europeanized’. Even though cooperation can be *enhanced* through the establishing of decision-making procedures that pool sovereignty, such as through the introduction of QMV, the overall structure will remain firmly intergovernmental (Wagner, 2003). Assessing the EU’s foreign policy towards the Middle East, Costanza Musu applies a historical institutionalist perspective when she argues that the driving factor behind the EU’s policy is more congruence rather than real convergence ‘capable of producing a truly collective policy, an expression of a unitary European political strategy’ (2011: 293).

Regardless of their scholarly popularity, the liberal perspectives have not been received uncritically. The enhanced prospects for institutional cooperation and the focus on absolute, rather than relative gains have been criticized by realist scholars such as John Mearsheimer (1995a) and Joseph Grieco (1995). Ronald Krebs (1999) similarly applies realist arguments when he criticizes liberal institutionalist contributions on NATO for neglecting intra-alliance conflicts, pointing to the difficult relationship between NATO members Greece and Turkey. From a different point of view, constructivist scholars such as Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore (2001) and Alexandra Gheciu (2005) criticize the liberal institutionalist framework for not acknowledging that institutions can have functions *beyond* the goals that states give them.

Constructivist perspectives on European security

Constructivism, being not a substantive international relations theory but a set of ontological and epistemological commitments, can in principle be blended with a range of substantive theoretical traditions, including realism (Barkin, 2010), the English school (Dunne, 1995; Suganami, 2003), liberalism (Wendt, 1992; Finnemore, 1996) and the Critical Theory tradition (Price and Reus-Smith, 1998). The constructivist turn within IR has produced an avalanche of studies concerned with the role of ideas, norms and culture in politics, underlining intersubjective – shared social – understandings (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001). While some studies address the key characteristics of constructivism at philosophical, meta-theoretical and theoretical levels, other studies are ‘applied’ and some of these applied studies focus on European security.

Ian Manners was the first to make use of the concept of ‘normative power Europe’ in his article of the same name from 2002, and in a revisited version stemming from 2006. Manners argues that the EU is vested with powers to promote norms and values beyond its own borders, which is a distinct capacity from other forms of state power, e.g. the traditional material notions of military or economic power. In other words, the EU’s internal identity is said to constitute powers that the EU can use to influence international relations by the promotion of these norms abroad. Examples include the EU’s abolition of the death penalty, as well as the promotion of human rights and democracy. While undoubtedly serving as an influential and important work on the impacts of norms on power, Manners has been criticized from various theoretical approaches, including Samir Amin and Ali El Kenz’s Marxist critique, arguing that Manners’ ‘glorification’ of the EU’s foreign policy ambitions serves as a justification for neoliberal economic imperialism (2005). Adrian Hyde-Price frames his critique in neorealist terms, emphasizing the EU’s intergovernmental dynamics and the aspirations of the great powers to ‘continue to jealously guard their sovereign rights to pursue their own foreign and security policy priorities’ (Hyde-Price, 2006: 231). Far from being a normative power, the EU is seen to be constituted by the powers of its member states, who continually value common security and defence cooperation as only a secondary priority.

Other important constructivist research on European security includes studies of European strategic culture, coercive diplomacy and immigration (Meyer, 2005; Wheeler, 2007; van Munster, 2009). Some of these (and a range of other) constructivist contributions are presented in the ‘constructivist liberal’ and ‘constructivist critical’ sections.

Critical perspectives on European security

Roughly speaking, two ways of understanding what constitutes critical security studies can be identified. One group see critical security studies (CCS) as ‘a distinct project in its own right’, pointing to the normatively guided research agenda of the Welsh school (often referred to as the Aberystwyth school). For others, however, critical security studies is seen as a label for a wide range of approaches critical to the dominance of realist contributions to security studies, including a range of various critical ‘schools’ (Williams, 2004).

For the purposes of this chapter, we contend that a broad take on critical perspectives applied to the study of European security is not compatible with narrow definitions or strictly defined research agendas. As the name suggests, critical perspectives are brought together more by their contentious relationship with conventional theories of international relations, than by shared theoretical underpinnings. Certain common characteristics, however, are being convincingly brought forward by Colin Hay, arguing that critical perspectives raise three distinct questions when making political enquiries: what is being studied?; what can

we know?; and how are we going to know? (Hay, 2002). Thus, as a point of departure, critical perspectives move beyond rationalist theoretical approaches by refusing to accept that the knowledge of the world we inhabit is objective. Following this, theories are not seen as neutral tools to understand the driving forces in our society, stripped of values and partiality. On the contrary, critical perspectives see theories as distinctly political, by arguing that the conduct of political enquiry is by its very nature a political behaviour in itself. The *critique* is directed towards the static rationalist assumptions about human nature and action, the rationalist belief in empirically verifiable truths and the positivist research method (Price and Reus-Smith, 1998: 261). These broad common features taken into consideration, it should come as little surprise that the research contributions that could potentially fit under the heading ‘critical security studies’ are overwhelmingly many in number. Responding to questions such as ‘*who* determines the European security agenda?’, ‘*what* is considered a security challenge?’, ‘for *whom* is it a security challenge?’ and ‘*why* is/should this be a security challenge?’, critical approaches to European security have proliferated over the last two decades (van Munster, 2007; CASE, 2006).

Given that critical approaches to the study of security have their intellectual roots in the positivism–post-positivism debate in the 1980s, critical approaches to European security owe much to the post-structural philosophies of Foucault and Derrida, the Marxist tradition of the Frankfurt school, peace-research institutes and their proponents as well as the constructivist research agenda more generally (Jørgensen, 2010: 156–69, CASE, 2006: 447–8). While this insight offers little help in conceptualizing the shape and content of critical security studies, it informs us that the critical approach to security has largely been cultivated in an environment marked by opposition towards the mainstream. Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams’ edited volume *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases* (1997) was an early, agenda-setting contribution that addressed the new security challenges of the 1990s. Among the many contributions, Beverly Crawford and Ronnie Lipschutz drew attention to how the politics of (in-)security was exploited to the full extent during the war in former Yugoslavia. The critique was directed towards attempts to structure the causes of the war in a deterministic manner (e.g. ‘the conflict was bound to happen’) in order to justify the late and incomplete reaction by the international community. By drawing attention to the construction of security, this contribution was an early application of what has become known as the securitization framework developed by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, also referred to as the Copenhagen school (1997). The social construction of security issues through various forms of communicative tools (speeches, images) has been picked up and developed further by critical scholars (Bigo, 1996, 2002; Hansen, 2006).

The Welsh school of critical security studies is characterized by stronger normative aspirations than those works already cited (van Munster, 2007: 235; Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2009: 18). The Welsh school cultivates a particular research agenda with a strong normative component, ‘conceptualizing security in terms of human emancipation’ (Williams, 2004: 144; see also Booth, 1991, 2005; Price and Reus-Smith, 1998; Wyn Jones, 2005). The normative component can be seen as a natural prolongation of the assumption that theoretical knowledge is socially constructed. If there can be no ‘research without politics’, the conceptual leap is short to advocating how ‘good politics’ can be better practised and ‘bad politics’ avoided. In a similar manner, the neo-Gramscian approach, advocated by Andrew Linklater, sees human equality as the goal for which research must pave the way (2000).

Constructivist liberal studies

While Alexander Wendt (1992) has pointed to a mixed zone of strong liberalism and constructivism, other constructivists have been reluctant or downright opposed to be identified with liberal positions. This somehow mirrors realist critics who, when addressing the constructivist turn, have been keen to employ standard realist critiques of liberalism (Mearsheimer, 1995a; Copeland, 2000). In contrast, Brent Steele (2007) argues vigorously that social constructivism is not liberalism, pointing to epistemological, ontological and normative distinctions between the two (see also Barkin, 2010). In short, the constructivist liberal position is deeply contested, yet also most capable of delivering significant studies. Four thematic areas have proved particularly attractive.

First, Emmanuel Adler and Michael Barnett's *Security Communities* (1998) draws upon Karl Deutsch's classic liberal work on security communities and 'role-identity'. Throughout this volume the prospect of security through community-based initiatives, rather than material factors, is a key theme. Others combine the security community perspective with alliance politics (Williams and Neumann, 2000). Generally, the security community perspective has informed a spate of studies.

Second, the distinctly liberal factor is often considered to be domestic politics. While Peter Katzenstein's *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (1996) mixes several analytical components, its emphasis on identity and domestic cultures of security does suggest some affinities with liberal theoretical thinking. The volume's three case studies on German, French and British security policy support this interpretation. Otherwise, the theoretical framework is as systemically structural as neoliberal institutionalism, albeit focusing on global norms rather than international institutions (Kowert and Legro, 1996). Moreover, the focus in other studies on domestic preferences makes it possible to speak about a constructivist liberal research agenda, merging constructivist and liberal perspectives as demonstrated by Wendt (1999) and Risse-Kappen (1995).

Third, liberal and constructivist scholars tend to agree that institutions matter, indeed Keohane (1989) was among the first to point to this shared feature. Several constructivist studies follow up on this proposition in general terms (Finnemore, 1996; Barnett and Finnemore, 2001), while other constructivist studies focus on how European institutions matter in relation to European security (Smith, 1998; Glarbo, 1999; Jørgensen, 1997a). Similarly, Risse-Kappen (1996), Fierke and Wiener (1999) and Gheciu (2005) have drawn upon processes of socialization and identity to explain NATO's continued relevance in the post-Cold War era.

Fourth, liberal and constructivist characteristics intertwine in their key assumption that progress is possible, although not inevitable. While constructivists point to processes of the making of social reality and thus, in principle, are open to options of change, nothing in its key characteristics suggests that constructivists suffer from an inbuilt bias towards change. The issues of the importance of change and continuity, respectively, have frequently been addressed (see e.g. McSweeney, 1996; Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1997).

Constructivist critical studies

Separating constructivist and critical approaches to European security studies can be seen as a somewhat artificial exercise, since substantial parts of the critical security scholarship adhere to the constructivist insistence on security as being socially constructed. In a similar manner, scholars such as Richard Price and Christian Reus-Smith (1998) and Hasan Ulusoy argue

that constructivism as a whole is a *critical* exercise of research, in particular since ‘it aims to recover the individual and shared meaning that motivates actors to do what they do’ (Ulusoy, 2003). From this follows the realization that it is a far from clear-cut task to single out distinct constructivist critical security approaches, but as will be argued, there is nevertheless leverage in the literature for such a distinction.

According to Ted Hopf, constructivist approaches to security can be roughly separated into two camps, specifically the ‘conventional’ and the ‘critical’ (Hopf, 1998), an argument also presented by Theo Farrell (2002). Whereas the former camp refers to the large body of constructivist scholarship occupied with the roles and influences of norms and identity in international affairs (as described in previous sections), the latter is more concerned with the role played by discourse and linguistic methods in the construction of security challenges (Karacasulu and Uzgören, 2007: 30–1). According to this dividing line, critical constructivist approaches to the study of security are to be found in-between conventional constructivism and critical approaches with strong normative commitments (Karacasulu and Uzgören, 2007: 30–1).

The Copenhagen school’s original outline of the securitization thesis, advanced in *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* by Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1997), can be placed within the critical constructivist camp. The social construction of security issues through various forms of communicative tools (speeches, images) over shorter or longer periods of time has been picked up and developed further by critical scholars. Among these, many adhere to the Paris school’s sociological approach, emphasizing how security practices move across a wide spectrum of issue areas (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2009: 10; see also Bigo, 2002; Huysmans, 2000, 2006; Aradau, 2004; Williams, 2004; CASE, 2006; and Hansen, 2006). In particular the securitization of immigration in Europe is a field that has received much attention (see Huysmans, 2000, 2006; Aradau and van Munster, 2009). Huysman (2006), to highlight one of the examples, shows in his contribution how specific securitizing moves within the EU have been initiated in order to govern the access of perceived ‘dangerous’ elements – that is immigrants, asylum-seekers, organized crime (van Munster, 2007: 239). The process of securitization has been facilitated, he argues, through the institutionalization of fear and hostility as an ordering principle (van Munster, 2007: 239; Huysman, 2006). Gross similarly sees strong securitization tendencies in the EU’s treatments of the Balkans in her analysis of the EU’s crisis management in the region (Gross, 2011). Finally, it should be mentioned that critical works focusing on security as practice have successfully combined different scholarly disciplines, exemplified by the work of Rens van Munster (critical constructivism) and Claudia Aradau (criminology) on the politics of exceptionalism in the face of terrorism (both in the USA and in Europe). As such, these critical constructivist studies can be said to look beyond the perceived disciplinary boundaries of IR theory.

Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen’s 2006 *The Risk Society at War: Terror, Technology and Strategy in the Twenty-First Century* can also be placed within the critical constructivist camp. The risk society literature draws upon works by the sociologists Ulrich Beck (1992, 1999) and Anthony Giddens (1999), arguing that in the era of ‘reflexive modernity’ the risk society is preoccupied with self-manufactured risks. As risks, unlike threats, can never be eliminated, according to Rasmussen ‘there is no such thing as perfect security’ (2006: 3). Decision-making takes place under conditions of uncertainty, and can be conceptualized as ‘a controlled extension of rational action’ (Luhmann, 1993). Rasmussen (2001, 2006), Christopher Coker (2002) and Michael J. Williams (2008) have all drawn upon the risk society thesis to explain Western/European security policy over the last two decades, with particular focus on NATO’s endurance and the manifestation of the precautionary principle as the new strategic doctrine. Anna Leander (2005) and Elke Krahnmann (2011)

have directed attention to how private security companies can contribute to shape security policies and preferences in the risk society drawing upon mixed constructivist critical perspectives.

Critical liberal studies

In Ken Booth's *Critical Security Studies* (2005) some of the contributors suggest that individuals – not states – should be the referent objects of security studies. This view does not necessarily make them liberals but does suggest that they share key concerns with both liberals and English school solidarists. Moreover, the position enables a research agenda on human security, i.e. an issue cultivated within both the UN and the European Union. Closely related to the emancipation of individuals as advocated by Ken Booth and Andrew Linklater, the human security framework stands out as a field worth noticing. Located within the security–development nexus, human security is a contested, yet widely popularized term, addressing security from the twin aspects of ‘freedom from want – freedom from fear’, targeting individuals, not states (Werthes and Debiel, 2006: 10). Mary Kaldor stands out as a scholar who has not only published influential studies in the field (Kaldor and Martin, 2009), but furthermore exercises some influence on the EU through the Human Security Study Group's publications (the Barcelona Report 2004; the Madrid Report 2007), initiated by former EU High Representative Javier Solana.

Most-mixed perspectives

Some would probably argue that this field of study is simply too complex or ‘über-patchwork-like’ to be helpful for analytical purposes. Yet in the real world, ‘appliers’ are often considerably more pragmatic than ‘purist’ theorists. In other words, this ‘several-overlaps’ position might not constitute a distinct theoretical position, yet nonetheless prove capable of producing numerous studies of European security. Moreover, while the 1980s and 1990s were predominantly characterized by competitive theory-testing and analytical MAD strategies, the times they are a-changing. Now it is notions of ‘dialogue’, ‘bridge-building’, ‘complementary potentials’ and even praise of theoretical eclecticism that characterize recommended research design (Sil and Katzenstein, 2010). We should therefore focus on scholars tracing the boundaries between analytical perspectives, for instance examining the boundary between critical security studies and the Copenhagen school (Buzan, 2004; see also Campbell, 1998) or discussing the mixed zone of strong liberalism and constructivism (Wendt, 1992).

In order to better understand junctions in this analytical ‘Dreieck’ of theoretical perspectives, we can ask if processes of securitization do not at least to some degree overlap with processes of domestic preference formation; if strategic bargaining does not constitute a distinct kind of social interaction defining the identity of actors involved; and if institutional design cannot be seen as part of the environmental structure in which processes of identity and interest formation are embedded, in turn defining the key parameters of policy-making. If yes, we have pointed to possible translations of the theoretical vocabulary that theorists employ.

When drawing out the consequences of the above ideas, two alternative pathways emerge as particularly intriguing. The first option is that we keep theoretical characteristics fairly fixed and look for a theoretical position that is the outcome of a conscious theoretical synthesis, in turn applied in studies of European security. In this case, [Figure 3.1](#) turns out to be a badly shaped donut, yet with the empty centre intact. The second option is to

acknowledge that empirical studies of European security often are nothing but a more or less messy set of variables, characterized by some varying leanings towards liberal, constructivist or critical analytical concerns.

Conclusion

As argued at the beginning of this chapter, studies of European security are characterized by a multitude of theoretical perspectives in combination with a multitude of understandings of what constitutes ‘security’ in the European context. Liberal, constructivist and critical theory perspectives are applied alone or in combination, contributing a constant chain of new insight and novel analyses. Within this broad and widely pluralistic field, it is nevertheless possible to single out some key areas of research that have proved particularly attractive to analysts working within the theoretical perspectives covered in this chapter:

- First, conflicts and interventions in the Western Balkans and the conduct of peace-support operations more generally have been among the most enduring challenges during the last twenty years. It is hardly surprising that these political challenges have been turned into analytical challenges and that liberal, constructivist and critical perspectives have been thoroughly employed.
- Second, NATO’s endurance has constituted a genuine puzzle for analysts drawing on very different theoretical perspectives. In a wider perspective, analysts have explored international organizations and regimes that enjoy mandates to deal with security issues.
- Third, EU advances in the field of security have been analysed within identity perspectives, institutional dynamics (CFSP, CSDP), processes of socialization and interplays between European and national levels of policy- and decision-making. EU engagements in Asia, Africa, the Caucasus and the Middle East have been thoroughly analysed. The issue of strategic culture might mainly have been analysed by policy analysts but some theory-informed studies have also appeared. In this context, we also find various studies of European security strategies at both national and European levels.
- Fourth, the EU’s neighbourhood and enlargements policies have got a fair deal of attention, although theory-informed studies have been relatively difficult to find.
- Finally, Russia constitutes kind of a constant in studies of European security. This analytical area includes issues such as nuclear security in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia–CIS relations and energy security.

Merand, Foucault, and Irondelle argue that the contemporary European security architecture, as it has developed since the fall of the Berlin Wall, ‘lacks a clear structure of political authority’ (2011: 302). The shift from government to governance in the security domain is a related observation, pointing to increased fragmentation of political authority and the parallel growth of multiple centres of power and the multiplication of security actors in Europe (Webber *et al.*, 2004; Krahmman 2003). These two observations are well reflected in a theoretically rich, thematically broad, and ever-expanding scholarly literature on European security, as outlined in this review.