

Empowerment as a part of the peace and stability in the European North: a case of Lapland

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Abstract: In the article I see the social, political and economical exclusion of the North as a part of the state and superpower-centric international system lasting until the end of the Cold War. My argument is that the structure of international system has changed in the last two decades. In the European North we are moving from the realist peace and security toward security communities and the democratic peace. Because of structural changes in the system the security paradigm is also changing. The security threats are now economical, environmental and social not the military conflict between the states. My argument is that the structural change and new security paradigms give possibilities for empowerment and inclusions for the people in the North. Simplistically, the realist peace and security means power for the people with material and military capabilities. Democratic peace means more diversified political actors and possibilities from disempowerment to empowerment also in the European North.

Introduction

In this article, my argument is that the post-Cold War structural changes in the International System – or even the post-state system in Europe – have enabled new kinds activities in the European North. For example, under the Cold War system, contacts with people across borders were always a potential security threat. Under the state system, self-sufficiency was a tool for minimising the security risks concerning food and energy availability. In the Superpower and state system, the technology (or indeed technological innovations) was mostly directed towards the military capabilities of states. However, this situation has been turned upside-down by post Cold War globalisation and other structural changes in the system. To sustain

an efficient economy and the development of new innovations, contacts with people living in other states are necessary, also at the level of civil society. Instead of national self-sufficiency, the word ‘economy’ is defined by an increasing amount of import and export between the states, companies and customers. In the post-Cold War system, the aspiration for national self-sufficiency determines the security threats, not simply the security, and the global finance system ties the interests and targets of different actors strongly together. Technology is now used more for capitalist markets and civil society than the military aims of states, and information technology even facilitates contacts between the people in different states. The combination of these factors creates a challenge for the state-centric security paradigm.

The Disempowered North

During World War II and the Cold War, the term “national security” was coined to describe the area of public policy concerned with the preservation of state independence and autonomy. In the state-centric age, national security was even synonymous with security. Michael Sheehan writes, “Security was seen as being related to the need for states to maintain their political independence and freedom of national decision making” (Sheehan 2005, 6). The theoretic base for the age was the hegemony of political realism. For Sheehan (ibid.,11) the “[r]ealist shares the political perspective that the central purpose of the state is to protect the citizens against internal or external danger”. The need to confirm and ensure state survival is seen as overriding all other policy considerations. Realism sees the world as anarchical and as dominated by a struggle for state power. The security system is constructed by the military capabilities and is directed against the capabilities of other states in the system. The world view of realism is based on a rigid distinction between inside and outside. Outside, the environment beyond the state’s boundaries is marked by a variety of dangers. Inside the state, the government provides the necessary degree of security, and is the sole legitimate wielder of the force. The power structure inside the state is hierarchical: the state is the political power centre, and this power depends on the political, physical, educational and military skills and capabilities of the political leaders. (See Sheehan 2005, Walker 1993; Waltz 1979.)

In the state anarchy, states are the final guarantee of security and the legitimate users of power. This position was evident in the age of the Cold War. The most dominant security discourse was military competition between superpowers. In the realist discourse, only superpowers have the real sovereignty. A state’s survival was dependent on its skills in developing military capabilities and making alliances. The main duty of a state’s foreign policies was to organise their alliance relations with the superpowers. In Finland, this was the case during President Urho Kekkonen’s time in office. The international structure of the Cold War disempowered non-superpower states. In particular, the anarchy of the state-centric system disempowered the people and cultures that did not have the state of their own. The Sámi Cultures in the European North were good examples of this. In the state-centric system, the destiny of a culture without a state was often to be merged into the national culture of another state.

In the anarchy of the state-centric system, the most frightening security risks were the enemies with military capabilities on the other side of the border. In the European North, the Iron Curtain barred contact between people in the Soviet Union and the Nordic countries. One reason for this was that the Soviet Union was worried that people crossing the border would never come back. The Cold War was a problem on the Western and Northern borders of Finland also. Sweden and Norway understood that Finland had a special military contract with the Soviet Union (the Agreement of Friendship, Co-

operation, and Mutual Assistance). From the Western and Swedish point of view, the contract meant that Finland had a political – and even military – alliance with the Soviet Union. After all, strict control of the borders was a part of the border administration policy of the Northern states. In general, the European North was a militarily important area for the Superpowers. The border between Norway and the Soviet Union also doubled as the border between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The role of the states in this state anarchy was to guarantee the security and the safety of the people inside the states and to define the real security risks for them.

During the Cold War, the political conflicts came from outside areas, and these conflicts did not have factual meaning in the daily lives of people in the North, except they created legitimate psychological barriers to co-operation in the area. The right-wing “pro-west” and left-wing “pro-east” political parties did not reflect the living conditions in the North. At least partly because of the Cold War, politics determined the state-centric system, it was difficult to see the common good for people in the North. The increased market value produced in the industrial process of northern natural resources did not stay in the area. There were also economical problems in the relationship between the northern periphery and the state’s centre. The cultivation of forests, hydro-electric power, and minerals in the North has spurred a more general economic growth of the states and has benefited the owners of the companies operating in the area. Because of the structural constraints as described, daily contact with people across

borders was more an exception than a rule in the border regions in the North.

Structural constraints create an inability for common people to improve the conditions of their daily lives through social, political, economical and psychological channels. Each form of power is based on the certain resources that can be accessed only by collective acts. John Friedman (1992, 66–69) defined several bases of social power. Knowledge and skills refer to both the level of educational and the mastery of specific skills by members of the population. Safety and empowerment require the appropriate information in order to affect a household’s production, available public services, a change in political configurations, and opportunities for wage-paying work. Social networks are also essential for self-reliant actions based on reciprocity. People with extensive horizontal networks among family, friends, and neighbours have a larger space of maneuver than people without them. Their instruments of work and livelihood are the tools of household production: vigorous and healthy bodies (physical strength), and access to work and production. Financial resources include the net monetary income of households as well as formal and informal credit arrangement. In Lapland and other parts of the European North, there have been constraints against using the social, political, economical and psychological power of the people. The state borders, scarcity of people and unfavourable economical relations with the centre are among these constraints. The people living in the northern periphery have not been an actor or even a subject in the International System, and there have not been many possibilities to drink from the

“fountain of power” of political realism in the European North.

Towards the democratic peace in the North

In the article I appraise the validity of a young student of politic Gav Nugent’s interesting explanation concerning Immanuel Kant’s democratic peace theory (Nugent 2011). My aim is just try to connect the people’s level in the theory. Nugent’s summary concerning Kant’s theory is, “Liberal democracies, in general, do not go to war with other liberal democracies” (ibid). In his theory Immanuel Kant argues that democratic states are peaceful because there are many bureaucratic constraints for war. Constraint is also that enterprises, children and citizens mostly do not like to go war. Only the military complex – some politicians, army and companies producing weapons and guns – prefer war as a tool for state politics. The problem for the military complex is the political power in democracy. They do not have enough power to guide a state to war because politics in liberal democracies are guided by the people’s majority.

In the article “Democratic Peace Theory – Why Liberal Democracies Don’t Go to War with Each Other”, Nugent compares the “interpretative power” of dyadic and monadic explanations as a version of democratic peace theory. The monadic explanation sees the democratic State’s internal constraints for war. These kinds of constraints are the media, public opinion and private companies. Nugent sees some points in the monadic explanation, “in liberal democracies, decisions on whether

to go to war or not attract mass media and public scrutiny” (Nugent 2011). If the people in the state are all the time informed about the question of war and peace, war is a very complicated question for the politicians. Even if politicians have tools to guide the public opinion, they have to consider the feelings and opinions of the citizens. In liberal democratic states there are also democratic-bureaucratic constraints of war. Nugent wrote that “to be elected, candidates require support from the general public, who tend to vote on fairly ‘safe’ candidates. Then (in parliamentary systems, at least) candidates need to garner support from within the party to obtain a place in the executive” (ibid.). Pro-war opinions are rarely popular enough in the campaign whose aim is to maximize the number of votes for a party or candidate.

The dyadic explanations consider also the political system of other states in the International System. It understands that a liberal democratic state could not be peaceful alone. The internal constraints of the state for war are not enough. The dyadic explanations relate the State’s internal constraints to the inter-state political system in the world. In this system the relations between the democratic states are also constraint for war. In the system of liberal states, “[t]he security in knowing that the other won’t, or can’t suddenly declare war, eases tensions between the two states in itself” (Nugent 2011). Also trade between the states has been war constraint in the system of liberal democratic states. Nugent considers that “[g]oing to war against a trade partner would be hugely detrimental to the economy, and the private sector of the economy would nearly always lobby

against war” (ibid.). It is quite easy to agree with the monadic and dyadic explanations of Nugent.

My argument in the article is that Nugent’s monadic or dyadic explanations are not enough. For the emancipation we need a triadic explanation for democratic peace. The explanation agrees with Nugent’s monadic and dyadic explanations. My contribution for the theory in the article is the people and the cognitive structure of their mind and their behavior in the liberal democratic state. I am interested in how peace – and the impossibility of war – changes the behavior of ordinary people. Long-lasting peace forces people – also in the military complex – to look after other kinds of tools for power in and between the societies in the world. This process is going on in the European North as in many other places in the world also.

The end of the Cold War was a very strong signal about the structural changes in the international system. Alexander Wendt wrote in his book *Social Theory of International Politics* that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a signal that “a new political culture has emerged in the West within which nonviolence and team play are the norm, in which case there might not be any such return to the past” (Wendt 1999, 297). Wendt calls this peace producing culture “Kantian” because Kant’s perpetual peace is the most well-known treatment of it. In the new structure, the states are more a friends or a team than enemies. Wendt wrote that in the post Cold War structure “states expect each other to observe two simple rules: (1) disputes will be settled without war or the threat of war (the rule of non-violence); and (2) they

will fight as a team if the security of any one is threatened (the rule of mutual aid)” (ibid., 298–299). Team work is necessary for the management of the new kinds of security threats in economical, social and environmental fields. Worth mentioning are the common aims for practically all the states in the world to solve the financial problems after the 2008 finance crisis and the co-operation for managing global climate change.

It is sure that economical, social and cultural ties between the people in different parts of the world are now denser than ever. This is the position also between the European North and other places in the world. The absence of war between the major powers has been a fact since the end of the Cold War. Now it is even possible to speculate whether the Kantian thesis about democratic peace could be practical realism for the democratic states in the world. Anyway, we could surely say that as a part of the structural change in the international system, the agenda of security threats has changed. In the world there are now new kinds of security threats in the world. The global finance crisis is a good example of security risks demanding team work. Also the risks in nuclear power, terrorism in civil society, national and international criminality, oil scarcity and social exclusion are worth mentioning. The core in security thinking is now the safety of the people, not the security of the state. Even the target of military violence is nowadays people and civil society not the state with is political system as was the case in state-centric system.

The changes in the structure of the International System determine politics,

economy, culture and social relations also in the European North. In my triadic explanatory model security threats and emancipation are deeply interrelated. War and the threat of war are the main security threats in the system of undemocratic states. Emancipation is the freeing of people (as individuals and groups) from particular physical and human constraints. War and threat of wars are constraints which have dominated the people's daily lives in the state-centric system together with poverty, inadequate education and political oppression. If Kant's theory concerning democratic peace is valid, democracy means less domination and oppression and more empowerment for the people.

During the Cold War, the undemocratic structure of the International System dominated the life of the people in the European North. Since the collapse of the Iron Curtain, social relations between the people in Russia and the Nordic Countries have been possible. European integration has deeply connected the people in the North to the economy and politics in mainland Europe. New information and communication technology has brought new possibilities to the North. The roles of the borders are changing, and the people in Northern Finland and Northern Sweden can co-operate more informally than before. Since the end of the Cold War, the political dimensions in the North have changed. The confrontation between socialism and capitalism does not determine the relations between the people in the North. My argument here is that these kinds of changes are signals of the more democratic political structure in the European North. The triadic explanation model concerning

Kant's democratic peace theory shifts the perspective from the political structures to the level of the people.

The Empowering North?

For John Friedman (1992, 33) the empowerment of people – in furthering their pursuit of life and livelihood – is spread out between three kinds of power: social, political, and psychological. Social power is concerned with access to certain “foundations”, such as information, knowledge and skills, participation in social organisations, and financial resources. When a household economy increases its access to these foundations, its ability to set and attain objectives also increases. An increase in social power may therefore also be understood as an increase in a household's access to the foundations of its productive wealth. Political power concerns the access of individual households members to the process by which decisions, particularly those that affect their own future, are made. Political power is thus not the only the power to vote; it is the power of voice and of collective action. Individual voice rises not only in local assembly but also, and at times more effectively, when it merges with the many voices of larger political associations – a party, a social movement, or an interest group such as a labour or peasant syndicate. Psychological power, finally, is best described as an individual sense of potency. Where present, it is demonstrated in self-confident behaviour. Psychological empowerment is often a result of successful action in the social or political domain. An increased sense of personal potency

will have recursive, positive effects on a household's continuing struggle to increase its effective social and political power. (See Friedman 1992, 31–34.)

Empowerment of the people means possibilities for alternatives when compared to the development of exclusion and disempowerment. Empowerment and alternative development must be seen as a process that seeks the empowerment of households and their individual members through their involvement in socially and politically relevant actions. Since the end of the Cold War, it has been possible to find several socially and politically relevant actions for the empowerment of households and people in Lapland. Border crossing is now part of daily life for people in Lapland, and new information technology gives wholly new possibilities for discussion and contact from Lapland with all other places in the world. Also, the role of education is changing. It seems that education now focuses more on practical skills and non-formal learning, which is also useful for the economical and social "living world" in Lapland and in the other parts of the North. Lapland is now connected to the global economy, which, for Lappish Companies, means more competition from abroad but also larger markets for their products.

Because of the structural change in the International System, it has been much easier to cross the borders in The European North. The end of the Cold War opened the door for EU-memberships for the Nordic Countries. Until 1995, Sweden and Finland had been full members in this "post-state-border Union". Because of the collapse of the Iron Curtain, increasing tourism

from Russia – as part of rapidly growing international tourism – has been a reality in the Nordic Countries since 1991. Unofficial border crossing has been a reality on the border between Finland and Sweden since 1995, and the new political structures have enabled co-operation between Tornio and Haparanda. Now they even have a plan for a common city centre on the border of two states (Finland and Sweden). After Finland and Sweden's EU-membership, the villages either side of the border have started much non-formal co-operation on the frontier. The problem has been that the demography for future development in the border area – except in Tornio-Haparanda – has been unfavorable. The younger generations have moved from the villages to the cities mainly for education and work. Just now it seems that the Northern Resource Mining Company will open three new mines in Kolari and Pajala (Meänmaa), and it seems that these new mines will encourage more border crossing co-operation in the area, also on the level of civil society. Because of the mines' rapid economic growth, there will be many new households in the area in the future. (See Koivumaa 2008, 194–199.)

The new information and communication technology was one of the reasons for the post-Cold War structural changes in the International System. In Manuel Castells's opinion (2000, 5–67), the fundamental flaw of the centrally-planned economy was its inability to accommodate the processes of rapid technological innovation. The centrally-planned, state-centric economy was not flexible enough for the challenges in an information technology-oriented network society. The people in the Soviet

Union understood the inconsistencies between formal state politics and informal 'real life' in the country. After five years of Gorbatshev's Glasnost and Perestroika policies – and a failed coup of Janajev's Junta – people were ready for real revolution in the country. The post-Cold War structural changes and rapidly developing information technology have stressed the role of networks in international politics year by year, and the role of information technology in political change is still growing. Since the early 2000s, new social media networks (Facebook, Skype) have connected the lives of people everywhere around the globe. Social media have had an important role in the political revolutions that have been underway in the Arab Countries since 2010. At first glance, it seems that information technology with social media would be extremely important for the people living far away from the centre. This is surely the case in the European North. The people and societies in Lapland, and indeed in other parts of the North, should effectively utilise the possibilities that information technology gives them.

The amount of people in Lapland is small but the global markets are huge. The President of Finland in the 1980s and 1990s, Mauno Koivisto, once wrote that it should be possible for Finnish companies to be successful in the global markets because in Finland we have only five million people producing products for the market of five billion people. We will find market niches somewhere if our products and society are competitive enough. It may be possible to apply Koivisto's ideas about economy and companies in Lapland.

There should be even better possibilities in Lapland because in Lapland there are now 180 000 inhabitants, and the global markets contain almost seven billion individuals. Of course, the growing global economy is the reason for the new mines in the European North. In Lapland, many companies have noted the significance of global tourism for their businesses. These are, at the very least, weak signals about the growing number of possibilities that the global markets create for the people in Lapland.

Conclusion

Exclusion from development has been a problem for the North and Lapland. This article described what this exclusion and disempowerment mean for the people in the North. Empowerment creates an alternative form of development for the people, and it is this empowerment that paves the way from exclusion to full inclusion in the global modernisation process. People are the actors in the empowerment process: they should understand what possibilities they have to change their own lives socially, economically and politically. Kant's democratic peace theory gives us the tools to understand how peace and democracy are related within the International System of states, and there is some evidence for the theory in reality. In modern history, democratic states have not fought against other democratic states, and in the International System there are internal and external constraints against wars between democracies. Of course, nuclear weapons are very strong constraints against wars, at least between nuclear powers. In my

triadic explanation model of democratic security, peace and democracy also mean new tools for people's empowerment in the International System.

In this article, standing beside the triadic model is the key for empowerment: security. Before the end of the Cold War, the main universal security risk was of war between states, and especially between superpowers. The threats also gave legitimate power to the powers: the state has the full rights to define security risks in the hierarchical political structures in the state. Because of anarchy in the International System, the state has all the rights to defend its geographical area and independence against threats from outside its borders. These positions mean disempowerment for the people and groups who do not strengthen the power and security of the states. Sheehan (2005, 165) writes that one can even see security and emancipation as "two sides of the same coin". This is because war and also the threat of war, which are treated as the main concerns under traditional approaches, are only two of many constraints that stop individuals from carrying out what they would freely choose to do.

Because of the structural changes in the system, we should evaluate security and power differently from how the state-centric system operates. We should define the economical problems of the state, companies and people as security threats. Climate change, pollution and the problems in nuclear power are more challenging security risks than the military threats of the other states. From the empowering point of view, the most interesting security risks are probably the social problems. If we want to

strengthen social security, we have to ensure that all people feel included in the society, and societies at all levels. The problem for the people is to find and organise the acts that give them more economical, social, political and psychological power in their own life. Thus empowerment produces more security, as the more economic, social and psychological self-confidence you have, the safer and more secure you feel.

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