

# *Central Europe as a regional security (sub)complex in the interwar period*

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**Abstract.** This article proposes the use of a tool for analyzing the evolution of the balance of power in interwar Central Europe, taking over the theory of the regional security complex formulated by the Copenhagen School.

This study starts from the premise that in from 1921 to 1938, it can be affirmed that the ephemeral existence of a central European security complex was distinct from the classical security complex of Europe.

Next, the analysis criteria specific to the regional security complex and the diplomatic developments that created the Central European security complex are presented.

**Keywords:** Central Europe, the interwar balance of powers, Regional Security Complex, regional alliances, Locarno Agreements

**Rezumat.** Acest articol propune utilizarea unui instrument de analiză a evoluției echilibrului de putere în Europa Centrală interbelică, preluând teoria complexului regional de securitate formulată de Școala de la Copenhaga. Acest studiu pleacă de la premisa că în perioada 1921-1938 se poate afirma existența efemeră a unui complex de securitate central european distinct de complexul clasic de securitate al Europei. În continuare, sunt prezentate criteriile de analiză specifice complexului regional de securitate și evoluțiile diplomatice care au creionat complexul Central European de securitate.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Europa Centrală echilibrul interbelic de putere, complex regional de securitate, alianțe regionale, Acordurile de la Locarno

## Introduction

Central Europe sparked a myriad of debates on ideas and projects after the First World War. For several decades, this region had been an example of the manifestation of the balance of power in the international system. The disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the withdrawal of the Russian and Ottoman Empires from this area created a vacuum that worried Western European leaders. One can see a growing literature on the issue of Central Europe.

An aspect that remains debatable from the perspective of geopolitical analysis refers to the actors that make up Central Europe. In recent work, Otilia Dhand stated that “Central Europe is not a place. It is an idea. But an idea of what?”<sup>1</sup>. The boundaries of this region were often arbitrarily delimited and are often contested by the very actors who are included within them. Starting from this conceptual confusion, it isn't easy to establish a methodology for analysing the region's security. The analyses that study the interwar decades of the first part of the 20th century are even more confusing.

This article aims to introduce a new methodological analysis perspective from security studies into this debate. Much more precisely, this paper will use the Regional Security Complex Theory to observe to what extent we can consider Central Europe as a distinctly regional security complex.

## Literature Review

Historiography on Central Europe in the interwar period was continuously developed based on the research of diplomatic archives and the presentation of various perspectives of analysis and interpretation. In general, these studies were focused on one of the following aspects:

- Combating the defeated states' revisionism towards the treaty system concluded after the First World War.
- Collective security and projects to maintain the post-war territorial status quo.
- Regional alliances (such as the Little Entente and the Balkan Pact).

In 1981, the Polish historian Piotr Wandycz, from Yale University, published a rather extensive study about the Little Entente<sup>2</sup>. His critical analysis of the historiography of this subject opened up the opportunity for a broader debate on how to analyse the impact of the Little Entente on

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<sup>1</sup> Otilia Dhand. *The Idea of Central Europe: Geopolitics, Culture and Regional Identity*, I. B. Tauris & Company, 2018, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Piotr Wandycz, “The Little Entente: Sixty Years Later”. *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 59, no. 4: 548-564, 1981.

the balance of power in Europe. The Little Entente is perceived as a cause of the failure of French diplomacy in interwar Central Europe.

Instead, Dragan Bakić<sup>3</sup> analyses “the British brokering of Central Europe and Balkan Locarno”, which represents an extension of the analysis in the South-Eastern part of the continent, where the Balkan Pact manifested itself. The context of the analysis was created by the Locarno Agreements (October 1925), which caused a solid diplomatic awareness for the Central European states that the balance of power must be thought of first at the regional level, and then at the European level.

The Western powers were concerned with achieving stability in Central Europe, and, in their view, this goal was only possible through a central European agreement. Therefore, British and French diplomacy was concerned that states such as Hungary, Austria, and Poland would not be bypassed in the process of achieving various regional alliances<sup>4</sup>.

Even though the French presence in the region was predominantly diplomatic, it prevented the penetration of other powers that would have liked to run regional projects, such as that of Benito Mussolini on the Danubian-Balkan Pact.

However, the perspective of a new analysis of Central Europe through the lens of the Theory of the Regional Security Complex, developed by the Copenhagen School, stems from the need to delimit, at least methodologically and theoretically, the security developments on the continent after the signing of the Locarno Agreements. What is specific to this theory refers to the object of analysis “the region” as an essential piece of geopolitics and security.

However, this paper uses RSCT based on some of the statements that Buzan and Waever made about the Balkans. In the opinion of the two authors, the period 1700-1945 coincides with the existence of a single European security complex torn in two in the Cold War.

It might be considered whether the Balkans should be defined as a subcomplex within the European RSC or as a case of overlay. The interpretation of overlay would stress that the area's (then not a subregion, but a region external to Europe) internal dynamics are

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<sup>3</sup> Dragan Bakić. 'Must Will Peace': The British Brokering of 'Central European' and 'Balkan Locarno', 1925-9. *Journal of Contemporary History*. SAGE, Vol. 48, No 1, January 2013, pp. 24-56.

<sup>4</sup> See Dragan Bakić, *op. cit.*; Bakić, Dragan. *Britain and Interwar Danubian Europe: Foreign Policy and Security Challenges, 1919-1936*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018. Piotr Wandycz, *op. cit.*; Piotr Wandycz, *Polish diplomacy: 1914-1945 ; aims and achievements ; a lecture in English and Polish*. Together with a bibliographical essay on works dealing with recent Polish diplomatic history. London: Orbis, 1988; Cienciala, Anna M., and Titus Komarnicki. *From Versailles to Locarno: Keys to Polish Foreign Policy, 1919-25*. Lawrence, Kan: University Press of Kansas, 1984

repressed by external powers—the Balkans is forced into peace against its will. If overlay was removed, the subregion would return to war. That is undoubtedly true at the moment. On the other hand, the Balkans seems to be on a track that will eventually transform it into an integral part of Europe— not a part without problems but with the more 'normal' East Central European problems. Therefore, the Balkans' medium-term position is a subcomplex, not overlaid. Long-term, it might merge into Europe without 'sub.'<sup>5</sup>

This article hypothesizes that between 1921-1938 Central Europe had many characteristics of a distinct security complex. What Buzan and Waever call the Balkan security sub-complex should be given a more general name considering the actors involved. The period 1921-1938 must be seen separately from what was before 1919 and after 1945. Interwar Central Europe does not have the characteristics of post-Cold War Central Europe. **The network of interactions knotted during the almost two interwar decades was more extensive than the one depicted by Buzan and Waever. At the same time, the securitization objectives in this area were distinct from those of the rest of the continent.**

On the other hand, unlike the interpretation assumed by Buzan and Waever, this article also takes into account Rothschild's representation of what Central and Eastern Europe means: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania and the Baltic states<sup>6</sup>. Rothschild's geopolitical representation is the closest expression of the interwar interdependencies in Central Europe. However, from the perspective of the analysis of the security complex, this paper will also integrate Germany, Austria and Russia. It is not about a geographical inclusion of Russia in Central Europe, but about the consideration of Russian interests in this area.

Historiographically speaking, the concept of Central Europe includes distinct meanings. In 1903, Joseph Partsch presented a Central Europe with Germany as its core: this region “consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly, belongs to the sphere of German civilization”<sup>7</sup>. This perspective was contradicted at the Paris Conference (1919). However, Mackinder presented the hypothesis of the creation of

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<sup>5</sup> Buzan, Barry and Ole Wæver. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 378.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the two world wars*, University of Washington Press, 1992, p. 2

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Partsch, *Central Europe*, London: Heinemann, 1903, p. 142.

the Middle Tier in Central Europe, having as its object of reference the scenario of a possible German-Russian alliance<sup>8</sup>.

Emmanuel de Martonne gave another perspective of what Central Europe meant in the interwar period in 1931. According to him, Central Europe included: Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Switzerland. De Martonne took into account the variables of human and physical geography to delineate this region, but he ignored the social, cultural, and economic variables that create a regional complex<sup>9</sup>.

More recently, the work of the Hungarian historian Ádám Magda has defined Central Europe by including several states: Germany, Italy, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia<sup>10</sup>. What this work highlights is precisely a regional security complex in which the elements of the securitization mechanism represented by the Little Entente are observed. Referring to Georges Clemenceau, the author pointed out that "From the start, the French Prime Minister integrated the settlement of the situation in Central Europe into the interplay of international interest networks and treated it with an approach that favoured France's security policy."<sup>11</sup> Ádám sees the rationale for this security policy in that, through the Bolshevik revolution, France lost a traditional ally that was Tsarist Russia. As Hungary could not be a credible actor because of its German orientation, French diplomacy turned to Czechoslovakia and Romania<sup>12</sup>.

Interwar Central Europe's analysis must be freed from geographical determinism<sup>13</sup> and approached through cultural and geopolitical conjunction. If we look at the cultural dimension, we can see the German influences extending beyond the Balkans. Considering the geopolitical dimension, we see the confrontation of German, Russian and Italian interests with British and French interference.

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<sup>8</sup> Harold J. Mackinder, *Democratic ideals and reality. A study in the politics of reconstruction*, New York: Henry Hold and Company, 1919.

<sup>9</sup> Emm. De Martonne, *Europe Centrale, Première partie: généralités et l'Allemagne*. In P. Vidal de la Blanche et L. Gallois (ed. by), *Géographie universelle*, Tome IVe, Paris, Librairie Armand Colin, 1930. Emm. De Martonne, *Europe Centrale, Deuxième partie: Suisse – Autriche – Hongrie Tchecoslovaquie – Pologne – Roumanie*. In P. Vidal de la Blanche et L. Gallois (ed. by), *Géographie universelle*, Tome IVe, Paris, Librairie Armand Colin, 1931

<sup>10</sup> Ádám, Magda. *The Versailles System and Central Europe*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p.49.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p.50.

<sup>13</sup> See Anita Sengupta *Heartlands of Eurasia: The Geopolitics of Political Space*. Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2009.

The approach that the great powers had after 1919 regarding Central Europe emanated from their fear of leaving this area under German domination as a sphere of influence. What these great powers lacked was a common strategy. Their involvement was built on selfish calculation and mutual jealousy between the British and the French. On the other hand, their geostrategic impotence also stemmed from an incomplete Covenant on which a League of Nations was built that lacked the dimension of international sanctions<sup>14</sup>.

The concept of the *security complex* was pencilled by Barry Buzan<sup>15</sup> and was then taken up, developed and updated together with other colleagues such as Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde<sup>16</sup>. Perhaps one of the most comprehensive approaches to RSCT is that of 2003 when Buzan and Waever analyse “Regions and powers” as structuring of international security. RSC theory is part of the conceptual triangle of the Copenhagen School, along with *securitization* and *security sectors*. Other authors have also used this analysis matrix to study different regions<sup>17</sup>. Some other authors have added to the RSCT other variables such as institutions, identity, and interests to respond more effectively to the dynamics of international security<sup>18</sup>. Naturally, critical perspectives on this theory, seen by some as being limiting<sup>19</sup> or as addressing certain variables too briefly<sup>20</sup>, have also been elaborated in the literature

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<sup>14</sup> David Mitrany, *The Problem of International Sanctions*. London: H. Milford, 1925.

<sup>15</sup> The author initially defined security complex “as a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another.” Barry Buzan, *People, States, and Fear*. Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1983, p. 106.

<sup>16</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde, *Security. A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner, 1998.

<sup>17</sup> See for example: Zenel Garcia, Power Cycles and Security Complexes: Evolution of the East Asian Supercomplex, In *Asian Politics & Policy*, 2017, Vol. 8(4), pp. 538-558. Barney Walsh, Revisiting Regional Security Complex Theory in Africa: Museveni’s Uganda and Regional Security in East Africa. In *African Security*, 2020, Vol. 33(4), pp. 300-324.

<sup>18</sup> Richard J. Kilroy, Abelardo Rodriguez, and Todd Hataley. “Security Inequalities in North America: Reassessing Regional Security Complex Theory”. *Journal of Strategic Security*. 10, no. 4, 2017, p. 1-28.

<sup>19</sup> Lemke, D., Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security. *Perspectives on Politics*, 2005, vol. 3(1), pp. 197-198.

<sup>20</sup> See Petr Zelinka, Kritika teorie bezpečnostního komplexu z hlediska přístupu síťových aktérů [A Critical Examination of the Theory of Security Complex from the Network Approach Perspective]. In MEZINÁRODNÍ VZTAHY 4/2008, pp. 52-74, who calls into question the usefulness of the RSCT for the analysis of the involvement of non-state actors in the formulation of the security environment.



This article uses the RSCT as a tool, rather than a framework of analysis, to provide a new perspective on the debate on interactions between state actors in interwar Central Europe.

### **The regional security complex and sub-complex**

The basic principle of RSC theory states that “a constellation is produced from the bottom up, connecting actor to actor. But, as in the case of the analysis of RSC Balkans<sup>21</sup>, powers outside the region forced the Balkans into the European security complex created at Versailles in 1919-20. The treaty system of 1919-20 linked Central Europe and the Balkans to RSC Europe. Nevertheless, this study starts from the premise that Locarno laid the seeds for the fusion of two regional security (sub)complexes.

1. Barry Buzan and Ole Waever define the security “subcomplex” as it takes over one of the theoretical characteristics of the complex: “security interdependence is relatively more intense inside it than across its boundaries<sup>22</sup>. In other words, the security interaction is inward-oriented.

What we can include in the Balkan security (sub)complex are Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, and Hungary. The foundation of this regional (sub)complex was laid by the Peace of Bucharest (1913), and its sharpening came after Locarno. At the same time, it can be emphasized that there is a balance of power between Bulgaria (supported by Germany) and the rest of the states.

According to Buzan and Waever, “the first decades of the twentieth century are of special interest because in this period the Balkans looks most like a separate RSC, equipped with its own ‘Balkan’ wars’ [...] The interwar years exhibited much the same semi-independence as the post-Cold War period. A local balance-of-power system was in operation, but in the interwar period, this connected to broader European dynamics.”<sup>23</sup>

This argument is not solid because “the wider European dynamics” did not amount to fundamental security interdependence. The securitization projection that the Locarno Accords created had as its object of reference only the western borders of Germany, and the eastern part remained unsecuritized. The bilateral agreements subsequently concluded by France with Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia did not

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<sup>21</sup> Buzan and Waever, *op. cit.* pp. 377-396.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 378.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 381.

constitute an accurate and valid system of security guarantees. For example, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Poland concluded their agreements that did not originate from common principles that could have been established through the previous bilateral treaties.

As far as the Balkans is concerned, the infiltration of the great Western powers did not necessarily provide the premises for integrating the Balkan states into "wider European dynamics."

As for the Balkans, Buzan and Waever reveal two "conflict constellations"<sup>24</sup>: one of Serbs, Croats and Bosnians and another around Macedonia. In this sub-complex, both authors consider that Romania, Hungary, and Turkey are "more or less involved at different points of time".

2. Here the second characteristic of the subcomplex is discussed: anarchy or even the absence of a hierarchy. However, the authors fail to establish *polarity* and *amity/enmity* patterns *accurately*. The weak link in the argumentation of Buzan and Waever is their attempt to establish a similarity between two historical stages for the same region. However, what that study tries to bring up is that interwar developments must be analysed and interpreted independently of post-Cold War evolution.

Relative to the Security constellation, this is a concept developed by Barry Buzan and his colleagues<sup>25</sup>. In the definition itself, assumed by the authors, the security constellation represents "the whole pattern formed by the interplay of the four levels: domestic, regional, interregional, global."<sup>26</sup>

The four levels must be interrelated:

(a) The domestic level of analysis shall focus on the particular vulnerabilities of states in the region. Here we can include the labels previously created by Barry Buzan of "weak states" and "strong states"<sup>27</sup>. The characteristics of these actors will be those that will highlight the security fears, threats, and vulnerabilities of a state.

(b) The regional level refers to the relations between the states in the region.

(c) The next level of analysis concerns how the region interacts with the other neighbouring regions. This analysis is relevant as long as

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 382.

<sup>25</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde, *op. cit.*, p. 210-212.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 491

<sup>27</sup> Barry Buzan, *People, states and fear: an agenda for international security in the post-Cold War era*, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p. 100. The distinction that Buzan makes is between "strong states" whose threats are from outside, and "weak states" that are threatened from inside.



the complex does not include global powers, and the neighbouring complex has a global power with a unidirectional interest in the analysed complex.

(d) The last level of analysis focuses on the role of global powers in the region.

According to Buzan and Waever, "all four levels of a security constellation are simultaneously in play"<sup>28</sup>. It is therefore not particularly relevant which level is dominant. Buzan and Waever state that "subcomplexes are not necessary features of RSCs, but they are not uncommon either, especially where the number of states in an RSC is relatively large."<sup>29</sup>

An additional feature of RSCs would be that they are "durable structures with an important geographical component";<sup>30</sup> as such, an RSC has "both internal structures and external boundaries that can be used to monitor continuity and change and to distinguish significant change from less important events."<sup>31</sup> To be more specific, the authors point out that four variables are embedded in the "essential structure" of an RSC:

- (a) boundary – that differentiates from other RSC.
- (b) anarchic structure – the existence of several autonomous units.
- (c) polarity – the existence of a distribution of power between units.
- (d) social construction – the existence of a pattern of amity and enmity between units.

Now it remains to be decided whether, following the Locarno Agreements, Central Europe and South-Eastern Europe can be considered as (a) two regional security complexes; (b) two regional security subcomplexes, (c) a single regional security subcomplex, or (d) two fully integrated parts into the European Security Complex.

The historical evolution of Central and South-Eastern Europe, combined with the discursive perceptions of actors outside the region, is empirical proof of the first variable: *boundary*. What connected them was the question of the *status quo* created by the Versailles arrangement. The diplomatic interactions between them had precisely this purpose. Maybe this is why the Little Entente and the Balkan Pact were created.

On the other hand, for each of the constellations, the elements of the *anarchic structure* can be identified: the autonomy of these actors being the reason for their interactions. The fear of returning to a pre-war status

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<sup>28</sup> Buzan and Waever, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 53.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*

quo justified the resistance to the federal and union projects suggested by some of the great powers.

The Central European states wanted to preserve their sovereignty.

Regarding the third variable in the definition of an RSC, *polarity* remains the controversial aspect of this argument.

The concept was taken from the neorealists. The seeds of distribution of power between the units of these constellations can be found, but two factors limit the duration of their manifestation:

1. Some actors became autonomous in distinct stages: Poland (1918), Bulgaria (1908), Czechoslovakia (1918), Yugoslavia (1918), Romania (1878), and Greece (1832).
2. 1945 is the time of the dissolution of these constellations and their absorption by the USSR.

Proceeding with the description of a subcomplex, “social construction” represents the hard core of the argument. It is precisely the patterns of amity and enmity that recommend defining them at least as regional security sub-complexes.

All the competition between the actors involved in RSC Central Europe can be explained through the prism of *amity v. enmity*.

An important aspect to consider is the size of the historical frame. RSC theory can be transposed into historical analysis, keeping only the framework of interpretation provided by the military and political sectors.

The dynamics of an RSC can reveal three possible developments:

1. Maintaining the status quo, which translates into the absence of dynamism.
2. Internal transformation – changes within the boundary, meaning changes in the anarchic structure, polarity, or amity/enmity pattern.
3. External transformation – changing the boundary by changing the membership of an RSC.

Regarding the types of security complexes, Buzan and Waever consider the axis of polarity comprising the variations “conflict formation”, “security regime,” and “security community”<sup>32</sup>. The same polarity issue leads the two authors to distinguish between standard RSC and centered RSC.

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 53-61.

**The characteristics of a standard RSC are its Westphalian aspect, a security agenda dominated by military and political issues, anarchic structure, and a polarity defined by regional powers (unipolar towards multipolar).**

Regarding a centered RSC, three possible forms can be outlined:

1. Type I – Unipolar RSC that has great power at its center (such as Russia at the core of the Commonwealth of Independent States)
2. Type II – Unipolar RSC has great power at its core (such as the United States in North America).
3. Type III – A region integrated by institutions (as in the case of the European Union).

### **RSC as a perspective for the analysis of interwar Central Europe**

Contrary to what Buzan and Waever claimed, the period 1919-1939 cannot be analysed as a continuation of the period 1700-1914. The interwar decades were a break in the historical evolution of the international system. From the point of view of the history of the international system, this was a stage of experimentation with a new type of interaction between states. Little of the pre-1914 and post-1945 characteristics are to be found in the two decades.

The concept most often used in European interwar political discourse was “collective security” which can be circumscribed to an integrated European security complex. Hence the hypothesis of the two security (sub)complexes that had an ephemeral existence:

- (a) RSC – Western Europe
- (b) RSC – Central Europe.

The signing of the Locarno Agreements (1925) is a fascinating utterance of selfish diplomacy. This event can be considered a milestone in defining the European security complex. Central and South-Eastern European states have noticed this nuance.

Therefore, drawing the boundary of the two (sub)complexes in the vicinity of RSC-Europa becomes relatively simpler. First, Austria and Hungary are not in the RSC defined by Locarno. The two states were perceived as direct threats to the status quo of Central and South-Eastern Europe. At the same time, Soviet Russia remained more of a threat to Central Europe and Baltic Europe and less to Southeastern Europe.

Second, the nomination of other actors within the two complexes is facilitated by two variables: (a) the perception of Germany, Austria, Hungary, Russia, Bulgaria, Italy, and Turkey as threats to the status quo and (b) the systems of alliances created between these actors. The two

variables correspond to the two variables described by RSCT: anarchic structure and polarity.

In the case of Central Europe, we are dealing with a standard RSC of the Westphalian type. There was no great power projecting its power into adjacent regions. The actors of this regional (sub)complex aim to maintain the status quo created by the Peace of Versailles, which the great Western powers cannot maintain in the eastern part of the continent. However, the status quo seems to be able to be maintained through alliances such as the Little Entente and the Balkan Pact.

An essential aspect of the affirmation of a (sub)security complex in Central Europe is revealed by the volatility of the “boundary” variable when referring to the composition of the European security complex. It can be said that the Versailles system tried to create a centralized security complex of type III, that is, a region integrated through institutions. However, treaty diplomacy's chaotic and selfish succession makes it almost impossible to define and delimit the European security complex.

Germany, together with Italy, found the strategic opportunity to increase penetration in the region through economic and political actions<sup>33</sup>. Germany became actively involved in Eastern Europe and can be considered, since the mid-1930s, an insulator, that is, an actor present in two or more neighbouring regional security complexes.

Relative to France, it manifested itself, in most of the two interwar decades, as a great European power interested in maintaining the continental order established by the Versailles-Paris treaties (1919-1920). For this reason, the Quai d'Orsay had initially promoted various formulas of regional blocs to compensate for the disappearance of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and to avoid the transformation of this space into one of competition between the victorious and defeated states.

The moment when Germany began explicitly expressing its economic interest in the eastern part of the continent also represented the blurring of the boundary variable and the return to the light of the European security complex. The Munich Conference (1938) formally ended the two (sub)security complexes. From this moment, the European security complex was reactivated. Practically, the chronology of these security (sub)complexes can be defined as 1921 (1925) - 1938. Its beginning remains debatable because we can consider two triggering moments: 1921 (the establishment of the Little Entente) and 1925 (the signing of the Locarno Agreements).

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<sup>33</sup> Ádám Magda, *op.cit.*, p. xvi.

Born as a Czechoslovak-Yugoslav-Romanian alliance system, the Little Entente was initially defined "...to be a force representing democracy versus reaction"<sup>34</sup>. Even though this alliance was "more apparent than real"<sup>35</sup>, it is the expression of a regional approach to security issues on the European agenda. Observed as a long shadow of Masaryk's First World War project of some United States of Eastern Europe, the Little Entente expresses a regional security concept away from the influence of the great powers.

The establishment of a Balkan Entente did not enjoy the same smooth journey as the Little Entente. As a synthesis, Lukasik believes that the Balkan Arrangement "represented yet another attempt to introduce a measure of security into a region whose reputation for volatility has always been proverbial"<sup>36</sup>. The logic of such an entente originated from the actors' desire to eliminate the weakness of this region and to strengthen it in order to face external threats. The same fears were identified as in the case of the Little Entente: (a) the danger of treaty revision; (b) the danger of dynastic restorations that may bring with them claims for a return to the ante-war status quo.

Having approximately the same sources of threat, the actors of the Little Entente and the Balkan Pact can be considered as part of the same regional security (sub)complex. Of course, quite a few security interactions between Poland and Bulgaria can be identified during this period. However, both belonged to the same (sub)complex because of the security constellation created after Locarno.

### **Final Remarks**

This article aimed to introduce the theory of the regional security complex as a means of developing the historical analysis of interwar Central Europe. Of course, this area can be analysed from the perspective of bilateral or multilateral diplomatic relations or the perspective of the anarchy of the international system and the balance of power. However, the RSCC can be used as a tool to observe in depth the impact that some security agreements had on the evolution of interwar European security.

The perception of Central Europe as possible regional security (sub)complex facilitates the debate about the diplomacy of the 1930s that paved the way to the outbreak of the Second World War. The argumentation

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<sup>34</sup> Piotr Wandycz, *op. cit.*, 1981, p. 553.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>36</sup> Sebastian H. Lukasik, "The Balkan Entente: A Reassessment of an Aspect of Balkan Diplomacy in the Interwar Period", *The Journal of Modern Hellenism*, 1998, vol.15, p. 67.

for developing this method of analysis can be enriched with more profound historiographic interventions that can attest to the relevance of the security relations between the states that were left out of the Locarno Agreements.

This article is a preliminary study of Central Europe using RSCT as an analysis tool. In the conception of this paper, what favoured the ephemeral manifestation of the two regional security (sub)complexes are: the weakening of Germany in European diplomacy in the 1920s, the security fears of post-1919 France, the lack of British involvement in military cooperation, and politics, favouring the economic and societal sector, which were not predominant in the interwar decades for the definition of an RSC, "British brokering", the attempts of British diplomacy to promote, in Central and South-Eastern Europe, a "similar settlement" such as the Agreements of in Locarno, since 1925.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, another essential aspect that deserves to be emphasized is that when referring to Central Europe from the RSCT perspective, it is essential to eliminate geographical determinism and focus on defining the security constellation that helps to delimit the Central European boundary as accurately as possible.

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<sup>37</sup> Dragan Bakić, *op. cit.*, 2013, pp. 24-56.