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European Union security governance: putting the ‘security’ back in

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The central aim of this article is to discuss the question of how we can understand and explain the European Union (EU) as a security actor – in essence, to elaborate on the current literature on security governance in order to provide a more theoretically driven analysis of the EU in security. Our contention is that whilst the current literature on security governance in Europe is conceptually rich, there still remains somewhat of a gap between those that do ‘security governance’ and those that focus on ‘security’ per se. We argue that a synergy or at least a conversation between these two literatures is required in order to enrich further the study of the EU as global–regional security actor.

Keywords: European Union; security governance; securitisation; (in)securitisation; governmentality; security; discourse

‘Security’ is an essentially contested concept in the academic literature and, indeed, in policy practice. ‘Security’ may be thought about as objective threats to specific referent objects; as a series of relationships between states, framed by the existence of international anarchy; as a mode of power relations between different groups; as a socially constructed norm that can empower and repress; as a mode of governmentality by which those in authority control the population; as a positive norm, which if achieved, can emancipate the disempowered. It may be seen as ‘freedom from fear’, and/or as ‘freedom from want’; or more positively, security might be ‘freedom to’ rather than ‘freedom from’. Not for nothing has ‘security’ become seen as essentially contested. And in the realm of policy practice, we have seen ‘security’ used to explain invasions (whether of Iraq into Kuwait, or of America into Iraq), justify peacekeeping, explain the role and purpose of international organisations and to frame development policies towards states emerging from conflict. It has, then, been used as a policy frame by democratic and authoritarian states, by governments and armed non-state actors and, within the state, by development agencies as well as by militaries. That ‘security’ has proliferated into a variety of different fields is part of a new common sense, as Buzan argued in the 1980s, ‘security’ can be seen in a broad perspective, affecting thinking in social, economic, environmental and political spheres, as well as in military ones. And in newer reformulations, Ole Wæver argues that ‘security’ is now an important element in thinking about religion. ‘Security’ is everywhere.

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The literature on the European Union (EU) in ‘security’, and as an actor in contemporary structures of security governance, has developed in the context of the above contested broadening and deepening notion of security. Indeed, work on EU security governance evolved in order to address the critical question of how the EU as a security actor could address the security dilemmas and challenges that it faces in the post-cold war world (Webber *et al.* 2004, Kirchner and Sperling 2007b, Hallenberg *et al.* 2009). However, despite the rich nature of this literature, it is our contention here that there still remains something of a gap between *theoretical* works, which focus on ‘security’ per se, and the *pre-theoretical*, conceptually based analysis of European (EU) security governance. Whilst this article does not seek to analyse in any comprehensive way the many different meanings or theorisations of security, it does aim to construct a theoretical framework, initiating a conversation between theories of security and concepts of European security governance, based on a comparative methodology and an understanding of ‘security’ as discursive in nature, as being performative in character. More specifically, it aims to rebalance the security governance debate with an emphasis and focus on putting the ‘security’ back in.

Our purpose in undertaking this task is threefold: first, we aim to move beyond the notion of security and security logics that are fixed in order to achieve a more nuanced and dynamic explanation and understanding of the EU as a security actor. Second, whilst ‘security’ – or at least some understandings of it, such as ‘securitisation’ and ‘insecuritisation’ theories – have been explored extensively in relation to certain EU issue areas (e.g. immigration) and in the context of integration more broadly (e.g. region-building), it is our intention to suggest a framework that can explore how EU security practices across a broad array of issue areas and through variegated processes and contexts are constructed, contested and operationalised in terms of governance/governmentality, change and outcome. Third, although our focus is on the EU (as a system of security governance), our aim is also to explain and understand its actions (as an agent of security) within broader regional and global discursive security fields. That is, we ask the question not of just how security is constructed internally, but where it plays out – in terms of the processes, institutions and actors with whom and within which the EU interacts. Such a framework offers a way of analysing EU discourse, identity and context, connecting this to the practice of security governance/governmentality through a comparative methodological approach.

In order to articulate such a framework, this article proceeds through three stages. First, a brief review of the literature on European security governance is conducted in order to demonstrate its strengths and weaknesses, and to construct a platform for our own argument on bringing ‘security back in’. Second, we define our theoretical position in the context of security theory and discuss how we might move forward in terms of a research agenda that includes questions about what security is, as well as its governance/governmentality and impact. Finally, we sketch the methodological underpinnings of our approach and provide a way forward in terms of a research agenda for analysing the EU as a security governance actor.

The security governance turn

The current debate in security studies is heavily influenced by the intellectual developments of the late 1980s–90s (see Buzan 1983, Booth 1991, 1997, Lipschutz

1995, Krause and Williams 1996, Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998) when the very concept of security was radically transformed. In the discussions over the concept of security, one of the most debated issues related to the role of the state as both the determinant, and the target, of security threats (Campbell 1998, Mc-Sweeney 1999, Kelstrup and Williams 2000, Kaldor 2007). Military challenges threatening the survival of the state seemed not to constitute the main security risk after the end of the cold war. Instead, other variegated threats were likely to have an impact on security, whilst the state appeared unable to face them alone (Webber *et al.* 2004, pp. 5–6). Moreover, the immediate threats were neither mainly military, nor solvable through pure military means. Many scholars dealt with the various referents of threats. For some, states' functions were the main victims of security risks. For others, it was society that was being endangered. For still others, human beings were considered as the potential referents of transboundary phenomena; whilst some ecologists have sought to prioritise the planet – or the biosphere – as the referent of security. According to these arguments, security was still about 'survival'; what was not safely definable was the target thereof (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998) – although of course the content of 'survival' varied with the referent in question. This broadened both the understanding of security and the potential levels of analysis, which began to include individuals, groups, humanity and even the planet (see also Buzan and Wæver 2009).

However, there was much more behind such arguments than simply focusing on the object and understanding the broadening levels of security: clearing out the rationale beneath these processes was the key theoretical conundrum of these studies. The reflectivist turn in international relations brought attention to subjective and inter-subjective dimensions of security. More and more, particularly in Europe, security was seen as a socially constructed phenomenon, which implied that security could be moulded to mean different things to different groups in different places, and at different times. 'Security is what we make of it', to paraphrase Alexander Wendt. Both the complexities of the security threats, the actors, the instruments and the security practices envisioned for their regulation gradually came to be interpreted as problems of 'governance'. The loose concept of governance seemed to be apt in capturing the idea of a variegated environment characterised by a multiplicity of actors and levels. This was especially the case with the EU given the multifaceted nature of its policy-making milieu. In this context then, security governance scholarship can be thought of as having passed through three waves. Webber *et al.* (2004) began with some important definitional points, and in particular, focused the analysis on security governance in Europe. That is, the concept was considered in part to be European specific, in part a socially constructed product of the societies and structures dominant on the continent. The second wave continued with discussion and debate between the authors (e.g. Krahmman 2003, Webber 2004), and was taken on over the next few years by Emil Kirchner (2005, 2007). The third wave, led now by Hallenberg *et al.* (2009), has taken these issues forward, and asks the important evaluative question, as to the way in which the concept of security governance can be seen to offer significant advances on other means of thinking about the security of Europe.

In Kirchner's words, security governance is an 'intentional system of rule that involves the coordination, management and regulation of issues by multiple and separate authorities, interventions by both public and private actors, formal and

informal arrangements and purposefully directed towards particular policy outcomes' (Kirchner, and Sperling 2007a, p. 3). A 'governance approach' should help understand vertical and horizontal interactions among different actors, serving as an organisational framework (Schroeder 2006, p. 5), analysing how security is produced (Webber *et al.* 2004) and ultimately representing an observable trend (Britz and Ojanen 2009). According to Krahmman, security structures or a coalition's fluidity and flexibility represent a distinctive characteristic of security governance, so that security coordination takes on different shapes (Krahmann 2001, p. 5). Of particular relevance for Kirchner is the working and coordinating mechanisms of security governance within and across issue areas. In this regard, coordination, management and regulation are the three components of governance and also the three tools used to empirically test it. Specifically, coordination concerns the way in which actors interact and who, among them, leads policy-making, implementation and controls the process. Management relates to risk assessment duties, monitoring, negotiations, mediations and resource allocation, whilst regulation is conceived as the policy result: its intended objective, its fostering motivation, its effective impact and the institutional setting created (Kirchner 2007, p. 24).

A significant part of the literature on security governance deals with the EU and its role therein. This is not surprising: Europe's 'post-Westphalian traits' seem to be the ideal-type of governance structure for several concerns, security included. The interdependencies that resulted from the internal economic project and the loss of some sovereign prerogatives related to that objective, suggested that a certain degree of multilateral coordination at more levels and among different actors was necessary to face ongoing risks (Kirchner and Sperling 2007b). Indeed, the idea that global solutions to security problems can better be achieved through the existence and the practices of post-Westphalian states (Kirchner and Sperling 2007a) spurred debates on the exportation of *the* European system of governance. According to this reasoning, this exportation could overcome some of the heterogeneity in the international system and set the basis for institutional and normative regulation of security challenges. However, threats can also be perceived and assessed differently; some actors prefer unilateral strategies rather than multilateral solutions and opt for hard tools to solve security matters. This is so, the argument goes, because some Westphalian states exist in the international context and characterise different systems of security governance from the European one: this ends up overburdening and complicating the achievement of global security (Sperling *et al.* 2003, Hallenberg *et al.* 2009).

Despite this debate on the exportability of the European model, most of the literature on the EU in security governance has focused on two aspects: the internal EU dimension (the institutional aspects of governance) in the 'security' field, with the EU characterised as a multilevel actor; and the security institutions existing in Europe and the idea of a division of labour among different security actors (Webber *et al.* 2004). In this branch of literature, the focus is on how different actors in the EU realm interact among themselves rather than on how security is constructed, sustained and practiced in fields of security discourse: which has important implications for the EU's policy efficacy and identity. On the whole, the body of literature on security governance is rich and highly promising, and indeed, offers a flexible framework for capturing the complexity of the EU's security actions in terms

of instruments, actors and tools. However, its conceptual virtue, among other things, also constitutes one of its main shortcomings.

As already stated, the literature on security governance is problematic in that it focuses predominantly on the dynamics of 'governance', on the multiplicity of actors, tools and instruments rather than the complexity of security and the implications varied meanings of security have for our understanding of the EU as a security actor. As acknowledged by its proponents, security governance 'is a heuristic device for recasting the problem of security management in order to accommodate the different patterns of interstate interaction, the rising number of non-state security actors, the expansion of the security agenda and conflict regulation or resolution' (Kirchner and Sperling 2007b, p. 18). Thus, the security governance approach, although possessing 'the virtue of conceptual accommodation' by this and other admissions, is inherently 'pre-theoretical' in the way that it has been developed (Kirchner and Sperling 2007b, p. 18), and thus it lacks nuance in terms of how the EU constructs its understanding of security and engages in security practice. Our argument, therefore, is that the security governance literature would benefit from incorporating a *theoretical* approach to security: this will provide a more complex understanding of the way in which security comes to be understood and intersubjectively defined, which in turn has implications for the relevant actors involved, governance/governmentality strategies and policy practice.

The second potential shortcoming of the (earlier) security governance literature is its predominantly Eurocentric contextual focus. This is neither surprising nor overly problematic per se, and indeed it is perhaps to be expected given that the aim for so many authors has been to assess the security practices of the EU. However, our argument here is that in order to understand the EU in and as an actor in security governance structures, a more global outlook is required to incorporate other dimensions and influences in the framing of EU security issues and practices, and on how they are constructed, managed and regulated. On this point, a significant step has been taken by Sperling *et al.* (2003), Sperling (2008, 2009), who envisages the possible existence of different systems of security governance characterised by the following features: the regulator, considering the mechanisms adopted to face security problems and resolve conflicts; the normative framework, identifying the role that norms play in determining interests and behaviours; sovereign prerogatives, investigating the degree of hierarchical interactions; the security referent, defining the nature of the state, the interaction between identity and interests and the usefulness of force; and the interaction context, investigating the strength of the security dilemma (Sperling 2009).

In our view, this is a productive way forward which aims at overcoming the strict European focus of current research, whilst simultaneously dealing with the EU's role in different security structures, and adding a comparative perspective to the analysis of EU security governance. In this context, our contribution would not only be in acknowledging that overlapping systems of security governance have implications for the EU, but also in laying down the methodological foundations to investigate how and why the EU can interact within them, and contribute to the sustainability, transformation or dissolution of such arrangements. Moreover, it moves beyond a pre-theoretical, functional aggregation of factors and characteristics of systems of security governance (and states within them) to ask critical questions of how they were constructed in the first place, and how this impacts on the way in which the EU

can speak and do security in different discursive domains. In summary then, whilst there is an acknowledgement in the latest European security governance literature of the security referent, the role of norms and the context of interaction – which is also of interest within our approach – there remains limited discussion on what is meant by security *per se*, or how it can be understood theoretically and explored methodologically in the context of the EU. How then, do we propose to take security governance forward and move it from a pre-theoretical to theoretical framework of analysis?

Putting security back in

To reiterate, our argument is that we must move beyond characterisations and typologies towards a clear theoretical and methodological foundation. There is a need to take the constructivist turn in security studies seriously in order to allow us to move beyond security as an objective phenomenon that is ‘out there’ and can be measured or analysed through a linear or deductive methodology. We argue in this context that a more obvious synergy with the security studies literature will enhance the analytical sophistication of the security governance literature.

This approach needs to be unpacked further in terms of the central theoretical and methodological tenets. As has already been said, our theoretical argument is one that connects with a broad constructivist approach to analysing security – and more specifically, the EU as a security actor in global politics. In this context, understanding security through discourse is placed at the centre of the analysis. Words matter; policy, after all, is developed, understood and communicated through language. By ‘discourse’ we mean to identify how language is implicated in a range of social relations involving power, domination, ideology and cooperation (Fairclough 1993). However, it is not enough simply to declare that discourse is important. We need to be able to understand where and in what ways. Discourses not only help (re)constitute systems of knowledge and beliefs, but in doing so they have the power to frame interpretations and therefore behaviour and practice. This highlights the importance of agents in the construction of institutions, but also in the maintenance and transformation of an institution. As such, and especially in the EU context, institutions cannot be neglected in the analysis, precisely because they are a crucial part of the story in terms of the construction and operationalisation of security. This is of crucial importance because institutions are seen as ‘an intermediate level of social structuring; “upwards” to the social formation, and “downwards” to social actions’ (Fairclough 1995, p. 37). The clear implication of this is that ‘discourses’ come to provide a cognitive filter, frame, conceptual lens or paradigm through which security policy may be ordered and rendered intelligible. Thus, ‘to identify a discourse is to point to the existence of a structured set of ideas, often in the form of implicit and sedimented assumptions, upon which actors might draw in formulating strategy and indeed, in legitimising strategy pursued for quite distinct ends’ (Hay and Rosamond 2002).

In the above context, our task is to identify discursive fields in relation to security as spoken by the EU; to assess internal construction, coherence and contradictions; and to understand how the EU’s discourse in these fields, structures the engagement of the EU in security governance. To elaborate and clarify further, we are acknowledging the EU as both a system of security governance, and as an agent

(among others) in broader European and global fields of security governance. In this latter sense, we are exploring the EU's actorness in terms of its (re)constructed discursive interjections, praxis, and how this impacts on the EU's identity as a security actor. This is with the recognition, of course, that the EU's identity and role as a security actor is not simply constituted by the EU and its member states, but also by the actors with which it interacts in the conduct of security governance.

Our starting point, therefore, is the security studies literature, which is broadly 'critical' in its theoretical orientation, and is concerned with the meaning and practice of security. Most relevant to us in terms of constructing a framework for understanding the EU as a security actor are 'securitisation' and 'insecuritisation' theory, although as will be outlined below, there is also a role for those that theorise change in the context of evolving security logics.

Within the securitisation literature, which is associated with the so-called Copenhagen School, the concept of the speech act has a particular function. Securitisation theory postulates that an issue becomes a security matter not because of objective threat, but rather when a powerful actor can securitise an issue, so that the audience accepts that 'we' must all now apply the logic of security to that issue, for fear that 'our' existence is at stake. If the audience accepts the securitising actors' speech act (known as the securitising move), it allows emergency measures to be brought into effect, measures that go beyond the 'normal' established rules. As the definitive statement puts it, 'A successful securitisation has three components (or steps): existential threats, emergency action, and effects on inter-unit relations by breaking free of rules' (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, p. 26).

Certainly this is an important route into understanding the ways in which speech impacts upon policy (indeed, the way that speech and policy are co-constituted). However, much is revealed not only in the speech of the securitising move, but also in wider speech patterns. That is, it is also in the realm of 'normal' or regular speech that important information can be gleaned by the analyst. Proponents of securitisation theory maintain that security is that which is done with it (a self-referential practice), but those who argue in favour of what might be called insecuritisation theory argue that '... what is done with it [how security is practiced] determines security' (Bigo 2001, p. 99). Insecuritisation theory argues that security practices internal to the nation-state (policing) and those external (military practices) have merged into one 'field of security', and hence there is a new field of security where the traditional internal/external divide no longer exists. The EU is crucial in these developments, as the end of the bipolar struggle has left security agencies in search of a role, and the EU has created a political space in which internal and external security practitioners can interact.¹ For insecuritisation theorists, these developments have allowed for the emergence of new forms of 'governmentality', the interface between 'sovereignty', 'discipline' and 'government' as envisaged by Foucault in the late 1970s (Foucault 1978/1991). Governmentality, as Huysmans asserts, 'is the art of governing a population rather than a territory. It shapes the conduct of freedom for the purpose of a stable, balanced development of population as a whole' (Huysmans 2006, p. 98). Security therefore should not be understood simply as a 'speech act' (as in securitisation theory), but rather as a deliberate 'process of securitisation/insecuritisation of the borders, of the identities and of the conception of orders' (Bigo 2000, p. 173). Thus, the propositions for examination are that the speech act impacts upon security by creating new security issues (through processes of

securitisation) and/or that security policy is about creating insecurities as part of a process of governing a population. Of course, we must also acknowledge that both these theories of security pose problems in themselves, and in particular in terms of analysing the EU as a security actor. This is not an obstacle to applying these to the EU, but in order to do so we must elaborate on such problems and on the way in which we can move forward methodologically.

As already noted, the main assertion of securitisation theory is that security operates as a self-referential practice. Indeed, whilst the arguments put forward by Wæver (1996, 2000) acknowledge that securitisation is not simply reducible to speech acts, but also certain material conditions of possibility, context and the capacity of the securitising actors, security is ultimately a matter of shared agreement and is 'constituted in the inter-subjective realm' (Wæver 2000, p. 252). In turn, securitisation theory makes an assumption that a relationship does exist between those that speak security and the (intersubjective) audience 'under certain enunciative and structural conditions' (Neal 2009, p. 336). The securitisation approach has generated the largest body of secondary literature in security studies, pointing out the many contradictions in the theory as well as problems with its key concepts. One contradiction is that securitisation is at the same time a performative speech act (whereby by simply speaking security, security is being done) as well as an intersubjective process decided between securitising actor and an audience (Balzacq 2005, p. 175). A related concern is the separation between a securitising move and a securitisation proper, a distinction that can simply not be upheld if a securitisation operates like a performative speech act, as then the saying itself (the securitising move) would be the complete securitisation. Yet another shortfall is the ill-definition of key concepts: it is not clear who or what the audience is supposed to be; it is not clear how to detect the securitiser, and neither whether 'desecuritisation' is supposed to have any normative content; neither is it clear what the difference is between securitisation and politicisation (Huysmans 1995); what conditions must be in place for securitisation moves to succeed or fail (Green-Cowles *et al.* 2001); or what forms securitising moves can take (images, silent or non-verbal, see Hansen 2000, Williams 2003).

The point here then, is that these critiques are all relevant in analysing the EU as a security actor, and the EU's security policy through such a lens. Moreover, the nature of the EU means that securitising moves are more difficult to discern than in a national context, and even if they can be identified, 'the relationship between that discourse and the reception, discussion, legitimization and actualization of policy proposals and changes is less clear' (Neal 2009, p. 336). Similarly, the EU communicative context is very different to that of a national context, as are the actors involved in securitisation. Thus, the links between the securitisers and the European public is much more uncertain. Furthermore, the complexity and multifaceted nature of the EU institutional and policy field means even identifying those responsible for securitising moves is more difficult than in the national context. Another issue is the lack of any single European polity, thus providing the EU with many 'perceptions' and 'audiences' in relation to any particular perceived threat or insecurity created by EU officials (Neal 2009, p. 337).

Of course, the ambiguity about the 'audience' in securitisation theory does not necessarily mean this cannot be addressed – in the EU context this can be made up of MEPs, experts, Commission officials, etc.: this is also true of the broader global

and regional environment within which the EU operates and interacts (UN, other regional bodies, states). However, what is problematic is that it is relatively more difficult, within the EU's complex institutional processes, to identify the relevant 'audience', or indeed any meaningful security discourse. Moreover, the contradiction in relation to what security is becomes even more pronounced at EU level: is an issue part of what is 'security' when it is spoken by the relevant EU actors, or only when the relevant audience legitimises it? Another problem here is in the nature of the securitisation itself: is the EU as a self-declared rule and norm-bound actor capable of extraordinary means to deal with an existential threat? (Neal 2009, p. 337). So, securitisation theory leaves many questions unanswered in the context of analysing the EU (internally and more widely) in security practice. It is particularly problematic in relation to the EU in terms of the construction and legitimation of a securitisation move, but also in terms of the outcome of any such move in terms of doing and making 'security' policy.

Insecuritisation theory also raises certain issues in relation to the EU and the theory and practice of security: some less problematic than others. Proponents of insecuritisation theory aim to unravel existing security/political dynamics responsible for the insecuritisation of the 'other'. The 'Foucauldian lens' enables them to go beyond discourses and reach the 'deeper technologies' at play in the insecuritisation process. In other words, they are informed by a logic whereby the methodology allows for the focus on securitisation as insecuritisation. The perspective that 'Securitisation is not a speech act but a multidimensional process with skills, expert knowledge, institutional routines as well as discourses of danger modulating the relation between security and freedom' (Huysmans 2006, p. 153), provides an ideal analytical platform for interrogating the EU's internal process and other regional and global fora – and indeed addresses one of the key problems with securitisation theory in terms of broadening the scope of what might constitute 'security' and how it might be done (through governmentality rather than extraordinary means).

However the fact that they see no discernable difference between theory and practice begs questions of first, identifying the actors doing security in the EU, and second, in providing any conceptualisation of change (or indeed, positive outcome for particular groups) in EU security (insecuritisation). A third and unrelated issue is the scope of such a theory. This in turn raises interesting questions of where and in what forms insecuritisation theory applies. Is it examining one phenomena only, that of the creation of insecurities based on identity politics where the inside/outside boundary has collapsed? How broad is that phenomena across the range of issues that comprise security studies? And although one of its strengths is that its empirical work is based in and on the EU, is this theoretical model that has vitality outside European boundaries? If so, are there any limits to those boundaries connected to political culture or regime type? This latter question is especially salient given our aim of analysing the EU as a security actor within regional and global discursive security fields rather than simply focusing on the EU domain.

Clearly then, these approaches taken independently are problematic theoretically and methodologically for the study of EU security practice and leave certain important questions unanswered. However, they do provide us with a research agenda, if not a coherent methodology. In other words, whilst they do not obviously come together in an intellectual way in terms of their methodology, they can provide interesting avenues for research on the EU as a security actor. Such an approach also

allows a process of dialogue and perhaps theory building within and across the two theories outlined above. Thus the challenge of securitisation theory in terms of analysing the EU in a ‘transversal’ context is to investigate:

- how and where ‘new’ security issues emerge;
- how and indeed, if, they become securitised (can any tipping points be identified in the process of securitisation?); and
- the impact that securitisation moves have on policy projection and governance.

This is applicable not just within the EU context but within other security governance structures and processes. In this sense, we can investigate not just the securitisation logic but also the potential removal of the logic of security from an issue area (‘desecuritisation’, as Wæver has described it), and its replacement in the realm of politics or ‘governmentality’. Indeed the analyst can uncover in a more dynamic way how security practice might sit uneasily between exceptional means and normal politics (even though the purpose of securitisation theory is simply the identification of securitisation strategies).

Second, the value of insecurity is that it allows an examination of how security policies can create structures of insecurity for marginalised and silenced voices, which can be both within and beyond the space of the EU. In addition, Wæver emphasises that the consideration of the role of security agencies and practices allows the analysis of practices by various agencies that may reveal different patterns and processes from those derived from the study of official discourse (Wæver 2004). Moreover, it allows more than securitisation theory the analyst to probe the ‘contextual’ and explore security not just as ‘existential threat’ and ‘exceptional measures’, but as a process of framing, politics and governmentality. That is, it allows the identification of different ‘security logics’ at work and an awareness of the means, ends and consequences of security measures, whether they are exceptional or not. Key dimensions for analysis here then, are:

- What makes a certain policy area a matter of security policy rather than social or economic policy (how do we identify a process of (in) securitisation)?
- What is specific about framing these policy issues in terms of security? How does it differ from potential alternative framings?
- What governance processes and governmentality practices have resulted from the security framing of any given policy issue?

Whilst these are questions that have to date been asked with reference to the EU specifically, there is no intellectual reason why they cannot be applied within other global and regional fields of security discourse. In addition, the analyst can usefully evaluate through this line of enquiry the relationship between discourse and policy practice – and indeed the implications that stem from framing an issue as ‘security’.

Comparative methodology: a way forward

Whilst the theories of security above clearly differ in their understanding and conceptualisation of security, they also have certain commonalities. For example,

they both view security as having implications politically; they both view security as essentially a constructed phenomenon (whether through speech act or framing); they both attempt to identify effects and logics of security; and they are both concerned with escaping traditional approaches to security (Browning and McDonald 2009, p. 15). Furthermore, the emphasis in both is to uncover discursive security fields, with recognition of the importance of context – in terms of speech and practice. Indeed, the unifying thread is that they are derivatives from a critical constructivist theory. However, what we have outlined above also has methodological implications and however much these theories have in common, it certainly cannot be said that they meld easily in to some sort of methodological coherence.

Moreover, they are also problematic in terms of analysing the positive impact of security or securitisation – as both, essentially, are conservative and focused on the ‘negative’ impacts of securitisation moves and insecurity practice. Our proposition here then, is that these two theories can intuitively provide fruitful avenues for research for the EU as a security actor through a comparative methodology within a broad constructivist logic, but that we also need to further consider how security discourse can actually politicise and therefore provide impetus for political action in certain areas that would otherwise be missing (something that the Welsh School of security have emphasised; see Booth 2007, pp. 108–109). In this sense, we need to include in our theoretical framework a positive notion of impact that can follow from security discourse, in order to avoid in particular any ahistorical or temporally fixed notions of security. Thus, there needs to be more focus on ‘the negotiation between the possibilities and constraints for change in security discourses and practices, or more simply, between the ‘what is’ and the ‘what ought to be’ of security (Browning and McDonald 2009, p. 13). This obviously also has an impact on the EU’s modes of engagement in relation to any specific issue area and how it seeks to project this in other relevant global fora and processes.

Bringing these theories together then through a comparative methodology, allows us to ask the necessary questions about the EU, whilst also connecting this to the more pre-theoretical notions of governance and governmentality. We contend here that whilst not ideal, this approach can be fruitful, as long as a more sophisticated notion of ‘context’ is provided in analysing the EU as a security actor. Indeed, context is important to the notions of security that we have discussed thus far. However, to simply say that context matters, is not new or innovative. But we argue that it is significant primarily because ‘contextualising’ security beyond a general commitment to ‘context’ provides a platform for not only understanding how the EU constructs ‘security’, but also on the different actors, measures, concepts and practices of security that might be deployed in a particular context. Moreover, and connecting to the point made previously on what security is and what it ought to be, it allows a normative awareness of the means, ends and consequences of security measures, whether they are exceptional or not (Ciuta 2009, p. 323).

The issue of normativity more broadly (which is excluded from the Copenhagen School) is especially important in an EU context, given its ‘variable and contested identity’ as an international actor – and indeed its own self-representation as a ‘normative power’ in global politics (Manners 2002). This ‘self-image’, underpinned by clear EU values, impacts on the way in which EU security is constructed, how it is performed and projected in practice, and how it is received and perceived by others as a security actor – with important implications for the EU’s effectiveness and of

course, identity across different policy areas. Furthermore, a comparative approach also incorporates a temporal and governmentality dimension to our analysis of how and why the EU ‘does’ security. In other words, such an approach allows us to take a reflexive perspective and thus to take into account changing security practice in different security governance structures and contexts (for example, not just as threat, but as risk-management and normal politics), whilst not losing sight of the importance of its constructed and actor-oriented nature.

This adds nuance and critical depth to an analysis of how the EU does security, and more importantly, allows us to analytically differentiate between the acts of security as ‘non-politicised’, ‘politicised’ and ‘securitised’ (see Figure 1). Thus, it allows us to probe further into the impact of how security is defined and done and establish a link between any construction, subsequent action and policy in different realms and across issue areas. Moreover, it allows an analysis of security that uncovers the nuance between the ‘politics of exception’ and a ‘governmentality of unease’ (see Neal 2009 as a good example). It also helps us to avoid simplistic or fixed notions of security over time and to provide for complexity in our analysis through recognition that there might very well be more than one security logic at play in any one issue area. This of course also then begs questions of the how, when and why in terms of change or non-change in each issue area, which will ultimately be uncovered in our exploration of both the EU institutional context, the broader global and regional governance environment within which and with which the EU interacts, and the relationship between the EU and actors involved in each issue area. Where then does this leave us with our methodological approach and framework? In terms of the methodological approach, the ‘constructivist logic’ of the theories of security is the unifying thread and whilst philosophically it is difficult to bring them together, this does point to an emphasis on: first, process tracing in order to establish changes over time and the factors or variables that might lead to change in terms of the (re)construction and practice of security logics in any given issue area; and second, discourse analysis, which will allow us to understand the construction/framing, performance, sustainability and practice of EU security. Combining both these methods will allow us to establish and understand through the stages outlined below a chain of events, the ‘context’ of these events, and the constitution of the EU’s identity as a security actor across a range of issue areas.

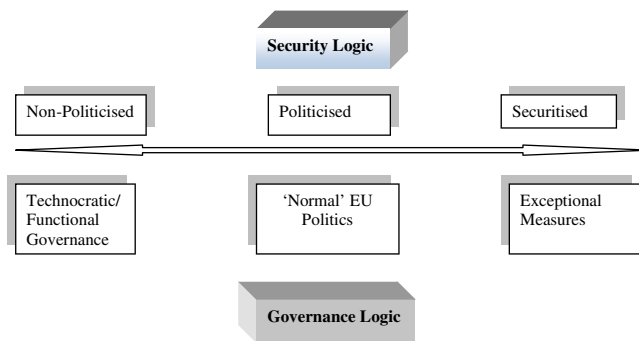


Figure 1. Security logics – a spectrum.²

Furthermore, we need to discern in terms of discourse what the key sources will be and what we are looking for – what utterances or speech acts we want to explore (Lupovici 2009). In our case, the main emphasis will be on locating EU public documents – that is, of all the actors within the EU (and potentially other actors involved in constructing EU security) that have been involved in framing or speaking security in relation to a specific case study area. This is not just limited to documents on policy construction and formulation, but also policy implementation. Of course, we do not have to limit ourselves to official EU discourse as other texts such as wider political debates, secondary sources, cultural representations and marginal political discourses (in the case of regional conflicts or human rights, for example) are important genres to be analysed in any given security context, in particular when we are talking about what security is and EU practice and impact. In addition, we must also take into account the powerful messages that symbols and images have in the construction, governance, performance and sustainability of security logic(s) in any one given case study area (Hansen 2000, Williams 2003).

The argument here then, is that we need to trace the discourse and the process in order to determine the ‘context’, and indeed outcome in terms of EU security practice and identity. In other words, in order to understand the complex ways in which the logics of security and governance interact, we need to unpack the rationale for action, how this is constituted and operationalised in practice, and indeed, what this implies for the EU’s overall ability to engage with security issues, and evolve as a security actor. For this purpose, we delineate the following analytical stages or dimensions in the evaluation of the EU as a security actor:

1. *Construction*: uncovers how and with what consequences and implications certain issues such as terrorism, migration, conflict or human rights, are first constructed in terms of the politics and linguistics of security. This provides the analyst with an idea of the ‘security logic’ surrounding the construction of a particular policy in any given issue area. Thus, for example, many analysts have pointed to the securitisation logic and securitisation moves associated with immigration policy, both before and in particular after 9/11. Pertinent questions within this dimension of the research in terms of our comparative methodology are:
 - A. How and why has this issue been constructed as security or a security threat? What tipping points can be identified in this construction?
 - B. Which actors (accepting the blurring of the internal/external) have been involved in this construction?
 - C. What sort of security logic was constructed for this issue area and how was it constituted or legitimised?

2. *Governmentality and governance*: uncovers how issues are ‘managed’, by whom and through what sort of *practices* (technologies, legal, professionals, foreign policy) and *transversal processes* (bilateral, multilateral, regional, etc.). In other words, what sort of institutions, processes and instruments have been constituted from the constructed security logic in any given policy area and how has this played out in terms of governance and governmentality. On this, we take governance to include ‘the coordination, management and regulation

of issues by multiple and separate authorities, interventions by both public and private actors, formal and informal arrangements' (Kirchner and Sperling 2007a, p. 3). In addition to this, we acknowledge that the EU as a system of security governance has at its disposal certain instruments, modes and mechanisms – persuasive or coercive (Kirchner and Sperling 2007b) – for the purposes of practicing security within a certain logic(s). Beyond this, and looking outwards, there is also a recognition here of the transversal governance processes through and within which the EU performs security. Indeed, such multilevel cooperation is significant in assessing the overall effectiveness and impact of the EU as a security actor within any given issue area.

By governmentality we imply certain practices (very much in line with the securitisation school of thought), which in the EU case predominantly refers to: the proliferation and intensification of use of security technologies (for instance GALILEO in relation to border control); legal practices, which basically refers to the evolution and role of law in the politics of security. This does not just mean the rulings of the ECJ and national courts, but also the role of regional and global legal institutions with which the EU acts or interacts (the ECHR, for instance, on human rights); the role of professionals refers to the changing nature of those involved in security practice, and in particular the extent to which challenges in the post-cold war era have led to pluralisation or multilateralisation of practice – away from the nation-state, and the implications this has in terms of forms of governance emerging (informal networks of police professionals, new modes of intergovernmental or transgovernmental activity, supranational institutions) and indeed, impact; finally, there is the process of Europeanisation in CSDP, and in particular how this has influenced security practice in the EU, especially in the post-9/11 era in terms of values, institutional actors and agencies involved (Burgess 2009), with the Lisbon Treaty now also institutionally significant for the EU's role as a security actor. Overall, of course, this touches upon the explication of linkages among different threats, in that the same instruments and technologies are applied to 'control' different phenomena thus allowing connections to be traced between migration, terrorism, organised crime, etc. (Bigo 2000). The main point here then, is that such developments have led to an increased complexity in the context within which the governmentality of security plays out.

As an example, and staying with the immigration issue, the case of FRONTEX is illuminating. Whilst the constructed security logic in the 9/11 context was of securitisation and the logic of exceptional threat, it has been shown that the resultant governance or governmentality of FRONTEX in the period that followed was of a predominantly unexceptional nature, with only some elements of exceptional measures being reasserted by states at certain points in time (Neal 2009). Indeed, Neale demonstrates in his analysis of FRONTEX the tension between those state actors that project exceptional practice and the practice of 'normal' politics. Pertinent questions here include:

- A. What structures of security governance and governmentality have followed the constructed security logic for any one issue area?

- B. Which actors have been involved in these structures?
 - C. What structures, institutions, tools and instruments have been utilised? What transversal processes have been utilised?
 - D. How has the security logic and subsequent structures of governance and governmentality changed over time?
3. *Practice/Impact/Change*: uncovers how security logics are sustained and actually operationalised through the different practices and processes at work for each issue, and in relation to the different organisations and actors that the EU interacts with on these issues. Impact, in this context, can mean a variety of things depending on the security issue and the security logic(s) at play within this issue. Thus we can only provide a general indicator here in terms of 'impact' by defining it as the EU's ability to address and transform the security issue or threat that it has identified through the goals and objectives that it has constructed; and this, with the caveat that what might constitute effective impact for the EU might not necessarily constitute the same for the security referent or other, or indeed be borne out in the practice on the ground.

This is why it is important for the analyst to trace not just how a security logic unfolds, but how and whether this changes over time in terms of governance and governmentality – and also how it plays out, is received and impacts in terms of policy change and influence. In other words, it asks the question not just of what sort of security logic (or logics) are at play, but the (inevitably normative) question of what this means for EU action (including consequences, intended or unintended) and indeed, the EU's effectiveness and identity as a security actor. Moreover, it acknowledges that the influence of the EU as a security actor is dependent not just on the EU context – but also on those actors with which it interacts on security issues across and within different levels, arenas and processes. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the EU in any given issue area is very much related to how the security referent – the other – receives the EU's narrative and logic and indeed how they respond to it in any given issue area.

Key questions here then, include:

- A. What has been the impact of the EU's security logic(s) and governance/governmentality on any security issue area?
- B. How effective has the EU been in its cooperation with other actors and within other processes (multilateral, bilateral, regional, etc.) in any given security field? Has the EU's security logic(s) and governance/governmentality of any constructed security issue been contested within or in its interaction with other actors and within other transversal processes?
- C. What impact has the EU's security logic(s) and practices had on the recipient actor (migrants, terrorists, regional conflict actors, etc.) and how have they responded? How do the security logics of other major actors affect those acquired or practiced by the EU?
- D. What impact has this had on EU policy direction or change? Has the EU been effective in addressing the identified security issue or threat? What impact has this had on the EU's effectiveness and identity as a security actor?

Conclusion

The central argument in this article has been that we need to move to a more theoretical (security-oriented) framework for analysing the EU as a security actor. Whilst the EU security governance literature certainly provides a plastic or flexible frame for this purpose, it falls short in our eyes, as it does not move beyond a conceptual notion of security (that is, it is pre-theoretical). The EU, as a security actor within structures of European security governance can also not be understood solely with reference to Europe; these are inter-regional and global issues. The suggestion here, therefore, is that through utilising the security studies literature, we can provide a flexible framework and a comparative methodology, which moves beyond traditional notions of security as the activity of states; a notion that is fixed or defined simply as a threat, and provides a more complex understanding of how the EU does and speaks security. We recognise that for many such a comparative or eclectic approach is problematic on a philosophical and intellectual level, but our position merely suggests that there is much to connect such theories (although not to collapse them into one theoretical approach, see Floyd 2007) – and that, whilst not compatible in terms of the methodological minutiae can at an intuitive and comparative level illuminate the problems in each, whilst also providing a platform for dialogue and theory building.

Thus, we do not argue that security governance is an unfruitful avenue for research. Indeed, we very much concur with the conceptualisation of security governance provided in this literature and its notion of European security as part of broader regional and global security governance structures. However, we do believe that it lacks a more complex understanding of the variegated meaning of security and security logics in the context of the EU. Our approach, therefore, almost takes a step backwards in its conversation with this literature – in that it seeks first to analyse the discursive construction of ‘security’ in different policy areas, whilst not losing sight of the connection between construction, governance/governmentality, policy practice and outcome. Overall, we suggest this is a more nuanced approach which allows the analyst to probe the dynamics of EU security action, and indeed, the implications and consequences of such action in terms of policy governance, effectiveness and its own identity.

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Notes

1. This is not to suggest, from our perspective, that security has simply been constructed for the sole purpose of servicing bureaucratic requirements, but that in servicing the insecurities that have arisen in a multipolar world, security professionals have been able

- to exaggerate the ‘actual’ threat posed, thus facilitating an increased role for themselves (through practice), and the in many instances, insecuritisation of daily life (Bigo 2001, p. 111).
2. This figure is not a static or linear representation of security logics and complementary governance/governmentality process. Indeed, its purpose is to highlight that the reality is often more complex and dynamic in the process of doing security and thus it should not be treated as a linear model whereby EU security policy can only move in one direction or indeed be categorised within one security or governance logic or another in the life cycle of any security issue. Thus, for example, an issue that might be securitised in the EU’s construction of a narrative for any given issue area will often not be dealt with through exceptional means but through technocratic governance. Conversely, technocratic governance can often reinforce a securitised logic in any given issue area.

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