

Politicizing European Security? Processes of Politicization in Counter-terrorism and Border Security

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Project Description

1 State of the art and preliminary work

The project investigates how and under which conditions politicization processes occur in the area of European security. It challenges prominent arguments about depoliticization in the purportedly special security field, develops a multi-stage analytical framework for the study of politicization and explores politicization processes as well as their facilitating conditions through in-depth case studies. The project aims to open up the black box of politicization processes by studying concrete politicization moves by different actors, the interactive contentious politics they provoke and the resulting, potentially ambivalent consequences. The empirical analysis examines politicization processes in the fields of counter-terrorism and border security at EU level as well as at national level (by using the example of Germany).

We start from the observation that the provision of ‘comprehensive security’ along the blurred divide between internal and external security has become an issue of increasing public interest and controversy at EU and member state level. In the face of a range of transnational risks (in particular migration and terrorism), EU institutions increasingly emphasize their security function as a source of legitimation and authority construction, as recently documented by the proclamation of the ‘Security Union’. This, in turn, may put the legitimacy of European security institutions and policies up for debate. On the one hand, there are a number of concerns about civil liberties and human rights, as visible, for example, in parliamentary inquiries, court decisions or public protests dealing with issues such as ‘blacklisting’ of terrorist suspects, data retention, mass surveillance (including the Snowden revelations) or the expansion of FRONTEX. On the other hand, there are growing demands from different political camps that the EU must increase its role in security affairs or, as right-wing populists have it, the EU itself is seen as a risk for the security of member states (e.g. due to the Schengen regime). Hence, the question arises whether these conflicting tendencies signal a broader politicization, which we understand as the transfer of previously uncontroversial or not publicly debated issues into the realm of open decision-making, public deliberation and societal contestation. Moreover, we are interested to see in how far politicization processes at the EU level may differ from national contexts, which many people still regard as the prime arena when it comes to security issues.

The project puts to the test both ‘traditionalist’ and ‘critical’ approaches to European security. While ‘traditionalist’ approaches tend to depict security as an area of ‘high politics’ and prerogative of governments, many ‘critical’ security scholars suggest that successful acts of ‘securitization’ move issues out of the sphere of ‘normal’ democratic politics. More recent research on European security governance maintained an emphasis on depoliticization, mainly via technocratic, multi-level governance. From these perspectives, European security is often portrayed as a special case (compared

to social, economic or environmental issues) that evades politicization. This project draws on, but goes beyond ongoing debates on the politicization of European and global governance, which, so far, largely ignored developments in the security field, and connects them to research on securitization and security governance that largely neglected the study of politicization and contentious politics.

(a) Securitization research

Recent political and academic developments call into question much of what is assumed about the negative or even pathological relationship between security and politics, but securitization research still largely continues to link security to depoliticization. Most prominently, the 'Copenhagen School' argues that securitization moves, if accepted by the targeted audience, lift specific issues above 'normal' democratic politics via the construction of existential threats justifying exceptional measures (Wæver 1995; Buzan et al 1998). This way, they partially reproduce 'traditionalist' accounts, which treated security as a case of 'high politics' and thereby matter of executive politics only, with other political actors and activities reduced to additional variables at most. Securitization research and critical security studies have become more interdisciplinary in recent years, with notable influences from sociology or risk and resilience studies (Aradau et al. 2008; Lund Petersen 2012). Yet, these strands of research share the general emphasis on security's depoliticizing effects, whether through everyday routines by technocratic 'security professionals' governing diffuse insecurities (Bigo 2002; Huysmans 2006) or seemingly technical practices of precautionary risk management and liberal governmentality (Aradau/van Munster 2007; de Goede 2008).

Securitization scholars explicitly or implicitly propose politicization as a normative ideal, but rarely study concrete politicization processes. For Buzan et al. (1998: 29), politicization basically means 'to make an issue appear open, a matter of choice, something that is decided upon and therefore entails responsibility'. Yet, the relationship between securitization and politicization is not always clear and consistent. On the one hand, it can be a precondition for a subsequent securitization by justifying and enabling public intervention in the first place. On the other hand, it is opposed to securitization because it transfers issues from the realm of exception and technocracy back into the sphere of 'normal' democratic politics where alternative policy options can be publicly weighed, debated and negotiated (Buzan et al. 1998: 29). Securitization scholars argue that politicization in the latter sense is possible only outside thinking and acting in terms of security and therefore regard desecuritization as a prerequisite (Aradau 2004). By now, the debate has widened and they have considered various understandings of 'the political', debated when securitization might be a viable option and discussed alternative concepts, such as emancipation and resilience (Floyd 2011; Pram Grad/Lund Petersen 2011; Wæver 2011; Balzacq 2015). However, by and large, they still unite behind the view that contemporary conceptions of security fundamentally constrain democratic politics and public contestation (Huysmans 2014). Securitization scholars, therefore, seldom examine politicization *within* a security framing, owing to the emphasis on how security is used to evade politicization and the focus on executive and technocratic politics.

While this view has elucidated important dynamics in security politics, it, however, does not match some recent developments in the security field. The Snowden revelations, for example, prompted extensive public debates about the limits of privacy and risks of surveillance. Parliaments have become more active and activist on security matters. Constitutional courts have more than once challenged governmental security policies. Civil society actors appear galvanized, launching campaigns against and

sometimes for new security provisions. Consequentially, first scholars started to reconsider dominant arguments about the security-politics nexus (Browning/MacDonald 2013; Fierke 2015; Hegemann/Kahl 2016a). They, for example, point to the persistence of rather 'normal' security politics in places like democratic legislatures (Neal 2012; Bright 2015), the re-evaluation of security policies in public inquiries (de Goede 2014; Thomas 2015) as well as the 'public sphere' as a sight for the articulation and exchange of alternative viewpoints (Schou Tjalve 2011; Vaughan-Williams/Stevens 2016). While forms of exceptional and technocratic securitization remain visible in certain cases, such as debates about the response to recent terrorist attacks in Europe, there is evidence for a new variety of political actors and activities within the security field, which reopens questions about the purportedly pathological relationship between security and (democratic) politics. The process of politicization, nevertheless, remains underexplored in security studies and we still do not know when, how and with which consequences politicization actually occurs. Such a perspective, however, would be essential in order to make full sense of the described phenomena and allow for a more comprehensive understanding of contemporary security politics.

(b) Politicization research

Politicization research recently gained prominence in International Relations and European integration studies. In a nutshell, politicization denotes the process through which previously uncontroversial or not publicly dealt with issues are promoted into the realm of open decision-making, public deliberation and societal contestation (Hay 2007: 81; Zürn 2013: 19). In the field of transnational governance, a range of authors suggested that the transfer of authority to the regional and global level led to new societal demands that put the legitimacy of international institutions up for debate (Zürn et al. 2012; Zürn 2013). This argument has sparked a vibrant research program with a special emphasis on the EU, which became increasingly challenged by Eurosceptic and populist movements that questioned the 'permissive consensus' among European elites (Hooghe/Marks 2009). While there seems to be a basic consensus regarding the existence of politicization and its basic relevance for EU politics, as visible for example in recent referenda, there is still debate about its different types, appropriate measurement, favorable conditions, and wider consequences (de Wilde 2011; de Wilde/Zürn 2012; Hutter/Grande 2014; Rauh/Zürn 2014; de Wilde et al. 2016; Hutter et al. 2016; Kriesi 2016). This project cannot cover all facets of this research program, but rather makes two main contributions.

First, it studies politicization as an interactive, contentious process and elucidates the specific political dynamics within this process. Initially, politicization research generally debated whether EU politics were politicized or not and how this might impact the process of European integration. They did not study how politicization actually emerged and unfolded and there, hence, was 'a lack of studies on the process itself' (de Wilde 2007: 3). By now, there are ample empirical studies that aim to measure the degree of politicization at a certain point, its change over time as well as its driving factors and ensuing consequences. They usually focus on quantifiable indicators for shifts and expansions in public discourses and mobilization, mostly measured through content analysis of media articles (Hutter/Grande 2014; Rauh/Zürn 2014; Dolezal et al. 2016). This approach is extremely valuable and able to generate a lot of data for cross-case and within-case comparisons. However, the actual politicization process and the way different actors interact in it remain understudied. As a result, we do not know much about how specific actors struggle for, react to, and draw consequences from politicization. Yet, this is necessary if we want to understand politicization as 'a set of interrelated processes in which human interaction is central' (de Wilde 2007: 19). To remedy this gap and open up

the black box of politicization, the project conducts an in-depth qualitative case study of concrete, multi-stage politicization processes and the 'contentious politics' (Tilly/Tarrow 2007) they involve. The project not only investigates whether or how much an issue is politicized, but also studies how politicization influences the politics of this issue and its handling in the public and political arena. Here, it is important to acknowledge the double-edged character of politicization. On the one hand, it can be a necessary condition for democratic politics by enabling public decision and deliberation. On the other hand, it may also lead to extreme polarization and radicalization and thereby undermine the possibility of political compromises and rational debate. These two sides of the coin are pointed out by the conceptual literature on the politicization of international institutions (see eg. Zürn 2013: 24-26), but the empirical analysis of its ambivalent consequences in concrete political processes requires further scrutiny.

Second, the project explores the policy-specific dynamics of politicization processes in the understudied security field. Security, so far, remains a blind spot in research on the politicization of international governance. The general assumption seems to be that societal politicization here continues to be absent, or at least especially weak, due to a lack of transparency in mostly transgovernmental settings, limited redistributive effects, governmental prerogatives close to the core of national sovereignty, limited visible interference with people's everyday life and a basic consensus between national elites (Herschinger et al. 2013; Zürn 2013: 34-35). However, taking seriously the above mentioned new variety of political actors, arenas and practices in the security field, the special status of security deserves closer scrutiny. Moreover, the assessment of and response to transnational security threats, such as terrorist attacks in Western Europe or the handling of the current 'refugee crisis', generated heated public debates at the European and national level, which may question the persistence of previous patterns. More research is, thus, needed to understand when, how, and with which consequences aspects of European security become subject to politicization. Moreover, studying the 'hard case' of security will help to explore those conditions, which foster politicization in general. Hence, this project responds to the need for more 'differentiated' empirical research, including the study of 'issue-specific politicization processes' (de Wilde et al. 2016: 10) in concrete policy-fields.

(c) European security governance

Empirically, the project focuses on European security and puts to the test established narratives about the dominance of executive and administrative governance. European security governance encompasses a complex field that transcends levels and issue-areas as well as the boundary between external and internal security and is organized around the ideas of comprehensive security and transnational risks, reflecting the broader widening and deepening of security. Research typically associates European security provision in this context either with new modes of governance portrayed as a necessary response to the challenges of globalization (Webber et al. 2004; Kirchner/Sperling 2007; Sperling/Webber 2014) or with executive and administrative elites advancing controversial views and measures without full democratic scrutiny (Guiraudon 2000; Lavenex/Wagner 2007). Moreover, securitization scholars dealing with European security typically argue that the EU's fragmented structure may not be very conducive to exceptional politics and extraordinary measures, but still provides an ideal environment for cross-border networks of 'security professionals', technocratic risk management and the use of new tools for information exchange or data collection (Huysmans 2006; Balzacq 2008; de Goede 2008; Neal 2009; Léonard 2010; Bigo 2014). These interpretations essentially amount to different forms of depoliticization and suggest that policies along the diffuse internal-external divide may be especially prone to evade 'normal' politics and public contestation.

The question, however, is whether a depoliticized governance perspective still applies to the changing landscape of European security. On first view, the post-9/11 fight against terrorism seems like a further limitation of politicization. Many studies have documented how the threat of terrorism came to dominate the broader European security agenda and pushed through a range of new policies and institutions without much deliberation and critique before the EU then turned towards an increasingly incremental, technocratic approach based on more fine-grained sub-policies that went largely unnoticed by broader audiences (Kaunert 2011; Argomaniz 2011; Bures 2011; Bossong 2012; Hegemann 2014). Especially after the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, the field of justice and home affairs (or the so-called Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, AFSJ) has gone through a process of communitarization and depillarization that removed many of the limits characteristic of the former 'third pillar'. This development led not only to qualified majority voting in the EU Council on many of the related issues, but also to an increased role of the EU Commission and, more importantly, to more competencies for the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice. A range of studies map this institutional structure and investigate the transfer of authority to the EU level, focusing on factors such as functional spill-over from other areas of EU integration, the role of external shocks, symbolic politics or the perception and construction of new threats (Monar 2010; Kaunert 2011; Kaunert et al. 2012; Trauner/Ripoll Servent 2015).

Research on the specific fields of counter terrorism and border security also focused on policy and institutional development at the EU level and its complex relationship with the national level. More recent scholarship analyzed the EU's institutionalization and actorness after Lisbon (Brattberg/Rhinard 2012; Parkes 2015), provided assessments of its controversial effectiveness and legitimacy (Argomaniz et al. 2015; Londras/Doody 2015) and elucidated developments in subfields like radicalization or border management (Bossong 2014; Léonard 2015). First studies on the role of the media, public opinion and civil society in European security point to a potentially growing involvement, but also underline persisting limitations, such as the fragmented nature of the field and the primarily national structures of legitimation (Rüger 2012; Joachim/Dembinski 2014).

The question of whether these new policies also led to new forms of politicization and public contestation, however, remains unanswered, apart from some anecdotal evidence. On the one hand, following the so-called authority transfer hypothesis in politicization research (Zürn 2016: 170-73), we should see a growing political and societal interest and demand in response to the new security powers granted to the EU and the growing involvement of various EU institutions (Genschel/Jachtenfuchs 2016: 49). On the other hand, some authors claim that, for instance, the European Parliament's use of its new powers diverged from previous patterns. It softened its stance on civil liberties and was rather willing to engage in informal negotiations with the Council and the Commission on controversial issues like the SWIFT agreement (Ripoll Servent/Mac Kenzie 2011; Ripoll Servent 2013). In this case, the politicization of security issues seems to be closely linked to familiar turf battles and behind-the-scenes politics in Brussels. Yet, especially counter-terrorism and border security also feature prominently in high-profile, contentious public debates, such as in the lead-up to the 'Brexit' referendum. In turn, EU institutions increasingly seek the public spotlight for their security policies, which they regard as a source of legitimacy and support. For example, the European Commission recently proposed the concept of a 'Security Union', including the post of a new Commissioner.

At the same time, there is evidence for a broader political and societal contestation of European counter-terrorism and border protection, especially where measures interfere directly with citizens' everyday lives. The 'blacklisting' of terrorist suspects or the retention of telecommunications data have not only become subject to substantial controversies in EU-level courts and parliaments, but also became part of national debates and campaigns. Moreover, public and private actors (e.g. European NGO Platform Asylum and Migration or the initiative '*Freedom Not Frontex*') challenge the legitimacy of seemingly technocratic border protection agencies and tools like *FRONTEX* and *Eurosur*. These episodes alert to tensions not only between different groups within EU institutions, but also between different political and societal actors that publicly address their demands and criticism directly to the EU. Hence, depoliticized security governance seems to reach its limits as political practice and as academic concept (Ehrhart et al. 2014; Hegemann/Kahl 2016b).

To conclude, we do not know yet whether these ambivalent observations are a sign for deeper processes of politicization in the European security field, which may challenge and, subsequently, alter existing policies and modes of politics. Hence, it is necessary to analyze emerging patterns in a systematic manner and examine the broader political and societal dynamics of this field beyond the dominant focus on politics within and between governments, EU institutions and technocratic agencies.

2 Objectives and work programme

Objectives

The proposed project sheds light on so far disregarded processes of politicization in the field of European security. We define politicization as the transfer of previously uncontroversial or not publicly debated issues into the political realm of open decision-making, public debate and societal contestation (Hay 2007: 81; Zürn 2013: 19). This understanding of politicization reflects a broadly liberal-democratic conception of politics that emphasizes legitimation and deliberation in the public sphere as well as competition and conflict regarding alternative policy options. To qualify as politicization, respective statements and action need to explicitly call and strive for political goals and the adoption of political, universally binding decisions (Zürn 2016). Finding such developments would counter the general assumption in most of the literature that security a) reduces the number of legitimate ideas and actors in the discussion and b) moves policy- and decision-making to executive or technocratic circles based on a basic elite consensus. This way, the project contributes to broader debates by linking securitization and politicization research, reassessing the relationship between security and politics in general as well as providing a better understanding of the broader political dynamics in European security.

On this basis, politicization needs to go beyond the standard operating decision-making processes in EU or national politics. Understood this way, politicization becomes apparent through (i) the *participation* of various political and societal actors in- and outside political institutions, (ii) the utterance of *diverging* or even polarized opinions and (iii) sustained *resonance* among wider audiences, especially in the (conventional and social) media (de Wilde 2011: 566-68; de Wilde et al. 2016: 6). In addition to these common indicators, we add (iv) '*contentious interactions*' among different parties (Tilly/Tarrow 2007: 10-11). This reflects the fact that politicization is a contentious, interactive process in which political actors pursue certain interests and advance competing claims over which they struggle with the targets of their political claims and demands, especially governments, and broader audiences. In many respects,

politicization, hence, resembles the concept of ‘contentious politics’ (Tilly/Tarrow 2007). In some cases, politicization may occur more incrementally and unwittingly. Yet, moving an issue firmly into the political sphere requires an active move. A politicization move has been able to induce a substantial politicization boost when it leads to a significant increase in the four indicators mentioned above.

The project, therefore, studies politicization through concrete ‘episodes of contention’ (Tilly/Tarrow 2007: 36) relating to specific European security issues. We analyze politicization processes with regard to two sub-fields (counter-terrorism and border security) and two arenas (EU and Germany) of European security (see section on case selection). Based on this, politicization processes involve initial politicizers, direct addressees and wider audiences. The project distinguishes three phases in an ideal-type politicization process: (i) the initial politicization move and the immediate reactions from its addressees; (ii) the interactive and contentious politics in which the response to the initial move is debated with a broader audience; and (iii) the eventual decisions and changes that lead to tangible long-term consequences. The project aims to open up the black box of this process and delve into the dynamic politics of politicization in order to understand how it emerges, unfolds and leads to specific results in policies and politics.

On this basis, the objectives of the project are the following:

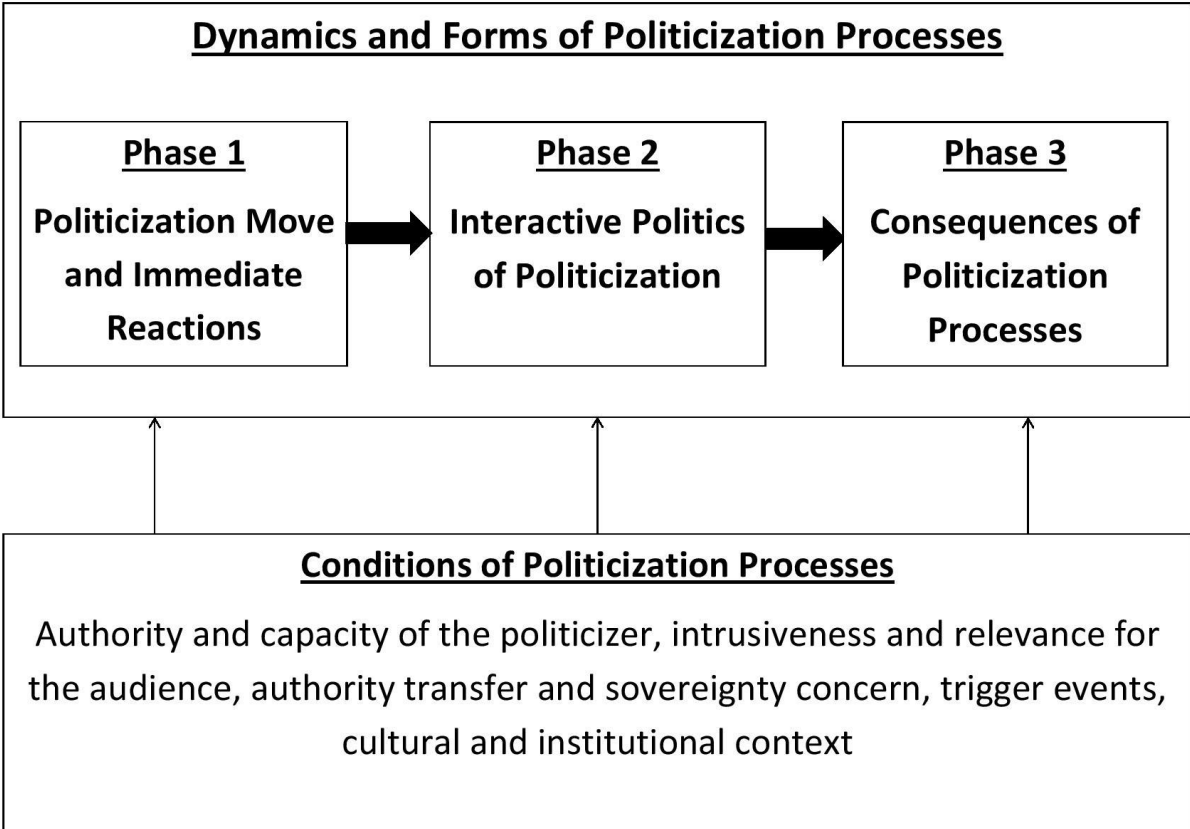
(I) Analysis of politicization processes: Which dynamics and forms of politicization, if any, can be observed in European security?

(II) Analysis of favorable conditions of politicization processes: Which conditions facilitate the emergence and continuation of politicization processes in European security?

Work program incl. proposed research methods

Following these overall objectives, the project will explore the dynamics and forms of politicization processes as well as their facilitating conditions through in-depth qualitative case studies. The empirical analysis will focus on two sub-fields of European security, for which a certain likelihood of politicization can be expected and which can be considered emblematic for the (European) governance of transnational security risks blurring the line of internal and external security: counter-terrorism and border security (see section on case selection below). After mapping the basic structure and evolution of each sub-field (covering the post 9/11-period from 2001 to 2016), the project will identify decisions and policies within the respective area that have drawn significant public attention and controversy. These will then serve as ‘windows of observation’ (Dolezal et al. 2016: 39) for the analysis of politicization processes. In each sub-field, the project will examine if and how these policies and decisions have been politicized at the European level and/or national level. For the national level, we will focus on the example of Germany which is not only a major player in European security policy, but also very much affected by both terrorism and migration, which caused vigorous public debates. The German case serves as a point of reference in order to see in how far politicization processes at the transnational European arena differ from those at national arenas and, moreover, in how far both arenas are connected and may reinforce politicization. Each case study follows a two-part research design looking at a) the forms and dynamics of the multi-staged process of politicization and b) its facilitating conditions (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Analytical Framework



Part I: Dynamics and forms of politicization processes

In this part, the project will analyze the dynamics and forms of politicization processes in the fields of counter-terrorism and border security at the European level and the national level in Germany.

In order to examine the *dynamics* of politicization, the project assumes an ideal-type process involving three different phases (see Figure 1).

Phase 1 relates to the initial politicization move and the immediate reactions to it. The politicization of an issue can be a creeping, incremental and more subtle process in some cases. However, this project focuses on visible politicization moves and ensuing politicization boosts that attract considerable public attention. We, hence, assume that there is a certain starting point to the actual politicization process, which – mirroring the language of securitization studies (Buzan et al. 1998: 25) – usually comes in the form of a ‘politicization move’ through which politicizers aim to move an issue into the public arena (see also Palonen 2003: 182). A politicization move usually follows a latent or imminent crisis of legitimacy during which the legitimacy of an institution or policy is questioned or disputed (Nullmeier et al. 2012: 32). In the case of European security, it may debate the legitimacy and effectiveness of existing measures. The debate is often about ‘too much’ or ‘too little’ security: While one camp holds that security is unduly privileged over other concerns like civil liberties and human rights; the other may express the fear that not enough is being done to address specific security threats or risks at EU or national level. The results are different claims expressed through discursive and/or practical politicization moves. At the same time, those who are directly addressed by the politicization move will

need to show some form of direct public response and legitimation, such as defending their positions, offering new evidence for their claims, rebutting criticism, denying allegations, offering concessions or turning to depoliticization tools negating the political character and public relevance of the issue at hand. Politicizers as well as addressees can stimulate greater public awareness for a certain issue and mobilize for public and media support. This way, the initial politicization move should have a visible effect on our four criteria of politicization because politicizers target other actors with diverging views with whom they want to start an interaction for which they seek to attract the attention of the wider public. However, politicization moves may provide the basis for, but they as such do not automatically lead to more substantial and sustained politicization boosts.

The first round may be followed by a contentious interactive process in *phase 2*, which determines whether an issue continues to evoke public controversy and whether tangible consequences emerge from this. Whether this is likely to happen depends fundamentally on the ability of politicizers and their addressees to convince a broader public audience within an interactive process (Balzacq 2005). We assume that the politicization process moves to a new stage when a) the debate continues to evolve with some intensity over a period of at least six months and when b) the indicators of politicization mentioned above become increasingly visible. This means that viewpoints expressed in the debate become even more diverse and polarized, new actors and arenas beyond the initial politicizers and their immediate addressees become involved, a broader audience becomes interested in the issue at stake, and the different actors start to engage in direct and intense interactions and struggles. Specific aspects to be studied here, hence, include the active engagement of diverse actors with different backgrounds (media, NGOs, industry, political parties, parliaments, courts, academic experts, individual citizens etc.), the emergence of new campaigns that join the bandwagon of the initial politicization move (or challenge it), direct references to opposing parties in discursive statements and practical actions, increased media coverage in diverse outlets, the organization of public protests, or controversial parliamentary debates and inquiries. Finally, we also expect that addressees would react with some kind of discursive and practical coping mechanisms, such as adopting new arguments in their legitimation discourses, promising transparency, using review and evaluation processes, or delaying policy decision.

Phase 3 of our model covers the different consequences emerging from a substantial politicization processes that has gone through the first two stages. This phase starts when the process moves from debates and negotiations to concrete results with tangible effects. As the formal 'success' of politicization moves is difficult to measure, we assume that a change in the discursive and institutional responses is a first indicator for substantial consequences. In general, politicization processes may promote new alliances and political parties, the emergence of new policy options, the reform of existing policies, the adoption of new measures, legal and institutional reforms (including the establishment of new bodies) or the integration and cooptation of so far excluded political actors (e.g. attempts by Frontex to reach out to critical human rights NGOs). In short, they may either confirm or change a policy or an institutional setting. They may, however, also end up in inaction or phase out incrementally. Or, alternatively, phase 3 may trigger a new round of politicization processes. Beyond the empirical focus on these immediate consequences, our analysis also provides important insights on the broader, potentially ambivalent consequences of politicization for conducting European security policies, for example by elucidating whether and how politicization increases or decreases the room for political compromises.

In addition to tracing the process of politicization and its contentious politics, the project will map and describe the *form* of politicization in terms of *objects* (what?), *agents* (who?), *repertoires* (how?) and *levels* (where?).

In terms of *objects* of politicization, the project analyses which issues and problems are actually politicized. In research on the politicization of international institutions, it is common to distinguish between politicization of the substance of specific policies and decisions and of the procedural and institutional setting in which decisions are made (Zürn et. al. 2012: 98; Rauh/Zürn 2014: 125; de Wilde et. al. 2016: 9). In the case of European security, politicization may, thus, relate to 1) the legitimacy of adopted policies in the sub-fields of counter-terrorism and border security on the grounds of their appropriateness, cost-efficiency, problem-solving effectiveness, necessity and unintended consequences and 2) the legitimacy of basic security norms, architectures and decision-making arrangements (on both European as well as national levels) with regard to issues like participation, subsidiarity and transparency, for example by questioning the authority of specialized security agencies. In reality, politicizers will often address different objects simultaneously or combine arguments. Following our understanding developed above, politicization becomes more intense when the views on these issues become more diverse and polarized as visible in public discourse and practice and when the debate moves considerably beyond criticizing policies and start to fundamentally question the politics of European security.

Regarding *agents*, the project asks who the ‘politicizers’, the ‘addressees’ and the ‘audiences’ are. We especially distinguish between politicization processes driven by societal actors and politicization processes driven by political elites (Hurrelmann et al. 2015; de Wilde et al 2016: 14-15). In principle, all politically involved actors can be politicizers or addressees. However, the latter are mostly those decision-makers and institutions in charge of a specific policy. As the participation of diverse actors outside responsible institutions is an indicator of politicization, politicization intensifies when it unfolds not only among different segments of the political elite fighting for resources and competences (e.g. institutional battles between the European Council and the European Parliament) but also extends to diverse societal groups that engage in public battles of legitimation and contestation. The project, therefore, explores whether political controversy extends to the public realm, which might question established claims about the dominance of transnational elites and ‘security professionals’ in European security signal a deeper politicization. The level of individual politicization through private conversation or opinion changes is difficult to research, but opinion polls, public protests with broader participation or engagement with relevant NGOs and social movements could signal a stronger societal dimension in politicization processes.

Regarding the ways or the *repertoires* of politicization, we assume that actors can draw on a specific set of context-dependent ‘repertoires’. The repertoires to be used may change in the course of the process, but even groups with different agendas operating in the same context will often draw from the same repertoires of political actions for their campaigns and protests (Tilly/Tarrow 2007: 16-23). For our purposes, a basic distinction between discursive and practical dimensions of politicization (Nullmeier et al. 2012: 24-26) serves as starting point to study the divergent opinions of and contentious interactions between involved actors. *Discursive politicization* requires the examination of public statements in mass media, parliamentary debates and other public documents. Importantly, these discourses need to address some kind of political action or decision relating to a certain topic in order to qualify as act of politicization. Moreover, the project is especially interested in dynamics of arguments and

counterarguments through which actors seek to politicize or depoliticize an issue in a certain way. *Practical politicization* finds its expression in parliamentary inquiries, official reports, or court rulings as well as in mobilization through political parties, interest groups, petitions, street protests, and election campaigns.

With regard to *levels*, the project explores at which level politicization becomes most apparent and how the different levels relate to each other. Does politicization unfold in a transnational political space with cross-border alliances and actions or does it remain confined to the national level? On the one hand, there is an assumption that a transnational public sphere should emerge alongside increasingly transnational governance (Risse 2015). On the other hand, existing research tends to suggest that ‘transnational politicization remains relatively weak’ (de Wilde et al. 2016: 7) and ‘nationally segmented politicization’ is dominant (Genschel/Jachtenfuchs 2016: 49). Debates and contestations at the transnational level do not necessarily translate directly into similar processes at the national level – and vice versa. Therefore, we cover politicization moves in policy-fields at the European level – with the EU institutions as central hub – and in one major European country (Germany) in order to search for variations, similarities and inter-level connections.

Part II: Favorable conditions of politicization processes

Like securitization (Buzan et al. 1998: 32; Balzacq 2005), politicization is context-dependent (Zürn 2013: 29-35; de Wilde et al. 2016: 10-12). In order to succeed, acts of politicization require specific facilitating conditions. The project, therefore, aims at understanding how different policy characteristics and political settings impact the decisions for and the kind of politicization at EU and national level. These conditions will make politicization processes more likely, but as such do not directly cause politicization. The aim of the project is not to establish or to test causal relationships, but rather to dissect those typical constellations that make politicization processes in the field of European security possible. As a starting point, the project will take those factors into account, which are prominently discussed by the above-reviewed literature on politicization, securitization as well as European security governance. The case studies shall contribute to the identification of particularly relevant conditions and thereby inform our knowledge about the dynamics of politicization processes. This can also help to generate more specific hypotheses for further research.

a) Authority and capacities of the politicizer

First, to start a politicization process, there must be a political entrepreneur who is willing and able to seize the opportunity. In analogy to the ‘securitizer’ (Buzan et al. 1998: 33; Stritzel 2007: 370), politicizers are more likely to succeed if they enjoy a certain political and/or moral authority with the target audience that fosters their claim to a hearing and furthers their ability to gain public support for their arguments and proposals (Hooghe/Marks 2012: 844; Kriesi 2016: 32). This gives established actors (such as opposition parties or experts) an advantage over newcomers to the field. Nonetheless, in a number of cases new political actors or social movements, such as populist movements or transnational NGOs, may enjoy a particular authority just because they are not part of ‘the establishment’. Politicizers must have the skills and the capacities to mobilize public and media (in particular social media) support. They also need to develop a pertinent narrative in order to frame their arguments and sell their alternative policy options. Ideally, these frames and narratives resonate with pre-existing discourses and historical experiences present in the collective memory of a society.

b) Intrusiveness and relevance for the audience

Second, we expect an issue to be 'politicizable' when it visibly infringes upon citizens' basic rights and everyday lives (Herschinger et al. 2013: 193). In liberal societies, the more deeply a measure interferes with people's daily lives, the more legitimation is required to justify them. In this context, 'subjective' impressions and interpretations can be as important as 'objective' facts. The legitimacy of invasive security policies (e.g. in the area of data protection and the right of privacy) requires the acceptance that certain threats justify such restrictions and the specific measure is appropriate to repel these threats. People should be more likely to accept invasive measures as long as they trust that they guarantee a certain degree of security. In the absence or erosion of this conviction, people should be more inclined to question the measure's legitimacy. Whether specific policies are perceived as intrusive and whether this intrusion is considered legitimate can be influenced by various factors, such as personal experiences, legal traditions or past disputes on similar issues. Regarding the latter, it will be important to see whether or not politicizers can build on a contentious history in order to mobilize an audience.

c) Authority transfer and sovereignty concerns

Third, the so-called 'authority transfer hypothesis', which features prominently in the literature on the politicization of transnational governance, argues that the transfer of decision-making and implementation powers to the international level is a key driver for politicization: 'the more political authority international institutions exercise or are expected to exercise, the more they attract public attention and demands. In this way, they become publicly contested' (Zürn et al. 2012: 71). This should hold up especially in areas that affect the core of national sovereignty and sensitive areas of established state responsibility, such as security, because this will likely fuel conflicts between Europhiles and Eurosceptics (Genschel/Jachtenfuchs 2016: 49). Hence, the transfer of important competencies to the European level as well as the exercise of these competencies by European institutions should breed politicization. Again, public perception is highly important here. In the area of border security, for example, NGO protests are increasingly directed towards the EU border agency Frontex, rather than national coast guards and border protection agencies, even though the latter still dispose of most competencies and resources.

d) Triggering events

Fourth, triggering events are another major factor with the potential to change the political agenda and the debate. Security policy as well as securitization is especially prone to such events. This includes potential and materializing threats that may undermine the perceived effectiveness of existing measures, erode public trust in security authorities or create a demand for policy change. Acts of terrorism are an obvious case in point, but also the disclosure of 'scandals' and controversial secret practices (e.g. Snowden revelations) or events allegedly linked to the consequences of migration (e.g. sexual assaults) may serve as triggers for further politicization. What politicizers and their audiences make of these security-related events crucially depends on their discursive framing and the question which frames find acceptance among the targeted audience (Balzacq 2005). Politicization research also highlights the importance of high-profile events, such as national elections, political crises or major integration leaps (Kriesi 2016: 34). Thus, the triggering event does not have to be one moment of 'shock' or single occurrence, but can also develop over time through a series of events, resulting in a crisis of legitimacy that puts decision-makers under pressure. Under these circumstances, politicizers can exploit the situation for the promotion of their agenda and alternative policy options, e.g. by demanding a change in security practices or the introduction of new security measures.

e) Cultural and institutional context

Finally, how politicization processes unfold and whether they succeed hinges on the respective cultural and institutional context. This aspect comes up in research on securitization (Balzacq 2005; Stritzel 2007) as well as politicization (de Wilde et al. 2016: 11-12; Kriesi 2016). Moreover, research on European security governance stresses the importance of the (national) security culture and the institutional setting of security policy. Following the conceptualization of Daase (2012), security culture can be understood as the sum of beliefs, values and practices of institutions and individuals that determine perceptions of pressing dangers and the appropriate response to these dangers. Thus, a security culture can be more or less permissible for politicization moves. For example, established mechanisms of democratic scrutiny in the security field may create opportunities for politicization while a dominant threat perception or trust in military and security institutions may make it more difficult to question the rationale of (trans-)governmental policies. This also includes institutional settings and structures in the security field. For example, they shape whether and how typical turf battles and rivalries among different EU institutions, government branches and security agencies (e.g. law enforcement and intelligence agencies) open up possibilities for politicization and to which degree parliaments and courts can serve as arenas for public debate and contestation. Furthermore, political conflict structures play a key role (Kriesi 2016). Hence, debates over intrusive issues or the transfer of authority should get especially intense when they link up with existing partisan conflicts regarding European integration and security policy. This dimension should be especially important to explain variation in forms and dynamics of politicization processes across both levels (EU and Germany).

Case Selection

The project focuses on two policies that are emblematic for the blurring of the external-internal divide: counter-terrorism and border security. Issues of counter-terrorism and border security involve aspects traditionally associated with justice and home affairs as well as foreign and security policy. On the one hand, they can be considered a 'hard case' for politicization as policies along the diffuse internal-external divide may be especially prone to evade the confusion of normal democratic politics and public contestation. On the other hand, in line with the conditions elaborated above the transfer of authority to the EU in these fields and the growing interference with citizens' rights and everyday lives leads us to expect a trend towards politicization. Especially following reinvigorated fears of terrorist attacks as well as concerns about the 'refugee crisis', counter-terrorism and border security are among the key issues where European citizens expect the EU to act. According to a Eurobarometer survey from May 2016, the public considers immigration and terrorism the two most important issues currently facing the EU. These two fields are, thus, well-suited to explore these competing assumptions. The goal is to cover by and large the period from 2001 (post-9/11) to 2016, in which both policy areas gained political relevance and public attention at both EU and national level, albeit in different ways and waves.

Our unit of analysis is the process of politicization within a certain sub-field. In each of the two sub-fields, we will select more specific policies and decisions, which serve as 'episodes of contention', based on an initial mapping. Thereby, we can examine a) whether and how politicization processes actually occur and b) whether there is variation in politicization processes across sub-fields and levels. The two policy areas cannot accommodate the full complexity and diversity of the security field as a whole and they are inter-connected in practice and discourse since, for example, issues of border security are often

linked to the paradigm of the 'fight against terrorism'. Nonetheless, each area also has its peculiar focus and policy goals and is shaped by different institutional settings at the European and national level.

Counter-terrorism: After 9/11, the fight against terrorism has become a major field in European security policy, gradually broadening its scope and affecting many other policy areas. Almost as a rule, the level of activity in EU counter-terrorism increased in the aftermath of major terrorist incidences in Europe (from Madrid 2004 to Brussels 2016). Despite the Lisbon treaty, this area remains largely shaped by 'soft law' (e.g. action plans), intergovernmentalism and cooperation among EU member states, but it has also come to include elements of 'hard law', such as the directives on data retention and passenger name records. It has a strong impact on other areas as well. For instance, the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2005) mapped out a range of issues, including inter alia preventing radicalization, combating money laundering and terrorist financing, imposing sanctions on persons and groups linked to terrorist acts (EU terrorist list), protecting critical infrastructure and international transport systems, promoting European and international cooperation, improving information sharing among security agencies within the EU, and strengthening Europol and Eurojust. The strategy has been supplemented by a number of action plans (up-dated since 2001), progress reports on the implementation of EU-wide measures, specific strategies on certain issues like radicalization, the founding of new institutions like the European Counter-terrorism Center as well as bilateral agreements (in particular with the US). Over time, the EU adopted a rather technical and incremental approach highlighting networked coordination, information exchange and new technologies (Balzacq 2008; Argomaniz 2011; Bossong 2012; Hegemann 2014). For the project, those issues are of special interest, which led to some public debate either around the Brussels-based institutions and/or at the national level and may therefore provide the basis for a broader politicization.

Examples to consider for the selection of specific episodes can pertain to questions regarding the sharing and transfer of personal data (e.g. the EU-US SWIFT agreement or the various agreements on the transfer of Passenger Name Records), mass surveillance (e.g. data retention and surveillance practices of intelligence agencies revealed by Edward Snowden), the direct targeting and pursuit of terror suspects (e.g. though the 'blacklisting' of persons and groups) or the general failure of EU agencies to prevent terrorist attacks that is often raised after respective incidents (e.g. through a lack of coordination and information exchange). European and national courts and parliaments have considered and in some cases repealed many of these policies, for example in the 'Kadi case' at the European Court of Justice in 2008, the European Parliament's committee inquiring into the Snowden revelations or the decision of the European Court of Justice on the EU's Data Retention Directive in 2014.

Border security: Compared to counter-terrorism, border security is characterized by a higher level of integration largely due to the development of the Schengen regime. Broadly speaking, border security has followed two different, at times competing rationales: first, the rationale of the single market, promoted by the EU Commission, which saw EU-internal borders as barriers to trade and to the freedom of movement; second, the security-centric logic of the national interior ministries who continued to regard border control and border management as key to national and European security. The Schengen regime, established in 1985, aimed at combining both rationales, at first in an incremental and strictly transgovernmental approach outside the EU institutions before integrating it into EU law in the Treaty of Amsterdam (1999). The focus of border security shifted from internal borders to the EU's external borders, in particular with regard to the Mediterranean and the East. The gradual communitarization of

border security aspects was also driven by Northern member states' desire to assure some degree of control of those southern and eastern states with external borders, whereas these states, in turn, hoped to receive some kind of technical and material support for their border management (Parkes 2015). Unlike the closely related issues of asylum and migration (Buonfino 2004; Huysmans 2006), observers tended to characterize border security as a rather technical issue left to specialized agencies or new technological systems of border control (Neal 2008; Léonard 2010). Border security, however, has gained importance and political visibility since the second half of the 2000s due to increased irregular migration and the growing numbers of refugees. Especially with the recent 'refugee crisis' the attention devoted to issues of border protection skyrocketed to new heights and it became a key priority of the European Agenda on Migration.

For the project, political and public controversies surrounding the following issues are of particular interest: the development of the Schengen asylum regime and in particular the de facto break-down of the Dublin convention (2015), the further expansion of the EU's agency FRONTEX (founded in 2004), which supports operational border management in member states, but also coordinates 'search and rescue' missions (e.g. operations *Triton* and *Poseidon*) in the Mediterranean, the introduction of technical border management instruments such as *Eurosur* (European border surveillance system); the growing number of bilateral agreements on migration and border issues (so-called *migration partnerships*) with Eastern European, North African and Sahel states and, most recently and controversially, with Turkey, which aim at relocating refugees, combating human trafficking, building capacities in border control as well as regulating migration.

Based on issues and debates chosen from the two security sub-fields, we like first to study politicization processes at the European level, not least regarding the two key decision-makers in security policies, the Council and the European Parliament. Who are the potential or actual politicizers (e.g. national governments, political parties, experts, NGOs) and their addressees? What are the typical dynamics of politicization at the EU level? Which national actors and issues play a role in EU-level debates? Second, existing research usually highlights that politicization still unfolds along national lines due to the nascent development of transnational or European public spheres and the effective concentration of decision-making power at the national level (de Wilde et al. 2016: 7; Genschel/Jachtenfuchs 2016: 49). Hence, to understand the politicization of security, where states are comparatively even more dominant actors, it is necessary to study politicization in the national context as well and compare it to findings from the EU level. To what extent do debates in Brussels translate into national debates? How do the forms of politicization and its consequences differ at the transnational EU level and at Germany's national level?

Methods and Data

The project seeks to understand how concrete politicization processes regarding specific security issues emerge, unfold and result in specific consequences. We share the basic emphasis on debate and mobilization in the public sphere characterizing previous politicization research (de Wilde et al. 2016: 4), but focus less on the quantitative, standardized analysis of large amounts of publicly available texts, mostly media articles. Rather, we opt for a qualitative approach and focus on in-depth case studies of politicization processes using a broad range of data in order to capture the different forms of discursive and practical politicization. The different steps of analysis will require different methods and different kinds of data.

The project's emphasis on the multi-stage process of politicization suggests *process-tracing* as a central method (George/Bennett 2004; Collier 2011). This method allows us to combine the detailed analysis of specific cases and the unpacking of concrete, interactive politicization processes with systematic, theory-driven analysis that will also enable us to evaluate and specify some of the claims made in the more general debates on securitization, politicization and European governance. Hence, the project will not only analyze the forms of politicization processes (object, agent, repertoire, level) in order to see who politicizes which issues in which arena but also trace the dynamics of politicization processes along the three phases sketched out above and assess whether and how our four indicators of politicization (participation, divergence, resonance, interaction) become visible and change throughout the process. Hence, the process tracing directly follows our analytical framework. For each field covered, the project team will first identify specific decisions that were prominently covered in public debates and negotiations. Thereby, we will develop an *event timeline* for each policy field based mainly on press coverage, but also additional sources like NGO websites, public speeches or official documents in order to identify starting and end points of politicization processes as well as periods of especially high and low intensity in the politicization process, which will be broken down into our three-phase-model.

Researching the different phases this way requires fine-grained qualitative case studies that draw on a variety of sources. Relying on systematic description, the project develops and underpins arguments based on detailed analysis of as many primary and secondary documents as possible and a detailed knowledge of the cases. The analysis is linked to and structured along the dimensions, indicators and favorable conditions of the politicization process developed above. In addition, the analysis demands field research at the EU and national level for the sub-fields of counter-terrorism and border security. We will, therefore, conduct *expert interviews* with key politicizers and addressees (parliamentarians, bureaucrats, activists etc.) in Brussels and Berlin as well as additional experts in think-tanks, media or academia. The interviews will inquire interviewees' inside knowledge of relevant politicization processes as well as their personal perceptions of and motives in these processes. This is crucial in order to understand why politicizers and addressees react to and interact with each other in certain ways and at specific points in the process. In order to collect a larger amount of primary data, we also plan to send out *standardized questionnaires* to policy-makers and other participants (NGOS, media etc.) on their perceptions and assessments of politicization and its facilitating conditions as outlined in our research framework.

Different stages of the process require the analysis of different kinds of data, which may include not only qualitative, but also quantitative sources. In the first phase of the politicization process, the project starts with mapping the relevant actors and identifying the different positions of politicizers and addressees. For discursive politicization, the examination here will focus on discourse analysis of announcements by politicizers and their addressees through the media, public statements, websites, communication material etc. For practical politicization, the project will take a close look at public actions like protests or symbolic actions in order to elucidate the full repertoire of politicizers and their addressees. In the second phase of the process, the examination will draw upon similar sources, but also delve deeper into the political process of negotiations and debates. For this, we will gather information on mobilization campaigns, resource spending, election campaigns, court cases or parliamentary inquiries providing further evidence on the range of participating actors and the polarization of their views. Moreover, we will reconstruct the contentious interactions among involved actors. This requires the analysis of publicly available sources as well as interviews with politicizers and addressees. Moreover, it will also be necessary to analyze to which degree the process resonates with wider

audiences. This can be achieved through the evaluation of broader public discourses through media reports and civil society sources. Additionally, the study can draw on EU-wide and national polls and surveys, social media campaigns or online petitions as indicators for public awareness and engagement. Regarding the third phase, i.e. the consequences of politicization, we will research different reactions by the addressees in terms of political responses. This includes revisions or withdrawals of specific legal measures, institutional reforms, change in political rhetoric or change in public attitudes.

Based on this, the project will conduct a comparison in two steps. In the first step, the project will compare politicization processes within each policy subfield across the European and national level in order to determine whether there is a common pattern of politicization in an emerging European political space or politicization still remains a largely national undertaking with country-specific characteristics (here Germany). This is important to understand whether there is a general trend towards politicization at all, but also to gain first insights on whether differences in the facilitating conditions (e.g. cultural and institutional) context lead to different forms of politicization in the security field that might also require different academic approaches and political responses. Moreover, our process-oriented case study approach allows us to trace possible mechanisms through which politicization processes travel from one level to the other, or to identify points where such a transfer is blocked, translated or channeled in different direction. In a second step, we will compare politicization processes across the two subfields of counter-terrorism and border security. This allows us to see how certain conditions, such as intrusiveness and authority transfer, play out in different sub-field. As we are interested in 'issue-specific politicization processes' (de Wilde et al. 2016: 10) rather than in the politicization of EU institutions as such and focus on the field of European security, we also need to know whether politicization processes are driven by overall development in and features of the security field or by even more narrow and specific factors and dynamics that are peculiar to counter-terrorism and border security.

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