The EU as a Securitizing Agent? Testing the Model, Advancing the Literature

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The EU as a securitizing agent?

Testing the model, advancing the literature

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The European Union (EU) is generally acknowledged to be a *sui generis* polity. That is the assumption around which other debates have pivoted relating to: the presence and nature of the EU's actorness in world politics (Duchene 1973; Manners 2002; Lucarelli and Manners eds. 2006), the trajectory of European integration and the institutionalization of the EU's actorness (Whitman ed. 2011), the limits of EU power, and the tension between the EU's civilian prerogatives and its gradually acquired competences in foreign and security policy (Smith 2014; Tonra and Christiansen 2004). Out of these debates, three propositions about the EU as an actor have gained wide acceptance: (i) the European integration process has been a story of transformation of European states toward post-Westphalian sovereignty (Wagnsson, Sperling and Hallenberg 2009); (ii) there has been a consequent de-securitization of inter-state relations and the creation of a security community around the EU; (iii) a EU/ropean way of conceiving and enacting security has developed that is multidimensional, preventive and forward thinking (Keukeleire and Delreux 2014; Telò 2009).

Yet, the precise nature of the EU as a security actor has remained an open question. Since the late 1990s, the EU has gradually acquired security and defence policy competences, in part to complete the European project and in part to achieve a greater equality between the US and Europe within the context of the transatlantic relationship. Since 2003, the EU has deployed civilian and military missions abroad

(Howorth 2014), has both strengthened its relations with NATO and obtained greater autonomy from it, and with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, has taken on an explicit commitment to collective defence (*Article* 42(7) of the Treaty on *European* Union). On the latter, it is notable that the first steps towards the implementation of the 2016 *EU Global Strategy* (EUGS) have centred on the defence sector (Council of the European Union 2016). In other words, the EU has gradually come to conceive of the use of military force as a viable and sometimes necessary policy instrument. It is gradually becoming a more traditional security actor while acknowledging the pragmatic need to rely on all available means to achieve effective policy outcomes; in other words, the EU has put 'principled pragmatism' into practice as defined in the EUGS (EU HR/VP 2016: 16).[i]

This trend towards greater EU responsibility for external action has, however, been placed into question by four developments: the re-emergence of renationalized security policies and narratives in several European states (Sciura 2017), the crisis of solidarity displayed by the member states since the economic and financial crisis of 2008 (Hall 2012), an inability to agree upon and implement a common set of policies to manage the influx of migrants and asylum seekers into Europe, and finally, Brexit, which clearly refutes the proposition that the European integration process is irreversible. In other words, the European states look a bit more Westphalian than they seemed to be some years ago and the security community they constitute somewhat less 'amalgamated.'[ii]

But EU actorness even in these turbulent times has been re-affirmed by a largely overlooked phenomenon, — namely, the emergence of the EU as an agent of collective securitization. The fundamental claim of securitization theory is that threat emergence and management is shaped by the actions of a securitizing agent, which explicitly links together the social construction of the threat with socially-acceptable governance or policy measures. Given this link between 'threat design' and 'threat management' (Balzacq et al 2016), it is something of an oversight that the analysis of security governance in Europe has not engaged with securitization theory to explain how security comes to be defined in the space of collective

effort (for an exception see Christou at al. 2010). This Special Issue has undertaken a concerted analysis of securitization within the EU space and its impact on the nature and modalities of EU security governance across different policy domains. In so doing so, it advances securitization theory through an elaboration of the concept of collective securitization – and broadens our understanding of the EU and its role in the system of European security governance.

This concluding article summarizes the main findings of this Special Issue. It does so in two parts. The first summarizes the case study evidence and posits the cases against the collective securitization framework outlined in the opening article (*** and ***: this volume). The second draws upon the framework and cases to offer reflections on how collective securitization relates to securitization theory more broadly.

Securitising politics in the European security space? Evidence from the case-studies

The policy or issue areas explored in this Special Issue differ, not only with respect to content but also the asymmetrical distribution of responsibility between the member states and EU institutions. There is no uniformity in the degree of sovereignty retained by the member states or the competences shared with the EU. Some issue areas have already been explored exhaustively through the analytical lens of securitization (e.g., migration, cyberspace, and climate), while others have been overlooked or largely ignored (e.g., health, terrorism, and energy). None, however, has been previously explored through the theoretical category of collective securitization.

Collective securitization unfolds in six stages: the policy status quo, precipitant event requiring a reconsideration of that status quo, the securitizing move, the audience response, policy outputs, and the new status quo (*** and ***, this volume). In what follows, I evaluate similarities and differences among the case studies on the bases of these six stages in order to consider whether or not collective securitization has

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occurred.

In all the case studies, it has been possible to identify a status quo security discourse and practice. In the case of Schengen, its 'normal functioning [...] was understood as maintaining the absence of border controls', and this was possible thanks to 'the EU's effort to safeguard the Schengen area', but equally to the member states' 'mutual trust' (***: this issue). In the case of health policy, the initial status quo is to be found in the 1990s, when cross-border infectious diseases had emerged as a salient area of cooperation in the EU.   The policy language used was one of 'infectious disease control' and the EU had developed an initial health policy regime, in coordination with a formalised network of European epidemiologists (***: this volume). Similar status quo points are identifiable in the case of cyberspace (economic logic), energy security (economic logic), counter-terrorism (a state's internal security), and climate change (as an environmental challenge).

Such initial conditions were altered by some form of precipitating event(s). An interesting finding derived from the case studies is that in most instances, there has not been a single precipitating event, but a series of challenges over time which shaped a transformation in the language and practice of security in the specific field. The cases of health, Schengen, cyberspace, and energy are particularly illuminating in this respect; each demonstrates how a series of events, internal or external to the EU, triggered a securitization process evident in both discourse and practice. By contrast, in the cases of terrorism and climate change, it is possible to identify a single precipitating event external to the EU, which triggered securitization. However, even in these cases, the main precipitant events were followed by other significant and reinforcing events (terrorist attacks in Europe, in the first case; a growing scientific awareness of the relationship between frequent natural calamities and climate change, in the second) that cumulatively created the momentum for the process of securitization to go ahead. It is interesting to note also that the events need not be of external origin (as is frequently the case in traditional securitization analyses); but can be seen as 'domestic' (EU) challenges, as in the case of health (Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) or Mad-Cow disease) or

Schengen (the suspension of open borders by the member states).

Contrary to the expectations of collective securitization theory, the speech act did not refer to an existential threat in the literal sense that the survival of the polity was at risk. But the securitizing speech act did change radically the discourse of threat. In most cases, practices were introduced for which a different security language was deployed with respect to the management of the issue at hand. Further, in all the cases analysed, as would be expected on the basis of collective securitization theory, a specific securitising move resulted in an 'iterative process of securitization' characterised by 'recursive interaction' between a securitizing actor and at least part of the legitimizing audience such that the distinction between securitizing actor and audience becomes blurred. This has clearly been the case in the securitization of Schengen, where some member states have become securitizing actors and have guided the Council in the iterative securitization process with the Commission. The same can be said for energy: the timid initial securitization moves by the Commission would not have led to an enhanced securitization speech act, had Poland not played a role in the process and the Council, under the Presidency of Donald Tusk, not followed the securitization rhetorical path. The same applies in the case of health (where transnational professional networks and bureaucratic actors played the alternating roles of securitizing actors and audience), terrorism (where the US and member states represented the audience interacting with the EU), and climate change (where the EU institutions performed securitization discourses and practices before internal and external audiences). In several cases there is a plurality of audiences among which it is possible to identify an 'empowering audience' (the audience ultimately legitimizing the securitizing actor's speech act) and an 'attentive audience' (the audience influencing security debates but lacking a legitimizing/empowering role). In a complex organization like the EU, the member states are the main empowering audience; external actors (like the US in the case of terrorism and climate change) are audiences that, although lacking a formal legitimizing function, might nonetheless influence the securitization process.

Another interesting finding has to do with the stakeholders involved. The securitizing audience, the

composition of which is expected to consist of member states in the collective securitization theory, does not seem to stand the empirical test of securitization in the areas of health and cyberspace. In all cases the role of EU institutions (the Commission in the first instance, but also the Council) is seen as crucial to the redefinition of language and practices, but in health and cyberspace the relevant audience existed well beyond the member states and included the private sector (crucial in the case of cyberspace) and epistemic communities of experts in epidemiology (health). The scientific community played an important role in the case of climate change; it articulated a consensus view that human activity is the driver of climate disruption and so has rendered urgent the need to craft timely political responses to an otherwise irreversible process.

Recursive interaction and the attendant actor-audience relations are thus context specific, differing not only by issue area but also in relation to specific domains *within* that area. This feature is underlined particularly in the case of cyberspace where the securitization process and the impact on security governance within the EU differ between network and information security (NIS) and cybercrime (***: this issue).

The policy outputs flowing from a securitized discourse have not always involved emergency measures as traditional ST would expect, but has instead engendered 'enhanced ordinary policy.' Does this imply that securitization has not occurred? *** and *** (this issue) claim that 'emergency ought not be a defining criterion of securitization.' Collective securitization can be said to occur if there has been a significant shift towards a securitized discourse and a transformation of security governance in/by the collective actor. What have been the policy outputs in the areas explored here? What consequence have they had for the EU system of security governance?

A first observation in these regards had been a strengthening of collective action in line with prior norms and rules. No exceptional measures disrupted ordinary policy, but significant transformations in the governance in each issue area are evident, particularly in the acceptance that the security threat at hand requires collective rather than national policy solutions. In a number of cases, policy outputs have been

described as part of the securitizing move inter-subjectively undertaken (as in the case of the revised politics of border control to 'save' Schengen or the transformation of public health into health security). Thus, in the case of energy, given the specific features of the issue area and the highly contested securitization move, enhanced cooperation - embedded in the proposals implementing the Energy Union package –reflected the Commission's ability to articulate the economic and the security logics of energy supply alongside concerns for mitigating climate change (*** and ***: this issue).

The second, related observation, has been the empowerment of one or more collective institutions (most frequently the Commission, but in some cases the Council as well). In fact, in more than one case, the Commission has been described not only as the main securitizing actor, but also as the institution benefitting most (in terms of relative weight and prerogatives) from the process of collective securitization, particularly in the cases of energy, health and climate change.

Third, there has been the creation, in several cases, of new institutions and procedures. This has taken the form of new mechanisms (the crisis solidarity mechanism in energy) or enhanced mechanisms (the surveillance and control for health crises and the Schengen Borders Code), new institutions (the EU Border and Coast Guard; the Health Emergency Operation Facility) or new relations among institutions or departments in a specific issue area (the European Council in climate change; the redistribution of competences within the Commission on health policy). That said, it is worth noting these changes did not rupture pre-existing rules or programmes.

Fourth, in some cases (energy, cyberspace, and possibly climate change) we have seen the adoption of measures in response to a securitization move that reflect a compromise solution designed to enhance resilience. This dynamic is apparent in the implementation packages of the Energy Union aimed at ensuring a stable supply of energy, as well as in the case of cyberspace with the General Data Protection Regulation. These cases of collective securitization and policy outputs targeting enhanced collective resilience can be seen as 'self-insurance' rather than 'self-protection' (Sperling 2012; 2018).

Taken together, these four observations suggest that recursive interaction between the EU and its member states has led to a transformation in the discourse of security in each policy area and so has transformed EU security governance with respect to patterned, stakeholder and regulatory interactions. The extent of that transformation has varied from case to case (with significant changes in the cases of Schengen, terrorism, climate change and health, and more limited changes in the cases of energy and cyberspace) and so complicates any definitive assessment of the EU's success as an agent of securitization.

Two obstacles seem to stand in the way of collective securitization and, by extension, the transformation of security governance in any given policy area. First, security goods which have a private (or national) quality – energy and cyber, for instance – have proven more resistant to collective securitization than those (such as climate change, health and, to some degree, terrorism) defined more broadly as 'public goods'. This confirms Sperling and Webber's (2017:26) expectation that '[c]ollective Securitization is more likely to occur when a threat has a systemic referent (impinging upon international and collective identities, or the rule and norms governing interstate interactions).' A second obstacle is the presence of a divided audience. In the case of a collective actor like the EU, differences among the member states are frequent (even normal) occurrences. Some disagreements can be more significant than others. This has been the case with energy and cyberspace, where an economic logic has come into play. As Barry Buzan (1991: 124) has noted 'the normal condition of actors in a market economy is one of risk, aggressive competition and uncertainty.'   That normality does not by definition preclude securitization (we have seen that securitization can obtain a routine as well as an exceptional quality) but it does make securitization

and specifically *collective* securitization more difficult simply because the audience may not be convinced that a threshold of threat or risk has been crossed.

The audience is also likely to be divided on the identification of the referent object and on the nature of the issue at stake. In the case of collective securitization it is often the case that the relevant stakeholders identify different referent objects (e.g., European security vs. the Single Market vs. national security). *** and *** (this volume), for example, claim that in EU discourse and practice, the economic referent object has an 'institutional and historically endowed constituency' that is enshrined in the Single Market. This privileging of the market in conjunction with the rising saliency of the EU as a security actor has created a contestation on framing issues within the economic or security referent. Frequently, this contestation makes it difficult to reconcile the instrumental necessity of securitization with the substantive objective of seeking a common solution to achieve the material and/or political goals of the EU.

Securitization processes have been regarded as having a negative impact on cooperation and actual security (Balzacq 2011). However it is also true that the perception of a common threat frequently leads to enhanced cooperation (or at least coordination). In other words, when the security stake is perceived to be high, multilateral security governance is enhanced. We might ask, therefore, if the securitization of an issue area has affected European security governance in terms of patterned, stakeholder and regulatory interaction (for definitions, see *** and ***, this volume).

Arguably, securitization of the policy issues under consideration has not led to a disruption of normal politics. A transformation in the discourse of security has been combined with new forms of security governance but these have occurred within the institutional boundaries of the EU. An enhanced role for EU institutions has clearly occurred in the case of climate change and, to lesser degrees with regard to cyberspace, Schengen, health and terrorism. Regulatory integration changed in all cases. New norms and

regulations, building on old ones, were proposed and implemented by the EU even if the degree of acceptance as well as the degree of innovation varied significantly from case of case. Collective securitization has led to changes in security governance characterised by transformed relations among the actors involved and alterations to institutional solutions to their shared concerns.

Implications for securitization theory

The Copenhagen School claims that threats are socially constructed through speech acts undertaken by a securitizing actor before an audience. Acceptance by the audience that a referent object is threatened empowers the securitizing agent to undertake exceptional measures to counter it.[iii] In this context, 'security has a particular discursive and political force and is a concept that does something – *securitize* – rather than an objective (or subjective) condition' (Buzan and Hansen 2009: 214). The original formulation of securitization theory has long been the subject of debate and has been tested in multiple conceptually-grounded empirical explorations. Such work has challenged some of the initial tenets of the theory and opened the way to new formulations (Balzacq and Guzzini 2016; McDonald 2008), so much so that now we can talk of 'various theories of securitization' (Balzacq 2015: 103). Five aspects of securitization theory remain open: the relationship between securitizing actor and audience, the nature and indispensability of the precipitating event and its definition as an existential threat, the relationship between discourse and practice, the transformative character of securitization, and finally, the normative implications of securitization. The articles in this Special Issue offer something on each of these aspects and at the same time widen our understanding of a specific, collective, form of securitization, thus far neglected in the literature. The following briefly touches upon each of these five aspects and then summarizes what we have learned about collective securitization.

Actor and audience: recursive interaction.

The most compelling feature of securitization theory is the claim that a threat to security need not be objective, but can be subjective, constructed in discourse. Securitization, the means by which that threat is articulated and dealt with, is, in turn, the result of an interaction between a securitizing actor and its audience. The role of the audience in the intersubjective construction of security is frequently downplayed and the audience is assumed to passively support (or not) the securitizing move. It is for this reason that some critics have observed that the commitment to the intersubjective nature of security is not always pursued consistently in securitization theory (Balzacq and Guzzini 2015: 99; McDonald 2008). Relatedly, there has also been a vigorous debate on who or what constitutes the actor (with early formulations of securitization theory being seen as overly state-centric) and what exactly is the nature of the audience or, more specifically, what role does it perform in its relationship with the securitizing actor (Léonard and Kaunert 2011).

The theoretical framework adopted in this Special Issue and then applied in select issue areas circumvent some of these limitations. In the case of collective securitization, state-centrism is avoided by definition, as it looks at 'how a group of states undertakes securitization in concert and how, at the international level, that process is expressed and institutionalized' (Sperling and Webber 2017: 25). The 'thick' version of collective securitization, moreover, regards the institutionalization of state behaviour in international organizations as giving the latter autonomy and standing in their own right (*** and *** this volume).

The EU is a very interesting case for collective securitization, possibly more interesting than NATO, as it does different things in different issue areas. It is a collective actor with agency, albeit with varying degrees of freedom from issue area to issue area; at the same time it is comprised of and interacts with its member states (as the 'empowering audience'). In other words, the

securitizing actor and the audience are engaged in a process of recursive interaction in which the process of securitization is intersubjectively produced. This focus on recursive interaction allows us to overcome the dichotomy between subjectivity and intersubjectivity: securitization results from both a securitizing move by the EU and the interaction between the EU (actor) and its member states (audience). This combination entails an actor-audience relationship embedded in a system of security governance. As we have seen above, in our cases, this process has been particularly clear.

Precipitating events and existential threats: from existential threats to ontological insecurity? The securitization literature has also debated the nature and necessity of a precipitating event that triggers the beginning of the securitization process. As we have seen, in a number of the cases analysed in this Special Issue such an event has not been apparent; instead, a series of cascading events has culminated in a securitization tipping point (particularly marked in cyberspace, Schengen, and health). This insight is a key finding of this Special Issue; it provides an empirical basis supporting the claim that the transformation of an issue area into a security issue is evolutionary rather than sudden. As such, securitization can be understood as path dependent: it draws upon existing policies and rules and is embedded in institutional routines. In the case of a complex political actor like the EU, where states have tended to resist drastic innovation (Brexit notwithstanding), the recourse to these mechanisms while readily understandable is significant nonetheless. It denotes a communitarization of security management and the absorption of crises within the bounds of normal politics.

A further aspect in the original formulation of ST open to challenge is the priority given to existential threats – to the survival of 'a designated referent object (traditionally, but not

necessarily, the state, incorporating government, territory, and society)' (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998: 21). As *** and *** (this issue) note, existential threats can be 'ontological and well as physical.' According to Anthony Giddens (1991: 38-39), ontological security is a 'person's fundamental sense of safety in the world [which] includes a basic trust of other people [in order to] maintain a sense of psychological well-being and avoid existential anxiety'. Mitzen (2006) and Steele (2008) have developed and applied this concept to international relations, mainly by transposing the ontological security of the individual onto the state. The argument here is that it is also applicable to collective actors such as the EU. Ontological threats arise even in the absence of a physical, material threat to a referent's survival. Securitization in the EU has been ontological insofar as it is a response to threats perceived as undermining some essential purpose of the Union. Thus, for instance, the securitization of Schengen did not occur because migration threatened to physically overwhelm the Union. True, such fears were articulated by populist anti-immigrant parties (and even sitting governments in Hungary, Poland and elsewhere) but *collective* securitization was the outcome of a desire to preserve the mechanisms of security governance – 'to provide 'internal' order to [the] otherwise uncoordinated patterns of Member State action' (***: this issue). Analogously, Russia's interruption of energy supplies to Europe has not only represented a challenge to European economies, but a threat to the Single Market and ultimately 'European integration and political stability' (*** and *** this volume). Both point to a peculiar role of ontological security in processes of *collective* securitization. If in the case of a typical state actor, ontological security refers to the perceived security of the self in terms of cultural and political identity (Croft 2012), in the case of a collective actor such as the EU, that identity is more obviously an outcome of functional competence as it is claims to cultural or political status (which are both

nebulous and contested). Ontological security, therefore, mostly refers to the protection of the collective self through its achievements (in this case, the institutional advancement of the integration process).

In some cases, the EU is forced to confront a rising level of risk rather than a security threat conventionally understood. The relationship between securitization and what Olaf Corry calls 'riskification' (2012) has been explored particularly with respect to the environment (Corry 2012; Lucke, Wellmann and Diez 2014). According to Corry, 'riskification' is a particular type of speech act which does not refer to 'direct causes of harm' (as threat-based security), but to conditions which give rise to the *possibility* of harm. This type of securitization gives rise not to exceptional measures as such but to forms of long-term precautionary governance, what Sperling (2018) has referred to as policies of 'self-insurance' (see also above). Of the cases considered in this Special Issue, cyberspace and energy appear to conform to this logic. This is not to suggest that the risks in these domains lack urgency, immediacy or gravity. The point simply is that risk has acquired a seemingly permanent character owing to uncertainties of scale, duration and origin; so they become subject to a constant process of security management. Corey (2012: 237) contends that 'risk politics' is distinct from securitisation, but what cyberspace and energy better illustrate is a point made in the opening piece (*** and ***), namely that the logics of exception (threat) and routine (risk) can co-exist, consistent with the assumption that securitization need not be made in response to a single precipitating event.

Discourse and practices.

The original formulation of ST focused on the speech act as the trigger of securitization. This

exclusive focus on discourse has been criticised (Bigo and Tsoukala 2008; Huysmans 2011; Hansen 2000) and eventually abandoned. In this Special Issue we have worked on both discourse (speech act) and practices, but it is clear that speech acts remain highly relevant in the case of collective securitization in the EU, particularly when embedded in policy documents. In fact, the hybrid political nature of the EU and the absence of a truly European public space where the EU voice can be articulated and discussed, means that the voice of the EU is largely heard through official documents addressed to specialised attentive publics and to actors already embedded within the structures of EU governance

Speech acts in the Copenhagen School formulation are also intrinsically purposeful: the securitizing actor makes a securitizing move (the speech act) to obtain the audience's approval for the use of exceptional measures. But it is not an act which occurs in one shot. The discourse of security can unfold over a lengthy period of time and bring with it a series of recurrent practices. Indeed, one finding from the cases studies is that securitization is an incremental process composed of what Jeff Huysmans (2011: 376) has called 'little security nothings': cases in which 'instead of "moments of critical decision" we have a myriad of decisions in a process that is continuously made and remade.' This implies that in some cases there was collective securitization without a marked departure from the 'normal rules of the game' (Huysmans 2011: 375), a state of affairs particularly clear in the case of the securitization of health. Securitization understood in this way poses normative questions. As Huysmans asks, how do we 'read politically dispersal and processes in which decisions cannot be aggregated into critical moments and sites that rupture a given order?' (2011: 380). We shall return to these normative issues below.

The transformative character of securitization.

ST claims that the process of securitization effects a transformation of the perception and definition of security in a given society. However, the transformative power of securitization has a further feature which is quite peculiar in the case of *collective* securitization: its *bordering power.* By means of securitization, the cognitive borders of the referent object (in this case, the EU) are transformed: the distinction between the inside (collective referent object) and the outside (the securitized issue/threat) are reshaped and thereby lead to a denser social construction of the collective border. The securitization of migration, and thence the securitization of Schengen, is the clearest case of the redefinition of the Union's borders: the external borders of the Schengen member states, owing to uncontrolled migratory inflows, have become more tangibly EU borders, protected and monitored by EU agencies (e.g., the EU Coast Guard). Even in the case of a truly transnational threat (infectious diseases, cyberspace, climate change), which would make it difficult to distinguish the inside (of the EU) from the outside, the *bordering* power of securitization is pretty clear: the more the issue is securitized and security governance adapted, the more the EU identifies itself as a specific security actor characterised by a distinctive system of governance or at least policies to develop a resilient capacity internally.

The normative dimension of securitization.

The ethics of securitization have been addressed by ST since its inception. More recently, a literature has developed that considers this dimension much more explicitly (Floyd 2011; Roe 2012). Most of this work is aligned with the original Copenhagen School position and generally regards securitization negatively in terms of process (it being characterised by the lack of openness and deliberation) and of outcome (the adoption of exceptional measures) (Roe 2012).   These concerns have been expressed in warnings against the so-called Schmittian exception (associated with the German political theorist Carl Schmitt) – the problem of measures taken in the wake of securitisation that subvert 'the restraining effects [of] the rule of law and democratic

representation […] on the arbitrary exercise of power.' Securitization, in other words, is to be avoided

because it results in a 'decisionist politics' controlled by an empowered executive authority (Huysmans 2004:

327). This essentially negative reading is not, however, the only way of viewing securitization's ethical

dimension. *** piece in this Special Issue argues that 'securitization can be just, in the sense of being morally

permissible provided that a number of conditions are met'. This more positive reading evaluates

securitization on the basis of three specific criteria: (i) that there is an objective existential threat; (ii) that

the referent object of security is morally legitimate; and (iii) that the security response is appropriate to the

threat (Floyd 2011: 428). In assessing the ethical dimension of collective securitization, one additional

criterion should be added: the coherence with respect to the normative stance of the collective actor.

What can we say, in this light, on the ethics of EU collective securitization? First, we can claim that in

the case of collective securitization, deliberation is inherently part of the recursive interaction engaging actor

and audience. This interaction has been present in all the case studies and differentiates sharply traditional

securitization from collective securitization. As for the securitization outcome, collective securitization

certainly generates exceptional measures – however, as noted above these reside within a densely

institutionalised environment in which prior action and processes matter. By reference to these two

considerations, then, the hazards the exception are somewhat blunted. Further, if we consider Floyd's

criteria, the first requirement is satisfied to the extent that it is possible to map (separate to the EU's own

claims) a deterioration of the security landscape. This is not an easy judgment to make – after all, the entire

basis of the Copenhagen School's initial approach to securitization is that of the speech act where 'the

utterance itself is the act' (Waever 1995: 55). As was pointed out in the introductory framing article, this

premise is misplaced: (in)security does have an objective status outside the perceptions of the securitising

actor. Floyd (2011: 430-431) suggests the presence of an objective threat can be known by reference to two

qualities. The first is intention (if an aggressor says its target is the EU then this is prima facia evidence of

threat). Such a position, however, is not that helpful in our cases, as most of the issues we have considered

are without explicit or conscious intention and/or cannot be traced back to an actor motivated by any sort of desire to threaten the EU. The second is capabilities. Here, conceptual purchase is limited if capability is associated with the intentions of an actor (as just indicated, threats can be actorless). But read somewhat differently capabilities can equate to the material properties of threat (even if an actor is seemingly absent) We know, for instance, that in material terms the EU has had to deal with a huge increase in migrants or measurable changes in global climactic and health conditions. This is not the beginning and end of securitization – all our cases illustrate how the objective conditions of rising insecurity are perceived in different ways. As for the second requirement, there are no reasons to claim that the EU has lacked moral legitimacy. We do not have space here to consider the now well-known debates on the EU's normative claims (cf. Larsen 2014). Suffice to say that one purpose of the framing article was to, at least, establish the credentials of the EU as an agent of collective securitization. But this bears, in turn, on Floyd's third criterion. If in some cases securitization has provided the EU with greater agency through the collectivization of security governance, in all cases the tension between the EU's self-representation as a civilian and normative power guided by values and principles has been challenged by the very process of securitization. The securitization of Schengen is the most pointed example in this regard. The main policy responses (externalization of migration policy and enhanced border control) have exposed migrants to treatment and legal protections which fall far short of those extended to the EU's own citizens (Fassi and Lucarelli 2017). But this is only part of the story. For Floyd (2011:432-433), appropriateness is judged by the proportionality and sincerity of measures taken to secure the referent (the EU in this case). In many cases, this will give rise to a simple prioritisation in that the case for the protection of the referent trumps other moral considerations. Protecting the EU from a health or cyber threat, for instance, need not afford any sympathy for the source of the threat (neither pathogens nor malware, for example, have rights). But other cases are messier. As (***: this volume) suggests, in the case of migration the desire to preserve the integrity of Schengen meant a 'prioritization of the security of [EU] internal space over the claims of migrants and

asylum seekers.' In so doing, the standing of the EU was placed above the rights and well-being of migrants – the EU's normative claims were extended not to the other but rather to itself.

Conclusions

European security governance has attracted quite a lot of attention in the past decade or so (Krahmann 2003; Kirchner and Sperling 2007; Webber 2007; Lucarelli, Van Langenhove and Wouters eds. 2011; Cottey 2014). This literature suffers from a lack of attention to how 'security' comes to be defined in the governance system (Christou, Croft, Ceccorulli and Lucarelli 2010; Ceccorulli, Frappi and Lucarelli 2017), a conceptual lacuna this Special Issue has sought to tackle. In doing so, it has relied on a modified version of securitization theory —collective securitization—precisely shaped to analyse securitization in/by a collective actor. The associated case studies show how discourses and practices of security can develop in different issue areas. The securitization of the issue areas in this Special Issue largely confirm the claims made about the process of collective securitization (see Table 1). They are of direct relevance to the European security space but also hold implications for other international institutions with a security remit.

(See Table 1)

The application of the collective securitization framework, meanwhile, has some relevance to how we understand the generation and functioning of securitization. In summary, the main findings of this collection can be listed as follows:

- Single precipitating events are less common than securitization theory anticipates. Instead, securitization is more likely to occur in response to a tipping point that changes

the underlying character (or understanding) of the policy domain. The analytical

framework of collective securitization does not rule this out – the security status quo

can be disrupted by a precipitating event but equally by a cascading of events. Our case

studies have provided ample evidence of the latter.

- The securitization move is an interactive process in which communicative actions (verbal

  and material) undertaken both by the securitizing agent and the interacting audience

  takes place. Recursive interaction is the manner in which this takes place; it is

  particularly relevant in the case of collective securitization, where the distinction

  between the empowering audience and securitizing actor is blurred.

- An existential threat is not necessary for a process of securitization to take place. As

  with national securitization processes, threats to the institutional purpose or relevancy

  of a collective entity like the EU can be perceived as triggering ontological insecurity.

- In a collective securitization context, the composite character of the audience is

  amplified and instances of contestation more frequent. This can lead to obstacles to

  securitization, but might not inhibit a growing collectivization of governance if the

  alternative logic endorsed by empowering audience leads to the same end.

- The policy output of a process of securitization need not be exceptional but can be an 'enhanced ordinary policy' which, building on existing policy processes, enhances collective governance. Securitization eventually empowers collective institutions and leads to the creation of new institutions or mechanisms.

- The success of securitization depends primarily on the nature of the good and the cohesiveness of the audience. A domain can be viewed as a collective good without being securitized, but the collective entity can only securitize a good that the legitimizing audience perceives to be a collective good.

- Securitization (and collective securitization in particular) has bordering power in that it transforms the cognitive borders of the referent object, thereby altering the distinction between the inside (internal referent object) and the outside (the securitized issue/threat).

- In the case of the EU, the different processes of securitization have led to policies of self-insurance (resilience) rather than self-protection (deterrence or defense). A significant exception is the securitization of Schengen, where the transformation of migration policy (border control and enhanced patrolling of the sea) contain elements of deterrence (*vis a vis* immigrants).

The introductory framework proposed in this Special Issue has proven to be a useful theoretical contribution to the analysis of the intersubjective construction of security in a collective framework of security governance. It also sheds light on the EU as a securitizing agent. Collective securitization is, on the evidence presented in our cases, a route to enhancing security governance. But governance can also be challenged by securitization. Three dynamics here are worth noting by way of concluding thoughts.

First, the emergence of the EU as a securitizing actor and with it the acquisition of ever more competences can trigger a process of securitization *of* the EU such that the EU comes to be seen as threat to the ontological security of its citizens (Manners 2002). Euroscepticism has, in fact, long dwelt in this current with the view that national and local identities have been subsumed by the EU's political and cultural encroachments (McLaren 2002). Relatedly, the securitization of migration, undertaken by both the EU and its member states, has had knock on effects internally. The migration crisis of 2015 was driven, by and large, by developments outside the EU – the conflicts in Syria, Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan and with it a perception that the integrity of the Schengen system was imperiled. But alongside this, migration internal to the EU through the operation of the Single Market has been securitized in discourses of nativist politics, a trend evident in some of the rhetoric around Brexit in the UK, the exclusionary politics of Viktor Orbán in Hungary, and the policies of the Law and Justice government in Poland. At the same time, the securitization of health might have similar results, as the 2017 debate in Italy on compulsory vaccination seems to imply. The securitization of the Eurozone since the 2008 financial crisis, with its attendant austerity measures to 'save the Euro', has meanwhile contributed to growing Euroscepticism and domestic political turbulence in several European countries (Greece and Italy perhaps most obviously).

A second governance challenge is what one might call 'securitization spillovers': the transfer of securitization from one issue area to another. Several authors in this special issue have underlined how not only 11 September 2001 (the event), but the securitization of terrorism (the fact that it has started to be defined as a shared collective concern) has led to securitization in other areas, such as cyberspace and

health. At the same time, the securitization of borders by some EU member states has contributed to a further securitization of migration and eventually to Schengen. The process is not limited to collective securitization, but might be more likely in a collective context given the path-dependencies that characterize international organizations.

A third challenge arises from the fact that, paradoxically, the more issues are securitized, the more there is an expectation of exceptional measures and exceptional effectiveness to be put in place by the securitizing actor. Long term, preventive measures, typical of the EU's policy toolkit (Keukeleire and Delreux 2014) and of the EU's responses to securitization (in the form of resilience policies), might be perceived as too weak to cope with an exceptional situation. In other words, as issues are securitized so the bar is raised for security actorness – and with it the greater likelihood that the EU will fall short. Paradoxically, therefore, more securitization might imply less not more security agency for the EU.

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Notes

[i] On the EUGS, see Tocci 2016 and Sperling 2018.
[ii] If in a 'pluralistic' security community the security dilemma among states is overcome by means of shared identities, many-sided relations, and diffuse reciprocity among states; in an 'amalgamated' security community there is the development of a common form of government, made possible by ever closer links among the societies of the original units (Deutsch *et al.* 1957: 6)

iii As discussed in the opening piece of this Special Issue, the Copenhagen School initially evolved through a series of works by scholars associated with the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (see Wæver 1995; Wæver, Lemaitre, and Tromer, 1989; Buzan and Wæver 1997, Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, 1998; Buzan and Wæver, 2003). For critical reviews of the Copenhagen School, see McSweeney 1996, 1999, Williams 1998, Huysmans 1998, and Hansen 2000.