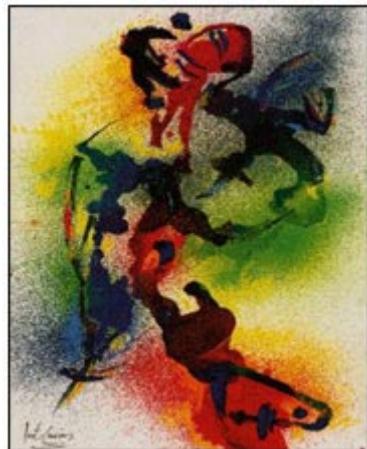


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Mechanisms in European Inner Security Evolutions

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Mechanisms in European Inner Security Evolutions

1. Initial observations and guiding question

This project's¹ point of departure lies in a somewhat puzzling feature of the origins and evolution of the European Community. Currently named the European Union (EU), the Community was partly constructed in order to prevent another Great War on the European Continent. Forerunners of the EU were essentially designed to give life to the hypothesis that an increase in institutionalised co-operation, but exclusively in economic and social affairs, would assure the prevention of war. Yet, within the European Community, a turning point has been taking place over the last decades. To an increasing degree, the domains of both inner security and common defence and foreign policy are being framed as crucial domains for the Union.²

These highly political issues that touch upon the heart of the national state's sovereignty, were initially deliberately excluded from the affairs that the Community should deal with. An obvious question arises from the juxtaposition of these facts: what accounts for the transformations during which an originally committed yet minimally politically designed European Community put high on the agenda, half a century later, the most delicate political questions in terms of their bearings on the national member states' sovereignty? In brief, *what accounts for the increased politicisation of the EU brought about with the expanding security agenda?*

Truly enough both inner and external security concerns represent areas so far primarily governed by a 'decision deficit' in the EU context to the extent that there has been a lot ado about

¹ For the sake of clarity, I would like to stress that this paper, more than a real paper, is an outline of central parts of my PhD project, as imperfect and partial as it currently is.

² At various occasions since the Second Gulf War Javier Solana has seized the opportunity to advocate for a shift in politics in common defence and security matters, thus recognizing the need for a 'real' European military force, necessitating some institutional changes and a serious reallocation of resources in the Community in order to flesh out the ambitions. Just to mention one reference, Solana was cited in *die Zeit* for stating that '*Bisher waren wir Europäer noch kein militärischer Akteur. Der aber müssen wir werden, wenn wir unsere Werte verteidigen wollen*' (Fritz-Vannahme & Pinzler, 3 A.D.). It is difficult not to recognize an echo of a certain US way of framing the relation between interests – or 'values' – and armed forces where the latter are seen as a necessary means for defending the former.

nothing. Yet if the area of external security and foreign policy remains one of extremely scarce developments (in terms of collective, binding decision-making among all member states) the inner security domain do present some substantial supranational decision-making. In addition the latter – under the auspices of ‘Justice and Home Affairs’ (JHA) in the EU construct – is repeatedly both by observers and EU staff being pointed to as *the* area of imminent future massive investment, very much in the same manner as the conception and consolidation of the Single Act and inner market occupied the political European scene in the 1980-1990s. Primarily due to the mentioned differences in collectively binding decision-making the more substantially developed inner security agenda is chosen as the primary subject of analysis in this study.

The study is anchored in the initial claim that the EU is being politicised due to the emerging security agenda. This statement is based on the assumption that although any topic could potentially be subject to intense politicisation³ some topics are almost pr. definition doomed to have this effect, in particular those constituting ‘high politics’.⁴ The security agenda belonging to ‘high politics’ means that integration attempts in this field are likely 1) to come about at a very slow pace only however 2), if successful, to cause fundamental political and societal changes.

Translated into Rogers Brubaker’s terminology (Brubaker, 2002) the promoters of a European social order and security regime are exercising strong ‘groupness’ making work.⁵ According to this author groupness making efforts may not necessarily result in group construction, i.e. failed group construction may be the outcome despite serious groupness making activities. This is a methodologically speaking important point – allowing for falsification of group existence hypotheses. In addition it seems to suit the case of the EU pretty well. Although a politicisation process due to the rising security agenda is taking form it would still be some of an overstatement to characterise the EU as a political ‘group’ or community – compared to the relative importance of the national state as a political identity marker Yet a lot of groupness making activities are being exercised at the EU level. By

³ See the discussion of this particular point by Ole Elgström and Christer Jönsson (Elgström & Jönsson, 2000). These authors pose the political storm over (BSE) as an example of this logic.

⁴ The distinction between ‘high politics’ and ‘low politics’ was suggested by S. Hoffmann (1966). ‘High politics’ refer to issues which are closely linked to the fundamental definition, identity and security of the national state, while ‘low politics’ are issues which appear as less threatening to the viability of the national state, such as European economic integration, the single market programme, or EU social and environmental regulation

⁵ Brubaker’s research domains include ethnicity, race and nationhood with a particular emphasis on ethnicity in the cited article. One of the central concerns of this author is to reformulate a research agenda for studies on ethnicity, race and nationhood which should not be based on the initial taken-for-grantedness of groups’ existence. Brubaker claims that this tendency haunts many studies in these research fields and suggests to remedy it by introducing a principled open inquiry into the question of group existence. In brief, instead of assuming groups’ existence, their existence is partly what should be investigated. My claim is that the conceptual framework developed by Brubaker yields very interesting elements for an analysis of the EU. This argument will be developed at more length at a later stage.

drawing on Brubaker's terminology again the European Commission, in particular, may be identified as the 'EU political entrepreneur'.

By inquiring into the ways in which groupness making activities are promoted in the EU, that is, emanating from EU actors and institutions, I aim 1) at evaluating the forms and contents of groupness construction work in JHA and 2) at considering to what extent relations to the public interact with this groupness construction work. Ultimately I wish to examine how the EU is being politicised qua the emerging security agenda. This analytical endeavour will be rooted in an analytical framework that take relations between the political system and the public into account. Contrary to political analyses focused on state or institutionalised political actors' actions (almost) exclusively this approach is based on the assumption that the EU system and institutionalised political actors necessarily operate in close interaction with the public. The claim is that they are indeed embedded in broader societal discourses as well as bound to the governance-intrinsic question of legitimacy, quite unavoidable in modern democratic regimes – and yet not necessarily forever confined to rest with the national state.

Before unfolding the theoretical grounds for these propositions, I shall in the following briefly indicate the institutional changes that incorporated the inner security agenda into the EU system, then specify the guiding question and a few hypotheses and, finally, sketch out empirical directions for the study.

2. Field of study and case selection

The above indication of the EU as a war prevention machine is intriguing from a certain state theoretical perspective. In itself, the optional, but once accepted, irrevocably disciplined and peaceful interaction with other states that the EU imposes on each member state precludes the sheer possibility of coming to a conclusion by making use of force. Thus the EU represents a turning point in state affairs – that is, vis-à-vis certain state theories which claim that an inherently violent or hostile relationship characterises the relationship between states, indeed defines the state (Boserup, 1986; Kaspersen, 2002; Tilly, 1992). Tendencies to state 'interlocking' in the EU are being given a further boost through co-ordination of inner security concerns at the EU level.

This integrative step profoundly affects the traditional – inter-governmentalist – assumption that held unlikely that integration would take place on issues representing 'high politics' (Hoffmann, 1966). Obviously, recent evolutions in the EU polity and policy making concerning inner security

suggest that this classical assumption is not perfectly well grasping the political European reality at the onset of the 21st century.

The very emergence of the Europeanised security agenda indicates an on-going politicisation or further political integration. Therefore this agenda appears as particularly interesting to inquire into when the theoretical issue at stake is a claimed increasing politicisation of the EU co-operation. As already stated several of the topics belonging to the inner security arena link up directly with individual states' most 'intimate' matters in terms of sovereignty, i.e. constitute 'high politics'. One example would be asylum and migration politics: these politics relate directly to the question of naturalization and thus to the definition of citizens of a given nation. But albeit very central concerns for a state the EU has been increasingly active in the formulation of various components of this political dossier. Another example is heightened degrees of police co-operation across the EU which touches upon the state privilege of controlling the legitimate use of violence within the state's own territory.

At a general level the logic of the state's sovereignty being concerned by the EU entering into the security field holds for the domains of both external and internal security. As such it could then in principle be relevant to make both domains subject to further analysis. However, only rather scarce developments exist in external security evolutions – some observers find that virtually nothing happened in this field since the early 1950s made it clear that the route to a militarised Europe was a clearly blocked one (Schmitter, 1996a). Changes may be under way as a result of the EU Constitution (including the appointment of a European Foreign Minister), or due to certain extra-EU initiatives – like the 'Praliné' or '4-Top Meeting' by spring 2003, shortly after the US led war against Iraq, when France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg discussed and made their visions for a strengthened military co-operation public. Yet, these initiatives only exist in a very embryonic form. The inner security domain in contrast yield more substantial degrees of institutionalisation and partly actual supranational decision-making with expectedly more to come over the next years.

In the EU polity and compared to the traditional EU policy making domains, the inner security domain is still a relatively new issue arena albeit one of potential explosion – a tendency which the first years of activity and proposal making bore witness of. The issue arena was officially institutionalised in the EU construct with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. It was adopted as matters of 'Justice and Home Affairs' and established asylum policy, crossing of external frontiers, immigration policy and policy towards third-country nationals as areas of 'common interest' of the member states. JHA constituted the so-called 'third pillar'⁶, subject only to intergovernmental negotiation. This, obviously, had the effect

⁶ The Maastricht Treaty brought the three pillar structure of the EU polity into existence. These different pillars are not least characterised by different types of decision making: the first is governed by supranational decision-making

that very little happened ((Hix, 1999): 315-330). By 1997 several JHA topics were transferred to the supranational governed ‘first pillar’ in the Amsterdam Treaty and then saw some more activity take form. Also, the symbolic notion and ambition of Europe as one single legal area, coined as an ‘Area of Freedom, Security and Justice’ (AFSJ) was formulated. These changes indicate a movement towards a higher degree of ‘europeanisation’ (in the straight-forward sense of more integration and harmonisation (Radaelli, 2000)). The Council meeting in Tampere, Finland, 1999, was devoted ‘*to the establishment of an Area of Freedom, Security and Justice and [to] elaborate the political guidelines for the next years, including the field of immigration*’ (European Commission, 2001c). The event clearly demonstrated the national political leaders’ ‘blueprint’ of the entire JHA project.

The Nice Treaty, 2000, predominantly focused on the imminent absolutely necessary institutional changes of the EU (in order to prepare the Union for the big enlargement round including ten former Eastern and Central European countries) primarily only adopted a few changes in the decision-making structures of the JHA – with some more weight given to the supranational mode, but with certain modifications compared to full supranational decision-making procedures.

The JHA-story, however, goes further back. Thus, the Maastricht Treaty embrace of the JHA concerns was in effect an institutionalisation of an already existing intergovernmental co-operation. It absorbed, for instance, the provisions prepared by the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Immigration (AWGI) which was set up in 1986 as an intergovernmental body of officials from interior ministries outside the formal EU structure. The Schengen Agreement is another example. The Schengen Agreement is the outcome of a security politics and polity process which was set in motion in the 1980s. It aims at increased trans-national police and judiciary co-operation as a response to opening the national borders within the total EU territory, allowing for the free movement of persons in addition to that of goods, services and capital. However, due to disagreements between the member states, the original initiative was shaped outside the EU structure and applied by only France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, in 1985. Between 1990 and 1996, the remaining member states, except Ireland and the UK, gradually joined the Agreement. The Schengen Agreement was later included in the Amsterdam Treaty, however still with the exception of the UK and Ireland.

Yet, at this stage a few caveats seem necessary to bear in mind. Before getting carried away at the perspective of an emerging European inner security agenda it may be suitable to recall that, so far, there has been more institution building and statement activity than binding decision-making (Eder & Trenz, 2003; Hix, 1999). The JHA represents a skeleton of institutions and communication structures

(qualified majority voting (QMV) in the Council, for instance), while the two others are subject to intergovernmental decision-making only (unanimity is required for).

which, however, lacks the flesh and blood to make it alive and kicking. Put differently: only limited degrees of rights of initiative and decision-making powers have been conferred to the supranational level. For the moment being the main initiative rests within the national states.

More precisely it should be emphasised that the JHA has a ‘hybrid nature’ (Stetter, 2000). Some topics are still dealt with in the third pillar, i.e. are subject to intergovernmental decision-making only. And although some topics have been transferred to the first pillar all of them are not dealt with as ‘normal’ first pillar topics: several ‘tricks’ have been introduced that allow the member states to keep more control of the speed and direction of evolutions than in really communitarised issue arenas.

The varying degrees of reluctance all link up directly with the fact that the matters dealt with in JHA are so closely related to any state’s core activities – whether in terms of controlling the means of violence, judiciary dealing with criminal matters (most member state reluctance, i.e. third pillar topics) or judiciary co-operation on civil matters and the movement of EU-citizens within the EU, the definition of citizenship and entrance/forced exit of society (less but still considerable member state reluctance/first pillar issues). But, interestingly enough, most of the freezers on turning the first pillar JHA into real Community law are limited in time. Within five years counted from the entering into force of the Amsterdam Treaty⁷, these blocking mechanisms are due to abolition. This means that unless unforeseen and circumventing decisions are taken in this respect, some JHA issues are slowly but surely moving towards full supranational decision-making procedures.

Both in terms of classical state sovereignty and citizen concerns these institutional transformations are not innocent bureaucratic happenings. They Europeanise the dealing and control with social order. The asylum and immigration politics, just to mention these examples, relate directly to the cont(r)acts between state and citizens, that is, it regulates who can be(come) a citizen in a given nation and how this relationship should be. How these matters became legitimate European concerns is a central part of what is at stake in the present study. Put the other way around: tendencies to it that the EU is venturing into such state defining activities as articulating distinctions between who is a proper citizen and who is a threat or enemy to social order indicate that something fundamental about statehood and EU-hood is under way to adopt new forms.

But there is more. As put by Head of the Information and Communication Unit of the Directorate-General for JHA, the JHA ‘concern absolutely everybody whereas only specific categories of people are concerned by sectoral policies’ (JHA, 2003). This may be some of an overstatement since it should still be an option to every EU citizen to stay put in one single EU country, marry a co-patriot, and stay clear of any illegal business making, whether in organised crime or as a terrorist. Yet, the statement clearly

indicates that the EU is aiming at creating one single legal area. Even if EU rhetoric takes pains to avoid the by the 1980s abandoned notion of a ‘European society’ – and rather speaks of ‘European civil society’ – there is no other way to put it: creating one single legal space provides a certain basis for handling the ‘adjudication’ mechanism (Tarrow, 2002; Tilly, 1992) evenly across EU-space. This types of structural change could lay out the foundation for considering the entire EU as a potential living space and, eventually, renders it more society-like – although, for the moment being, national suspicion that the others’ judiciary systems are not fully trustworthy would seem to prevail.

3. Guiding question revisited and some hypotheses

The above brief outline of institutional renewals of the EU construct regarding inner security concerns and the following considerations about state- and EU-hood indicate the direction of my analytical endeavours. I aim at examining the processes of institutionalising the JHA within the EU structure. Although originally forbidden land for the Community, and although action is still progressing at a very slow pace only, there are signs that the JHA are to gain considerable importance over the years to come due to the expected deepening of institutionalisation.

On this basis the guiding question can be reformulated and currently stands as follows: *what accounts for the increasing institutionalisation of the inner security agenda at the EU level?*

The question implies investigations relating to both political salience of the Europeanised inner security agenda and to the character of the varying categories of issues which are dealt with in JHA. The latter dimension refer broadly to the very categorisation of inner security the EU way and more specifically to, for instance, policy types⁸; the former dimension concern the relationship between the peculiar EU polity and the public or European citizens, as it were.

The examination of the JHA policy area involves considerations of the following kind: JHA represents no ‘natural’ set of topics or way of dealing with these topics. Across countries the issues dealt with in the national corollaries to the EU JHA (security issues or civil law) and the dominating profile (policing or defence of civil rights) vary considerably. As such the JHA has no given logic to it

⁷ The Amsterdam Treaty entered into force in 1999.

⁸ Four types of EU policy types has been suggested in the EU literature: constituent, redistributive, distributive and regulatory types. In the constituent type the basic rules and principles of the system itself are under consideration. The redistributive types refer to the transfer of financial resources from some actors to others. The distributive type concern the allocation of Community funds within sectors. Finally, the regulatory policy types are those where member states agree to adopt common regulations on the activities of both private and public actors. Originally these policy types were coined to identify four different clusters within the entire EU policy-making apparatus, that is, the concept refer to a general level of analysis and not, initially, to identifying different strands within one single area of policy-making. Nevertheless I would argue that the heterogeneous character of the JHA issue arena makes it possible to distinguish between the differing types of policies within this single policy making entity. This interpretation would seem to be

but is itself part of the intrigue: which topics are brought together under the JHA umbrella? Which policy types do the differing topics in JHA represent? Which relations are suggested among which actors or groups of designated persons or activities? What kind of security profile or social order (ideal) is being promoted? These are some of the questions whose answers may help us identify the groupness making work emanating from the evolutions in JHA.

It is for instance by drawing on classical distinctions between policy types that those represented in the JHA shall be defined in order to suggest reasons for and patterns in the Europeanising impetus to the inner security endeavours. A first hypothesis can be formulated on these grounds: different policy types expectedly affect the likelihood of increasing degrees of institutionalisation differently.

However, a central claim in this study is that an exclusive focus on the processes within a political system or among the directly involved and appointed political actors partaking in the shaping of JHA politics would lead to the dismissal of important dynamics in the making of these politics. In particular, sudden external events may have an impact and, more generally, interactions with the public sphere. To put it differently examinations of how the emerging inner security agenda in the EU could be related to the notion of a ‘transnational public sphere’ (Eder et al., 2003; Trenz & Eder, 2003) constitute another main axis as well as attention to catalysing effects of certain external factors (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001) may prove significant in accounting for deepening integration steps. Due to the field of study the central external event to take into consideration is 9.11, that is, the terror attacks in New York and Washington DC, 2001.

A second cluster of hypotheses stems from these premises and suggests on the one hand that external events may have strong catalysing effects on on-going or potentially progressive policy making and, on the other hand, that public discourses may have certain certifying⁹ – or decertifying – effects on topics (to be) dealt with politically, in particular when these discourses are strongly represented in the public sphere. Whether in its mass mediated form or as episodic collective action it is both unpredictable and demanding, the latter point regarding a political system’s need to publicly explain itself, political choices and visions.¹⁰ As a potentially ‘third observational party’ (Trenz et al., 2003), the

endorsed by the statements by several JHA staff who point to the varying political stakes and judicial foundations governing the different JHA issues, i.e. these issues are not identical in terms of policy type.

⁹ ‘Certification’ has in studies on contentious politics been suggested as a crucial social mechanism whose main importance is to legitimate a new direction of political action, a new actor or identity (cf. (McAdam et al., 2001; Tarrow, 2001)). This perspective will be developed at more length at a later stage.

¹⁰ *En passant* it should be noted that it goes beyond the scope of this study to engage in the problem of deciding how public discourses, mass media production, the political system and individuals actions are related to one another. Depending on the theoretical outlook, media coverage may be identified as the instruments of a few information monopolists, an assumption which is based on the supposed determining importance of ownership and production

public sphere incarnates the position that nowadays makes the notion of closed, political decision-making systems unreliable (and theoretical accounts relying implicitly or explicitly on such ideas even more so).

4. Thoughts about empirical materials

The outlined research interests imply investigations of the documentary sort, ranging from EU legislation, via ‘white papers’, to various (EU) institutions’ homepage (re)presentations. My theoretical framework further impels me to consider studies of mass media and the public sphere; however, I shall in this respect rely on good research carried out by others!¹¹ In the same vein, I expect to draw on statistical work, as the recurrent *Eurobarometer* surveys, in order to solidify, say, supposed changes in ‘voter concerns’. Finally, I believe qualitative, semi-structured (expert) interviews to be a suitable means for collecting data in order to analyse the communicative interactions between the JHA and the public sphere.

Part of what should be investigated is whether the involved actors in decision-making and shaping of the JHA in the EU conceive of the terrorism acts on September 11 as catalysing activities that were already strongly underway in the EU or if these terror attacks are perceived as having directly caused new orientations or actions, till then not expected to be adopted in the EU context.

In terms of methodology, I expect to pull the empirical material through the discourse analytical mill – which obviously includes not only textual analysis but equally a strong emphasis on institutional developments. My use of the discourse analytical grip on the empirical material will have a certain tool-oriented character in so far as my general analytical endeavour is inscribed in the so-called mechanism approach. In brief the mechanism approach is oriented at constructing causally explanatory models – and is thus somehow at odds with the more ‘purist’ discourse theoretical assumptions about social reality, its constructedness, fluctuating identities and renouncing vis-à-vis the notions of ‘causes’ and ‘origins’. But before I spell out at more length what the social mechanisms approach means or how it could be used, I shall go more into detail with some of the theoretical grounds for the outlined problematic and hypotheses.

conditions. Media coverage has also been pointed to as a crucial condition for a topic to become politically salient, i.e. to receive sufficient attention from political systems to be acted on. The growing literature on ‘spin doctors’ suggests that these communication wizards are controlling virtually every bit of information flow in and out from political systems. The ‘truth’ probably lies somewhere in between.

¹¹ It remains an open question how I am going to deal with this part of the study. Being a one-man band there is no chance that I could carry out an analysis bearing on the public sphere and, for instance, analyse the media coverage of JHA over time. Best bet: to draw on existing studies.

5. Approaching EU integration theory

In this section I shall elaborate on the so-called multi-level governance structure and consider ways of construing emerging democratising elements in the EU. But before I do this, I shall sum up my main assumptions, leading to considering the just mentioned concepts and evolutions. They fall in two main clusters.

The initial claim is that a process of politicisation of the EU can be linked to the expanding inner security agenda, located in the JHA. An emerging European inner security agenda touches upon national state high politics, that is, concerns the fundamental definition of the national state and, consequently, that of the EU. I suggest that these changes in definitions of community may be interpreted through the lens of groupness construction work (Brubaker, 2002). The analysis consists mainly in an inquiry into diverging degrees of commitment to groupness making efforts at the EU level in JHA. These divergences are manifest in discrepancies between JHA actions and actors' activities (i.e. primarily Commission/Commission actors) as compared to member state reluctance due to the topic as such (i.e. 'high politics', 'reluctance' indicated by: originally only institutionalised as an inter-governmentally ruled area or as an attenuated kind of first pillar, supranational governance). In sum these suggestions amount to scrutinize the JHA trends and evolutions with a view to identifying their central categories and Europeanising or freezing moments of the Europeanising impetus.

Secondly, the study relies on the supposed importance of construing political decision-making in the broader societal context, i.e. suggest that political analyses that tend to zoom in exclusively on institutionalised political actors directly partaking in the decision-making are too narrow and miss essential dynamics in political decision-making, that is, the dynamic interactions with the public. This point seems to hold whether directed against the neo-functionalism strand, the inter-governmentalist type of political analysis or the institutionalism approach. Among the attempts at theorising the EU as a political system the multi-level governance approach appears as the most adequate in terms of escaping the 'political systems in a vacuum trap'.

On the basis of the claim that increasing integration in the inner security domain can be considered an indicator of a politicisation of the Community questions of possibly changing collective identities and forms of collective action equally arise. If the Community is at a turning point where it is 'emerging' as a different kind of community, a political Union (Eder, 2003), it could indeed be argued that the EU is adopting far more identitarian aspects of policy making – and engaging in more far reaching groupness construction work. The fact that the EU deals with the maintenance of social order in European societies, conceived of as a whole, appears as a clear example of a shift in politics oriented

at the societal level. As already mentioned the current EU slogan aiming at characterising the business of assuring European inner security announces, very tellingly, the EU as one single ‘Area of Freedom, Security and Justice’.

In the meanwhile academic discourses striving to get a hold on the notion of ‘European civil society’ or the European ‘transnational social space’ tend to converge on the claim that ‘*European society is important because of its absence*’ (Rumford, 2003):25), according to Chris Rumford’s review of the literature. From a less pessimistic point of view some authors would however argue that the EU fosters the emergence of new patterns in the functioning of the public sphere, crossing national borders (Eder et al., 2003; Trenz et al., 2003). Likewise the peculiar EU polity characterised as part of a multi-level governance structure is considered to nourish the establishment of new political opportunity structures in addition to those existing at the national level (Balme & Chabanet, 2002; Eder, 2003; Tarrow, 2001; Marks & McAdam, 1996).

Before proceeding with a more full account of the multi-level governance analytical approach, it would seem appropriate to spell out a few necessary caveats regarding the scope of the present study and the role of theories covering the total EU polity or dynamics in all EU related policy making processes.

Obviously, my primary concern cannot be to define which theoretical perspective better explains the EU or European integration *generally* – because I am not pretending to carry out an ‘cover it all’ investigation. By studying the emerging European security agenda, I am only dealing with one particular domain of the EU co-operation. Thus, it goes without saying that my study does not allow me to extrapolate suggestions about the entire EU polity and politics structures. Hence with respect to the business of sometimes evaluating every aspect of the EU polity outcome and politics evolutions, I shall necessarily draw on arguments stemming from the work of others. In doing so, I am merely positioning my work within a given academic strand, indicating where my theoretical sympathies lie.

The importance of distinguishing a singular area of co-operation from the total amounts of domains dealt with in the Community is due to the many issue dependent variations in decision and authority structures. In terms of rights of legislative initiatives and types of decision making (rights of initiative, differing voting and decision-making procedures etc.) the balance between the member states and the EU institutions varies as a function of the issues dealt with ((Hix, 1999): 21-55). Since various types of co-operation between the member states and the EU institutions are continuously co-functioning, investigations in one corner of the total EU structure would not contain all the elements necessary for drawing competent, overall conclusions. In more concrete terms, it can briefly be stated that most issues dealt with in the Community are treated in a supra-national manner (pillar one), some

are kept at the inter-governmental mode of negotiating (pillars two and three), and some are *de facto* hardly existing although spelled out as common concerns of the Community in the Treaties (in particular: common defence and foreign politics/pillar two).¹² Due to the differing types of negotiation principles it is obvious that investigating different areas of the EU co-operation would result in rather different conclusions. Put differently: specific governance structures in one singular issue arena can only erroneously be utilised to characterise the overall EU structure in general.

The multi-level governance stance¹³

The above suggestions about the decision and policy making structures also highlight the fact that the Community can still be considered ‘*un objet politique non-identifié*’¹⁴, that is, an unusual political authority structure which at present does not resemble any other known contemporary polity. According to Schmitter these observations point to a ‘third way’ of construing the EU: neither as an ordinary type of inter-governmental co-operation/institution, nor as an emerging quasi-state, but as something else, quite novel, and rather tricky – if evaluated from a traditional modern state centred perspective. Thus the EU has been considered part of a ‘*multi-governance model*’ (Marks et al., 1996), a ‘*composite polity*’ (Tarrow, 2001), or a ‘“*post-sovereign, polycentric, incongruent, neo-medieval*” arrangement of authority’ ((Schmitter, 1996b):132). The beast answers many names in the literature.

The ‘alternative’ vision of the EU sees the EU as representing a ‘composite polity’ where overlapping and multi-layered governance structures reconfigure and open the field of politics.¹⁵ This opening refers to the polity structure itself which – compared to a national state or an international institution with stable, clearly defined competencies – presents a more complex, political authority structure with varying and changing types of negotiation procedures. But it also refers to the changed alliances possibilities and patterns among subnational, national, and supranational actors. Some scholars (Tarrow, 2002) have emphasised the striking resemblance between the multiple forums of political

¹² It should not be ignored that the first part of the draft of an EU Constitution, handed over in June, 2003, to the EU by the Valéry Giscard d’Estaing led Convention, contains considerable changes in security and defence matters. Also, the whole pillar structure is abandoned. Put in other words: if not dramatically changed in the course of the European Council evaluation and final ratification process (due by Mai 2004), major changes in this field may be under way.

¹³ For the moment being the following theoretical parts remain somewhat unconnected to the specific case of the JHA and the empirical foundations of the study sketched out earlier.

¹⁴ In the apt words of the former President of the Commission, Jacques Delors, here cited by Philippe C. Schmitter ((Schmitter, 1996a):1).

¹⁵ This type of reasoning has been explored and developed by numerous scholars – (Marks, Scharpf, Schmitter, & Streeck, 1996), (Tarrow, 2001), (Balme et al., 2002), (Eder et al., 2003; Eder, 2003; Trenz et al., 2003) – and in all cases invites us to reflect upon EU matters and actor interactions from a more dynamic and complex perspective. Originally, the multi-level governance model was introduced in studies on regionalism. The notion then very concretely referred to different ‘geographical’ levels of interacting polity structures. Increasingly, however, the term rather

negotiation and variable coalition making options at play in contemporary Europe and in Europe of some 400 years ago, that is, before the national state became *the* privileged fulcrum for political decision making and a central marker of collective identity qua its intrinsic relation to the nation.¹⁶

Thus changed political opportunity structures have involved a broader range of actors and actor constellations taking part in, being invited, or striving to be heard at the EU level – not least in connection with the work of the Commission. As shown by Richard Balme and Didier Chabanet (Balme et al., 2002), the Commission can be conceptualised as a nucleus with numerous satellites – all types of social movement, interest and particular issue organisations – constantly encircling it. A symbiotic relationship apparently exists. The ‘satellites’ are clearly interested in influencing the outcome of Commission propositions. The Commission equally has its own interests in furthering consultancy rounds. The participating groups represent a source of expert knowledge to which, due to its limited resources, the Commission would not otherwise have access (i.e. self be able to generate on the basis of the available resources). Secondly, the inclusion in consultancy rounds of representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGO), in particular, is perceived by the Commission as a means for acquiring some democratic legitimacy ((Eder et al., 2003): 14).

Several scholars emphasise that the particular composite EU polity opens the field of politics for social movements and collective action by multiplying the levels and possible fields of collective claims-making (Marks et al., 1996; Eder et al., 2003; Tarrow, 2001)¹⁷. According to Sidney Tarrow (Tarrow, 2001), the very opening process of facilitated access to power holders and political authorities

connotes multiple, overlapping and not primarily ‘geographically’ defined structures and possible coalition building nodes.

¹⁶ A few crucial differences do however seem appropriate to keep in mind: the early modern European coalition patterns and the current EU-ones differ fundamentally with respect to the role of both democracy and the state. Early modern Europe was not bound by the notion of the national level (which hardly existed as an established political, even less identitarian reality!) as the proper arena for legitimate politics making. Equally, early modern Europeans were not bound by any ideas about (representative) democracy (not yet ‘invented’) as the more legitimate foundation of the political and just policy making. Currently, we are heavily bound to and by both ideas: the nationally representative democracy incarnates the normative ideal about the foundation of good politics. Finally, today’s states are stronger than early modern state structures – both in terms of the scope of actual activities dealt with and with regard to its status among (conventional) citizens.

¹⁷ More precisely, this applies not unevenly to any type of a third interested party. The Commission does not accord the same amount of attention nor possibilities (i.e. invitations to participate in consultancy rounds) to all kinds of public interest groups. Some are very obviously ‘insiders’ (for instance: The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the European Office of Consumer Union (BEUC), the European Environment Bureau (EEB), and the Migrants Forum), others still remain ‘outsiders’ (Hix, 1999):196-198. In this respect, the opening of political opportunity structures as compared to the traditional national politics picture are not equally accessible to all. However, the participation in the EU game is even more complex. Among ‘insiders’ the amount of successful trans-national collective claims-making and mobilisation varies with the topic at stake. Thus, Marks and McAdam show that one of the central ‘insider’ public interest groups, the labour movement, has been ‘handicapped by economic integration and the multiplication of new institutional sites for collective bargaining and lobbying’ (Marks et al., 1996):117), in which process priority has been given to the (business interests) removal of barriers to the free movement of capital, labour and materials.

facilitates the enactment of contentious politics¹⁸ and would thus imply an increase in claims-making. Gary Marks and Doug McAdam argue, however, that the widening of political opportunity structures do not by themselves account for a social movement's success or failure in influencing the EU politics A social movement's internal structures (i.e. oriented towards national politics or susceptible to trans-national politics adaptation) are another crucial element, partly rooted in historically forged orientations, and intimately linked to the particular policy area that the movement addresses (Marks et al., 1996).

With regard to the JHA it would seem that the NGO's addressing the citizen rights component are likely to meet the trans-national politics criterion, i.e. unless they operate from a strongly nationally grounded position they should in principle be geared to gain influence on the EU politics making.

Beyond national democracies

Klaus Eder and Hans-Jörg Trenz (Eder et al., 2003) make a strong argument for re-conceptualising the integrative forces of the EU by paying due attention to the peculiar EU multi-level governance model and to the emerging European public sphere and their interaction. These authors claim that multi-level governance produces the conditions which fuel the emergence of a European, or 'transnational', public sphere, and which, once established yield performances that influence the institutionalised political systems. Briefly stated, both political institutions and civic actors observe and interpret each other During these processes they may all adopt various types of reaction (depending on their degree of responsiveness). The coining of this interplay as 'transnational resonance structures' captures reciprocal influential effects as well as indicates that the scope of these communicational structures function across the traditional borders of national politics.

What distinguishes this theoretical perspective from government and other institutionalised political actor oriented perspectives is that the influential and for the modern democracy necessary condition and conditioner: mass public mediation (cf. (Manin, 1996)) as well as collective action are taken seriously into account. That is, these elements are not simply treated as 'exogenous trends'¹⁹ but as theoretically integral elements of the European conditions of politics making – and shown accountable for integrative mechanisms. Elsewhere, the authors state that the '*contribution of theorising the*

¹⁸ Contentious politics is, here by Charles Tilly, defined as: 'episodic, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims and b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants (Exercise of police jurisdiction or the raising of claims concerning governmental policy suffices to qualify government as a party.). Roughly translated, the definition refers to collective political struggle. It excludes regular bureaucratic work, string-pulling, favour-giving, private claim-making, and workaday conformity to governmental edicts concerning taxes, censuses, registration of vital events, and the like. In short, it excludes the bulk of political activity in most polities. Yet it includes just about any episode that political analysts call war, revolution, rebellion, protest, genocide, or social movement activism' (Tilly, 2000)(:137-138).

public sphere for understanding European integration' relates to the '*assertion that public communication always goes beyond institutional responses to political issues and is linked back to particular conditions of public monitoring and to non-institutional social carriers in the EU, i.e. to the people in Europe*' ((Trenz et al., 2003):6).

A few interesting perspectives can be sketched out from these observations and positions – in particular on the background of the observation that in most European countries and in the United States of America democracy preceded the nation state (Hix, 1999): 309). In academic discourse it may to an increasing degree be found that the relationship between the EU and democracy is not simply judged – upon comparing with modern, Western, national democratic regimes – according to the motto that 'the EU suffers from a democratic deficit. Period'. In effect, it may seem that more flexible manners of conceptualising democracy or processes of democratisation are more apt to capture democratising elements and moments relating to the EU. According to Eder and Trenz this approach would instead allow us to identify in the on-going debates over the democratic deficit an inherently democratic process ((Trenz et al., 2003): 4). The complaint over deficits of democracy is in this theoretical perspective itself considered part of an already democratising process.

The interesting question lies not necessarily in the blunt assumption that if EU-Europe is being democratised, then it shall also develop into a nation state type of political community. At present this seems an unlikely scenario. The peculiar EU polity structure seems currently to find its most adequate formulation in the notion of the EU as a composite polity/part of a multi-level governance arrangement. This topic has already been dealt with in the previous sections. Thus with regard to the question of democratisation, the changing political opportunity structures brought about with the peculiar EU polity represent part of the story by opening up new possibilities for collective action and claims-making in Europe; by including for instance NGO's in consultancy rounds held by the Commission.²⁰ More generally, the EU results in the dissemination, Europe-wide, of common issues to be dealt with politically and hereby contributes to laying out the foundations for the formation of 'transnational resonance structures' (Eder et al., 2003; Trenz et al., 2003).

In the same vein it may be worth considering that the EU is creating or provoking increasing degrees of '*protected consultation*' (Tilly, 2003) which, according to Charles Tilly, is the very core of democratising processes. In relation to the EU, examples range, for instance, from elections for the European Parliament (EP), via consultancy rounds organised by the Commission, including various NGO's in proposal preparation, to European encouragement to organise, locally, hearings about controversial political topics.

¹⁹ As some political analyses would have it, neo-functional ones for instance (cf. (Schmitter, 1996a)).

Tilly emphasises that instead of rooting democracy in particular legal-institutional settings (for instance: contested elections, representative institutions and formal guarantees of liberty) or in particular types of relations between state and citizens (say: just or egalitarian), it may be useful to stress the '*quality of relations*' between governmental agents and citizens (Tilly, 2003) (:25).²¹ Thus the author suggests that '*democratization means formation of a regime featuring relatively broad, equal, categorical, binding consultation and protection. Summing up variation in all these regards, we can block out a range from low to high protected consultation*' (Tilly, 2003)(: 26, emphasis in original). This amounts to identifying democracy with an ideal situation which, by the way, Tilly states, no polity never fully developed. By doing away with the idea of full democracy as a historically achieved fact, Tilly's model implies that '*democratisation*' appears as the more adequate concept, i.e. a concept that refers to a process as opposed to a static achievement.

Democratisation is consequently conceptualised as a change toward more protected consultation. Equally, it becomes possible to identify processes of de-democratisation as a result of a move away from protected consultation. The characterisation of any polity as 'democratic' is thus, strictly speaking, disingenuous or an euphemism at best; it is, however, as is well known, a deeply rooted convention which in practice reposes on identifying within particular regimes more or less democratic elements and moments; these factors indicating 'democraticness' are, as the author notes, '*matters of degree*' (Tilly, 2003) (:26).

In sum, democratisation can be considered as a process; it may come under many a form; it relates to numerous aspects of societal and political life; it is not a one-way route: steps backwards are also a likely option.

Progressively notions and the importance of ideals about democracy are being reframed (Trenz et al., 2003; Eder et al., 2003). Thus Eder and Trenz propose to de-couple ideals about democracy from the national state and national democratic regimes, inviting us to re-think democracy both in terms of acting it out, conditions of possibility, forms, and functions. These authors highlight that democratising EU does not imply a predestined evolution towards a 'European nation state', nor towards a European Federation. What then may in effect be understood by 'democratising the EU'? How does it manifest itself and what are the likely long-term outcomes?

²⁰ Although these possibilities are unevenly distributed as indicated in the above section on the EU as a multi-level governance model.

²¹ Tilly lists five dimensions which in differing ways are set up to characterise the quality of relations between governmental agents and citizens (Tilly, 2003)(: 25-26) and suggests a regime be democratic if the relations between government and citizens (or 'subjects') are '*regular and categorical, rather than intermittent and individualized*'; include virtually '*all subjects*'; '*are equal across subjects and categories of subjects*'. Furthermore, both governmental

Eder and Trenz coined the quality of current processes of a democratising EU ‘democratic software’ (Trenz et al., 2003). Hereby they stress that comprehensive institutional ‘democratic hardware’ in the EU is not entirely at hand as well as the existing democratic institutions are relatively powerless in the global EU institutional and actor networking set up. These observations, however, do not lead to a belittling of the ‘democratic software’; quite the contrary, these authors argue strongly for engaging in a tentative articulation of the peculiar contours of democracy the European way, that is in connection with the EU polity, and under the conditions of an emerging trans-national public sphere.

In sum their analysis suggests that among several possible types of public spheres and collective learning modes, the one representing the highest degree of democratising potential coincides with a mutually heightened level of responsiveness on behalf of civic and institutional actors. In that case, a process of ‘*societal learning under conditions of triple contingency*’²² unfolds. Thus, this perspective stresses that an integrative mechanism is inherent in the democratising process which results itself from the very polity, the multi-level governance architecture.

– ‘Integrative mechanism’? What kind of an odd fish would that be? This is the question that shall be addressed in the following sections on the social mechanism approach.

6. Mounting explanations the mechanism way

Analytically we can distinguish between ‘why’ and ‘how’ something happens. A mechanism approach suggests that the analytical endeavour is split into two distinct, however interrelated steps. Firstly, in order to explain ‘how’, we need to orient our attention to the *processes* by which changes were initiated, negotiated, accepted or rejected, and, eventually, transformed the studied topic. This last – transformational – turn is then, secondly, sought explained by the dynamic interacting of clusters of social mechanisms in the peculiar time-space bound context.

Put in more case-specific terms, we would first have to zoom in on *how* the evolution of the politicisation of the EU qua the emergence of the security agenda is taking place. Second by combining the mechanisms which fuel this evolution and by considering the particular EU polity and politics making context, we may be able to come up with an explanation of *why* it happened, i.e. why the EU finds itself engaging in the highly political enterprise of developing a security agenda.

personnel, resources, and performances must ‘*change in response to collective consultation of subjects*’, and, finally, subjects, especially members of minorities, must ‘*receive protection from arbitrary action by governmental agents*’.

²² The notion of ‘triple contingency’ refers to the situation that negotiating parties are not acting simply under conditions of mutual contingency, but equally have to cope with the effects of performing in front of an attentive and unpredictable audience. This is also the point where this theoretical perspective moves beyond institutionalised actors, networking and negotiation theories: by including the unpredictable audience into the equation.

Thus, the analysis of ‘how’ should precede considerations about ‘why’, and yet the aim is to come up with some suggestions which in causal terms shed light on the studied topic and thus answers the ‘why’ question. In short, particular combinations of a whole series of social mechanisms and particular context factors compound to form the causal-explanatory model.

In order to characterise the mechanism approach in terms of type of explanatory models, it may be useful to contrast to, for instance, the functionalist approaches. These two types represent almost opposite types. Schematically, it can be stated that the former is oriented towards the outcome or the whole, and concentrates on which elements or factors are necessary – or possibly delay – the evolution. In sum, it represents a form of a teleological reasoning where the expected goal defines the analytical focus. The mechanism approach favours the processes and social mechanisms over the outcome in order to demonstrate which elements or factors cause a given outcome. In brief, this approach aims at establishing a causally explaining model. While in the first case, the notion of the general is rooted in the outcome and the ways may be chaotic and past understanding, in the second, the general is anchored in the ways and in the manners of using the ways, leading to varying outcomes as a result of particular interplays between ways, wayfarers, and local landscapes.²³

In the present study the assumption is that although embedded in politico-diplomatic and context bound negotiation rounds, the processes involved in the evolution of the European security agenda may present sets of relational regularities. The more interesting question would obviously be whether the social mechanisms, if identifiable in these situations, are isomorphic and thus can be generalised or whether they remain specific to the type of *explanandum*, that is, the politicised security agenda in the EU.²⁴ Due to the limited scope of this study, I shall have to simply emit a few hypotheses regarding possible general social mechanisms.

Upon this short introduction to the mechanism approach, I shall elaborate more in detail on the potential explanatory power of social mechanisms with regard to changes in macro phenomena. This section will be followed by an attempt to explore one particular element in social mechanism guided explanatory models: the catalysing effects of external events, exemplified by the September 11 terrorism acts.

²³ But, as suggested in (Tarrow, 2002), the dividing line may be extremely thin if the mechanism approach is turned upside down and the question asked which mechanisms are necessary in order to guarantee a certain outcome – as done with regard to the ‘necessary’ state activities, as originally identified by Charles Tilly (Tilly, 1992), for a state to engage in if it is to persist.

²⁴ Inside readers would know that here, I draw heavily on the future research agenda for the mechanism approach as articulated by Renate Mayntz (Mayntz, 2003).

Mechanisms as explanations of social macro-phenomena

One of the most appealing features of some of the mechanism approaches in the social sciences (Mayntz, 2003; McAdam et al., 2001), I would claim, is that they deliver tools and arguments for analysing macro social phenomena beyond the dichotomisation between methodological individualism and rational choice models on the one hand and structural explanatory models on the other. This feature results from the ambition to include consideration of individual action without, however, requiring or indeed expecting that a social phenomenon be traced to individual motivations. Quite the contrary, processes generating social macro phenomena may be the result of relational constellations and dynamics, that is, social mechanisms which may be set in motion by individuals who act, but who are nevertheless not in control of the global outcomes which are produced.

By drawing on Renate Mayntz' admirable effort to clarify the use and relevance of the concept or explanatory tool of 'mechanisms' in social sciences, we are invited to acknowledge that the essential feature of mechanisms is that, when successfully identified, mechanisms play a crucial role in the causal reconstruction of social macro phenomena, i.e. yield central insights into the explanation of these phenomena (Mayntz 2003). In order to make sense of this 'hard' statement, it is useful to define what exactly is understood by a 'mechanism'. In the literature, little consensus exists, yet, in her article, Mayntz provides a valuable, synthetic account of the various uses.

Initially, it may be useful to note that the notion of mechanism is both used to name a certain type of real phenomena and to designate a class of (causal) propositions referring to such phenomena. In order to define what mechanism approaches aim at, Mayntz demonstrates how they differ from other explanatory models. That is, strictly speaking, among the different types of explanatory models available in the social sciences, some of them are not really providing explanations but are rather (simply) indicating correlations. Hence, they actually tend to black-box the explanatory element. Very briefly, it can be stated that unlike the statistically based methods that establish correlations between social phenomena, to apply a mechanism approach serves primarily the purpose of establishing a causal explanation which, however, explicitly avoids to represent itself as fulfilling the – impossible – task in the social sciences of claiming the existence of social laws. With respect to this last particularity, Mayntz states that '*the main difference between a mechanism approach and a covering-law approach is not that mechanism statements are less general than the propositions in a nomological-deductive explanation, but that in the analytical theory of science (...) "laws" are basically statements about co-variation, i.e. "laws" point out causal factors, and not processes'* (Mayntz 2003: 4. Italics in original text). Essentially, what we should note in this citation is the emphasis put on *processes*; this notion is the key to understand what kind of entities mechanism approaches are searching for.

Moreover, Mayntz aligns herself with those scholars who insist that some regularity is required for a mechanism to aspire to the classification as a mechanism. This means that the position held by for instance Raymond Boudon, who also accepts the use of the notion in singular cases, is brushed aside. Accordingly, Mayntz advocates for exclusively using the notion of mechanism to designate '*[c]ausal generalizations about recurrent processes*' (Mayntz 2003: 5). Hence, whatever the *explanandum*, the author states that '*in each case the explanation means causal reconstruction, a retrospective process-tracing that ends with the identification of crucial initial conditions*' (Mayntz 2003: 6).

In theoretical terms, the 'linking' effect of a mechanism is its central explanatory function – which means that a mechanism cannot simply be an intervening variable. It is something else and more, a process which makes possible the transition from the outset conditions to the observed (changed) situation. Yet, contingency resides in the initial (or context) conditions that are not part of the mechanism itself. This implies that the initial conditions in the final proposition should be stated explicitly: they are – or should become! – known conditions, while outcomes vary in predictable ways with changes in these conditions.

The logic of mechanisms can be illuminated in drawing on the so-called 'macro-micro-macro model of sociological explanation', developed by James Coleman (Mayntz 2003: 9). Instead of reserving this model to spelling out the principle of methodological individualism, Mayntz thus shows how mechanism approaches may be said to have been employed at various steps in this model. More importantly, however, the author shows that the macro-micro-macro model of sociological explanation has an in-build bias favouring (motivated) individual behaviour (or agency) at the expense of relational mechanisms. And states that: '*In fact (...) macro-structures, i.e. relational constellations that may, but need not be institutionally based, are integral parts of the processes generating social macro-phenomena; they are in fact the decisive parts*' (Mayntz 2003: 12. Emphasis in original). This position echoes that of McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly in McAdam et al. (2001), although these authors seem to consider the possible inclusion of individual's motivations in a more flexible manner. However, they, and Mayntz, reject the principled defence of a methodological individualism approach, promoted by scholars like Peter Hedström and Richard Swedberg (1996).

The research agenda of the social mechanism studies primarily drawn upon in the present study ultimately aims at establishing causal explanations of complex, social macro phenomena by arguing for an analytical focus on dynamic interactions; this aim is in (McAdam et al., 2001) both substantiated by an unfolding of reasons on theoretical grounds, and strengthened by empirical analyses which support the hypothesis of a series of general social mechanisms operating in contentious politics across space

and over time.²⁵ These mechanisms work in a similar fashion in differing cases or situations, however combine differently and interact in variegated ways with local context conditions and thus contribute to yielding varying final outcomes.

The mechanism approach seems to be of great value to the proposed analysis of the mechanisms relating to the European security agenda and on-going processes of politicisation of the Community. In terms of the ambitions of the work to be done, the logic goes the other way around as well: the analysis could, hopefully, contribute to enhancing the as yet rather scarce theorizing and analysis of actor constellations and structural configurations from a mechanism approach perspective. This ambition links up directly with Mayntz' concluding judgment of the state of the art in mechanism approach studies. The author concludes her review by stating that a considerable amount of mechanism models of different forms of collective behaviour already exists, that is, collective in the sense that the uncoordinated but interdependent actions of many individuals generate aggregate effects. In contrast there is not a comparable number of mechanism models covering the logics of specific types of corporate actor constellations or relational structures. Besides attempts to conceptualise this kind of collective action by drawing on game theory, literature on systematic analysis of social mechanisms at play in structural configurations or actor constellations – with the work of McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001) on contentious politics as an exception – is still awaiting.

In the following section, and thematically more directly linked to the security agenda, 9.11 shall be represented as an incident of a spectacular environmental change with a view to defining the relationship between sudden environmental events and more general social processes in politics making.

Triggering facts and long-term tendencies

When it comes to the evaluation of which relevant empirical facts present themselves as salient for the shaping of the EU politicisation process in security matters, it could appear as an obvious option to consider a very popular interpretation of a crucial shifting point in history, often set up to account for the most various changes in the world and security matters in particular: 9.11, i.e. the terror attacks in New York and Washington DC on September 11, 2001.

Both scholarly, politically, and following from media constructed images and discourse, it has become a widespread notion that 9.11 meant or has occasioned a profound remodelling of the world order and of reasoning about our common social reality. However different these voices are, they may

²⁵ Very tellingly in this respect, their empirical analyses include episodes ranging from 19th century nationalist movements to contemporary Muslim-Hindu conflicts to the Tiananmen crisis of 1989, and the disintegration of the

converge on one main point, claiming that September 11 very effectively tore down whatever beliefs we still might have had, after 1989 announced the end of the Cold War, in an amelioration of the principles of the world order. Thus, the logic goes, the sweet optimism generated from the fall of the Berlin Wall vanished as the twin towers of the World Trade Centre (WTC) came down in dust and powder.

9.11 was an outstanding terror event. And obviously so for several reasons, among which we find the immediate experience, on both sides of the Atlantic, of the double attack on Pentagon and WTC as the most extreme terror act probably ever carried out, even leading to the many-sounding framing of the attacks as a-historical. The ‘extremeness’ has been connected to various aspects. On the one hand to the symbolic value – U.S. hit in heartland – which correspondingly reflects the importance of the peculiar spatial dimension (this type of event occurring in the *United States of America, in New York and Washington DC* is conceived of and reported on differently than a similar catastrophe in, say, Africa or South America would probably have been). On the other hand, the extremeness has been linked to the scope of actual devastations, and the number of deaths, as well as to the truly original means for creating shock and panic: commercial aircraft turned into powerful bombs by suicide terrorists, and the WTC and Pentagon set up as battlefields.

The coining of the shorthand for the terror attacks on Pentagon and the WTC as simply ‘9.11’ tellingly indicates that these acts of terrorism have acquired a strong symbolic status, i.e. that they already possess the communicatively strong power of an ‘emblem’ (cf. (Haajer, 1997)). Nevertheless this status does not amount to an unequivocal definition of the terror attacks. Variegated accounts of the meaning of the events of September 11 have been proposed, ranging, for instance, from claims of the fulfilment of the Samuel Huntington thesis of the Clash of Civilisations, via speculations about the end of normal warfare, and the ‘North-South’ inequality thesis suggesting that the hegemonic and imperial like, U.S. way of running foreign politics was simply likely to foster a kind of striking back, to media analyses evaluating the semiotic value of the coverage of 9.11 with a view to the moral bearings for the audience.

In terms of impacts on politics and on the security agenda, it is significant that numerous measures, both political, legal, symbolical, and in terms of heightened levels of surveillance and control, were debated and enacted in the immediate aftermath of 9.11 – in the U.S., of course, and in the EU member states as well as in many more countries world-wide.²⁶

Soviet Union.

²⁶ Official EU documents; diplomatico-political statements; surveillance and control measures – in airports, in particular – all these incidents bear witness of the immense activity following from 9.11. Not to mention the media storm, lasting for months after the terror attacks and still, almost two years later, a recurrent thematic lens.

And yet, all of these ‘extraordinary’ features notwithstanding, my analytical lens compels me to consider 9.11 slightly differently, both with regard to its status as a fact, as construed event, and in terms of its impacts on politics and polities.

More of the above mentioned aspects characterising 9.11 as a fact and as an extreme terror action could be considered to be representing a newness of ‘only’ or primarily quantitative degree. If qualitatively different, then the spatial-symbolic dimension (cf. (Sewell, 2001; Tilly, 2000)) could seem to account for the more original features and for the great shock waves produced from the event. On the other hand, the ‘undecidability’ of the event (Chouliaraki, 2002), which in part resulted from the lack of a clearly articulated message connected to the acts of terrorism, would appear as decisively ‘different’ terrorism characteristics.²⁷ – However, not beyond any imagination. Quite the contrary: several fictional and hitherto truly fabulous representations of terror attacks not too different from those of September 11 had been published before the attacks.

In more academic terms, promoters of a critical inquiry into the asserted a-historicalness have argued that the framing of 9.11 as ‘a-historical’ is as problematic as logically – and factually – ‘proven wrong’ if pains are taken to analyse the historical dimensions and socio-economic causes of these terror attacks (Der Derian, 2002). Hence it could be suggested that accounts casting 9.11 primarily as terrific, outstanding or as *sui generis* beyond our common concepts have, probably and understandably enough, been shaped in an atmosphere of heated apprehension. Since then time has passed, some temperatures cooled and 9.11 does not attract the same amount or kind of attention.

In a more detached manner it can thus be proposed to consider 9.11 in a broader context. From this perspective the event may have been an important and indeed effective trigger of a changing security agenda; however, by downplaying the focus on 9.11 as changing ‘everything’ over night, we may opt for a different stance and look further back in history in an attempt to consider, for instance, the continuity in security matters which 9.11 allowed to come to the fore (cf. (Roy, 2002)²⁸). Hence, we may look for earlier processes during which the foundation of the rising security agenda, although allegedly boosted by the events of September 11, was prepared.

In short, I consider the importance of sudden events or environmental changing factors in a fashion which echoes the analysing principle of McAdam and colleagues who state: ‘*environmental changes*

²⁷ Cf. the terrorism study by Peter Waldmann (Waldmann, 1998) for a persuading account of terrorism as communication, that is, as a very particular, and power provocative, form of getting a message through.

²⁸ This argument builds on the principle in Olivier Roy’s analysis of the U.S. responses to 9.11 (Roy, 2002). This author argues that although at the surface everything changed after September 11, with a whole new foreign politics model being promoted by the Bush-administration, in effect, nothing could be more wrong. The goals articulated and forcefully pursued by the Bush-administration in the aftermath of the terror attacks were developed long before the

start our story but by no means explain it' ((McAdam et al., 2001): 63). Adhering to this principle implies exploring of trends and tendencies which preceded observed (sudden) social changes in order to contextualise, and eventually explain the studied topic. Observed through this lens environmental changes may rather be the bearers of catalysing effects than directly causing factors.

Consider for instance the numerous, elaborate, and extremely rapidly shaped EU reactions to the terror attacks on September 11 in the US. It is simply and literally incredible that the EU system – which normally needs at least a year to land a new council framework directive ((Héritier, 1998):6) – could have achieved the new framework on combating terrorism (European Commission, 2001a) within barely two weeks. Also the by the way little to do with fighting terrorism council framework directive on the 'European Arrest Warrant' (European Commission, 2001b) was ready as early as by late October 2001. This last achievement was publicly framed as part of the judicial necessary condition for effectively combating international terrorism. Although it has a lot more to do with 'ordinary' criminal matters. Thus it is seems that the enactment of the Arrest Warrant responded to the heated panic and dismay over 9.11 in a very strategic fashion: an otherwise very controversial proposal could be hastened through without meeting too much public or political resistance. Due to its complexity, it is however evident that it has been under way for a very long time.

A crucial detail to highlight is that there was no functional necessity to this integrative step at that moment. This last suggestion does by no means imply that 'anything' could have been proposed and enacted in an unproblematic manner. By drawing on the literature on revolutionary moments when profound political and societal transformations are happening, we may agree with Jack Goldstone's proposal, as evident as simple: ideas must fit the moment (Goldstone, 1991).

The essential point is of course that a lot more activity was going on before public discourse, in the aftermath of 9.11, 'discovered' the topics of terrorism, security, and the ambiguities of protection and surveillance as crucial concerns, both generally, for the European Community, and elsewhere. Stating this also amounts to adhere to a common notion of environmental changes in studies of contentious politics where environmental events may trigger or catalyse certain evolutions which would, however, not occur or persist were it not for the actors, actions and identities which could be linked to, inspired, or provoked by the environmental changes.

The mechanism approach promoted by McAdam and colleagues operates with relations or dynamic interaction as the primary unit of analysis. This implies a shift from a position which focuses on events, institutions or actors as entities with fixed attributes, whether in terms of identity or

terrorism acts on the 11th of September came to constitute the all too 'perfect' occasion to let these strategies see the light.

motivations, towards attention directed at both actors, actions and identities with a view to explaining collective action and contentious politics as a result of the connections and dynamic interactions between these different entities ((McAdam et al., 2001): 55-58, 132-148). The explaining element is located in social mechanisms – for instance brokerage, identity shift, and category formation – which these authors claim take place in various sorts of incidents of contentious politics over time and across space.

If translated into Brubaker's conceptual framework we should ask which groupness making efforts are played out and by whom/which institutions. According to this author organisations often seek to monopolise the rights to articulate group identity, goals, appropriate means and visions (Brubaker, 2002).

If the EU initiatives enacted in the aftermath of 9.11 appear as mainly technical, police or judiciary related or associated with principled dimensions of democratic control and accountability, they do however also link up with identity questions. Not least in the sense of drawing boundaries, that is, defining 'Us' and 'Them' and thus ordering who belong to the trusted, safe Community, and who are the dangerous, threatening Others, better kept Outside.

An interesting detail relating to the boundary setting/community constructing activity or groupness making work concerns the very naming of the European security agenda itself. It has been changing names over time (Eder et al., 2003). Depending on the observer or promoter, designations as the critical 'Fortress Europe'²⁹ alternate with the positively connotative 'Area of Freedom, Security and Justice'. An interesting question is, of course, whether the latter discursive framing mirrors a deliberate renaming process aiming at recasting or promoting the security project vis-à-vis European citizens; or whether it reflects a shift in collective identities which already took place within European societies. One does not exclude the other. The essential point is that processes of renaming are potentially strong symbolic and action inductive activities (cf. (Sewell, 1996)).

The JHA conceives of itself, in a very direct and outspoken manner, as the promoter of securing the EU as one single legal space, as one coherent Area of Freedom, Security and Justice. In itself, these are strong categories and values that virtually nobody can disapprove of – except maybe criminals and their soft-hearted relatives. The AFSJ articulation is symbolically opposed to the forerunner, the notion of 'Fortress Europe'. The latter designation attracts attention to the exclusiveness and to the border drawing without characterising what should be inside or so important to protect from intrusion. The AFSJ in contrast highlights what the internal area should be like and

downplays the boundary drawing aspects and relations to the outside. In brief, an ideal formulation of the inner contents, ignoring the Outside has been substituting a rather hostile image which was silent about the inside, focusing on keeping the borders tight.

According to some authors identity politics and security questions are closely interrelated, even co-constitutive (cf. (Campbell, 1992; Waever, 2003)). According to Ole Waever, integration is a third constitutive element in the security complex ((Waever, 1995)). An exiting feature of the mechanism approach applied to the European case is that it invites us to orient our reflection beyond dichotomies and to stay sensitive to more complex configurations of actor constellations and social processes. In the case of the EU, this is particularly interesting since studying the EU invites us to reflect in terms of post-sovereignty. As Ole Waever suggests the EU is '*a prominent case to investigate if one is interested in issues like the changing nature of boundaries and the possibilities of constructing political communities beyond sovereignty*' (Waever 1995: 389). In dynamic interaction terms this means that studying security implies analysis of the dynamics which entail – or contest – integration, and in which questions of changing collective identities are inherently at play too.

7. In the absence of a proper conclusion

For the sake of a brief recapitulation: I am interested in studying dynamic interaction processes in relation to the rising European security agenda with a view to causally explaining the evolution of this agenda, politicising the EU.

The case specific entrance of study – the emerging security agenda – appears as critical in the sense that these topics and concerns are some of the more delicate ones in terms of their intimate relation to the 'basic state activities' (Tilly, 1992) of the member states, i.e. concerning 'high politics'. And yet a central point to spell out is that the EU may not be(come) a political community in the state and nation type of manner (cf. (Schmitter, 1996b; Schmitter, 1996a; Tarrow, 2001)). The EU represents something else and supposedly rather novel: a composite polity which offers new, more complex political opportunity structures and conditions for political battles to be, expectedly, fought out by institutionalised actors as well as by means of contentious politics.

The idea is to examine a few selected cases more extensively with a view to identifying social mechanisms at work in the EU. For instance, accounting for the emerging European security agenda raises questions of construing empirical facts which may have an impact on the development of the European security agenda and the entailed politicisation. By evoking an example of a dramatic episode

²⁹ Originally a term used to designate the economic closure of the Community, the term has found renewed use among critical observers to whom the Community's commitment to inner security issues inherently makes alarm bells ring,

influencing politics and security matters, the acts of terrorism on 11th September 2001, I have been arguing for its catalysing effect regarding a broad range of policy and politico-diplomatic reactions. And yet the aim was to demonstrate that a fascination with ‘outstanding’ events should not shade the importance of more persistent or apparently anonymous long-term tendencies.

By applying the mechanism approach to a number of situations, cases, and varying actor constellations in the EU history, I aim at emphasising that the EU is not a fixed entity or set of institutions. Instead it should be conceptualised as a constantly changing structure or set of conditions and possibilities which offers varying opportunities and obstacles for acting collectively in Europe as well as it may increasingly be seen as a driving motor in democratising Europe. Equally the analytical endeavour relates to considering integration and reluctance/resistance processes vis-à-vis integration or, put differently, to studying evolutions in the sharing of/moving beyond sovereignty as opposed to the insistence on the continued importance and agenda setting role of the state. Thus the sketched changes that tend to Europeanise the political control with the maintenance of social order can be articulated in pure state theoretical terms and, for instance, be diagnosed as changes in sovereignty balances (Waever, 1995; Wallace, 1999). Or in a more historically evolutionary oriented perspective one may observe that core state building activities (Tilly, 1992) can be identified among the activities keeping the EU increasingly busy. Yet as should by now be clear the aim is not least to invite sociology to venture into this field of study – it should come as no surprise to students of sociology that this statement presupposes that the discipline has, by and large, left it to others to deal with the EU. As an emergent political order (Eisenstadt & Schluchter, 2001) of enormous importance in terms of impacts on national politics (Wallace, 1999; Hix, 1999) and thus, eventually, on citizens’ everyday life EUrope deserves due sociological theorising and empirical research.

In particular, the EU offers itself as a field of study allowing us to move beyond the confines of ‘methodological nationalism’ (Wimmer & Schiller, 2002). Methodological nationalism has, according to Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, been haunting most of sociology if not the social sciences broadly. Although it is in itself challenging for sociology to move beyond the study of nationally defined societies³⁰ there are also more substantial reasons and inquiring questions inspiring this move in the present study. The EU represents a critical case (that is, a difficult one) for the study of group making mechanisms and activities. The European security agenda even more so – due to its unlikeliness to come about readily. Finally, the notion of an emerging ‘transnational public sphere’ can be

signalling risk of violation of citizen rights and, paradoxically, endangered citizen securities.

³⁰This is obviously not to suggest that this was not already done! As is well-known, Niklas Luhmann defined society as world society. Also Karl Marx’ theorising about the Capital knew no national borders. Just to mention a few examples. However, and this is the point: they remain few and somehow marginal in this respect.

linked directly to the peculiar EU polity, i.e. the multi-level governance architecture. Secondly, it may be evaluated as a basis for a certification mechanism, that is, a social mechanism that endorses changes in political action, the establishment of new actors or identities.

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