14 The Dynamics of European Security: A Research Agenda

MARTIAL FOUCAULT, BASTIEN IRONDELLE, AND FRÉDÉRIC MÉRAND

The preceding chapters have analysed a variety of European security issues, focusing on how they have evolved since the fall of the Berlin Wall. These issues range from classical ones in security studies (defence policy, armed forces, nuclear weapons) to emerging challenges such as energy security, transnational terrorism, and organized crime. Building on the notion that security is a shifting concept, our objective was to understand how the evolution of the European security environment since 1989 has been linked to changing social representations of security among people, practitioners, and theorists. In this concluding chapter, we try to gather the book's findings and propose an original research agenda that will help us begin to conceptualize the dynamics of European security.

The intensity of threats to the European continent has declined since 1989. This, we argued, suggests that Europeans live in a relatively more benign environment. Does this mean that Europe has become a completely pacified, stable security community? As Giegerich and Pantucci document in their contribution, terrorist acts in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005 are good examples of the continuing existence of lethal risks. It is also striking that both the origin and the target of these threats have changed in a fundamental way. As Kirchner and Sperling (2007: 13) argue, security threats are no longer limited to the existential question of national survival or territorial integrity. To get a better sense of threat perceptions, we must consider two dimensions: the *origin* of the threat (producer) and the *target* of the threat (state and/or society). The combination of these two dimensions leads to a new architecture of security within Europe and in the European neighbourhood, one in which the visibility of threats is less clear and security risks are more diffuse

because more threat producers target society as a whole. In this sense (in) security has become a transnational public good (bad), which, as Gheciu's chapter shows, enables actors to engage in a significant redrawing of the security field's boundaries. Among the main issues emphasized in this book, some relate to standard theories like realism while others lead us to look for new theories, for example securitization (energy, crime). As we argued at the outset, different theories may well be adapted to different security issues. But how do security issues become salient? Why did new ones appear after 1989 while others were marginalized?

These two questions point to the importance of analysing the (current and future) dynamics of European security. By dynamics, we mean the set of issues emerging both inside and outside the political scene that shape European decisions in the security domain. As Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones (2005) argue, a policy process is characterized by the 'dual and contrasting characteristics of stability and dramatic change.' Although the agenda-setting perspective developed by these two authors has never been applied to security studies, we believe it can generate insights into why security issues (in the form of policy agendas and scientific paradigms) are usually stable but sometimes undergo swift changes, what Baumgartner and Jones call 'punctuated equilibria.' We should try to understand why and to what extent political actors seek actively to bring issues onto the agenda if they are looking for a change of policy, or to keep them off the agenda if they want to defend the status quo. This could mean, for instance, studying the attention paid by parliamentarians to security issues through committees, question periods, special reports, and so forth, to improve our knowledge of security policymaking. By looking at security policy from a macro perspective, a research program based on the agenda-setting perspective may thus combine what security scholars observe in specific circumstances (peace, war, transition, etc.) with what scholars in comparative politics analyse at the sectoral level (law and order, health, environment, etc.). The basic idea, then, is to enlarge the analytical perspective and identify the dynamics of security agenda-setting in the past two decades. Did priorities vis-à-vis European security shift dramatically or not? How and under what conditions have such changes been put forward? What is the role of public opinion, media, policy actors, and academics in this process?

Although this task is too daunting to be taken up here, this chapter puts forward the first conceptual elements to account for paradigmatic changes in the European security agenda environment by looking more

specifically at the security policy agenda of the European Union. The idea here is that agenda-setting dynamics will have a profound impact on theoretical developments in security studies. Gathering the main findings of the book, we would like to show how a policy agenda perspective may fit in European security studies and capture the dynamics of change in European security.

Five Trends in the European Security Environment

In this section we briefly summarize the book's main empirical findings. The various contributions to this book suggest that since 1989, five trends in European security dynamics have been taken into account and reflected in theoretical debates.

A defining feature of the post-1989 European security landscape is the *development of institutionalized security cooperation*. The continued existence of NATO following the demise of the Soviet threat and the development of ESDP have reinvigorated institutionalist approaches, which tend to show the self-reinforcing dynamics of European security cooperation (Wallander 2000; Mérand 2008; Howorth 2007). A parallel strand of research pays particular attention to the socialization effects of international security institutions given NATO enlargement, OSCE-based dissemination of human rights' norms, NATO-sourced military concepts and doctrines, or Europeanization (Schimmelfennig 2003; Gheciu 2005). To this we should add Moscow's standing offer for the creation of a pan-European security organization. We thus observe a proliferation of institutional arrangements, which results in fragmented but overlapping networks of actors, both public and private, managing European security issues (Krahmann 2008; Hofmann 2009).

The second trend is the *consolidation of Europe as a security community* dominated by a Kantian culture of anarchy (Adler and Barnett 1998, Cottey 2007). Europe and European states no longer face enemies in the international system, even though, as Pouliot's chapter shows, the opportunity to anchor Russia in this community was missed in 1994 and Islamist terrorism may be on the rise (see Gheciu's and Giegerich and Pantucci's chapters). Thus Europeans tend to privilege soft power and a comprehensive approach to international security rather than hard power and military force; they also support a judiciary and police approach to fighting terrorism rather than a military one. The transformation of Europe into a post-Westphalian security system, or a security community, was a challenge for European security studies (Kirchner and Sperling

2007). The normative and cultural transformation is twofold: on the one hand, as Biscop and Ojanen argue in this book, the emergence of a European strategic culture and the Europeanization of military policy; on the other hand, the study of the identity of Europe on the international scene and the debate over Europe's civil and normative powers (see Gross's chapter). This is the privileged domain of 'soft constructivism,' which preserves a positivist epistemology and attempts to foster dialogue with mainstream security studies approaches, namely realist ones.

The third trend we observe in the contributions is the *strategic marginalization of Europe* since 1989. Rynning illustrates this phenomenon through the geopolitics of NATO in Eurasia. Von Hlatky and Fortmann show that European security studies have seen the decline of the nuclear issue. Europe is no longer a key object of scholarship regarding nuclear deterrence, proliferation, or arms control and it rarely features as a future major player in realist analyses of the balance of power (for an exception, see Paul 2005). Much academic attention in recent years, evidenced in Forster's and Vennesson's chapters, has been paid to military transformation and military reforms involving the move from the large-formation force structures of the Cold War to joint modular expeditionary forces for crisis management (Dyson 2008). This research makes use of a cross-fertilization approach borrowed from sociology, military sociology, strategic studies, and political science. It suggests that, in the absence of major threats or external pressures, Europe is only slowly adapting its security institutions.

In parallel, European security studies are coming to terms with the gradual blurring of internal and external security, and the broadening of the notion of security to incorporate non-military issues such as organized crime, human migration, natural and technological disasters, health, or the environment. *Securitization* is the fourth trend of European security affecting, for instance, energy supplies (Jegen's chapter) or the EU's neighbourhood in the Balkans (Gross's chapter). Scholars are increasingly attentive to the logic of securitization pertaining to these social issues, often using a critical approach to address both securitization and its consequences for affected individuals (e.g., migrants) and civil liberties. This questions the classic boundaries between police forces and armed forces in a unitary state. A number of scholars are involved in mapping the field of (in)security professionals, analysing the emergence of the field of European police cooperation, anti-terrorism collaboration, and so on. This is the preferred field of critical constructivism (CASE Collective 2006).

Interestingly, the evolution of the European security environment has also generated a return to classical IR approaches. The latter, exemplified in Rynning's chapter, can be characterized by their positivist epistemology and a particular attention to material factors, notably unequal power relationships. This literature underpins public discourses on *Europe puissance* and multipolarity. The fifth trend is an *ongoing debate about Europe's role in the international system*, which goes some way towards explaining the prominence of institutional projects like the CFSP and ESDP. Realists emphasize the role of polarity in the international system to explain alliance formation, security cooperation, and foreign policy adaptation. The main issue for structural realists is evaluating the consequences of unipolarity within the European security architecture. From the unipolar structure of the international system, some realists infer that European security cooperation (i.e., ESDP) can be associated to hard balancing (Posen 2006) or soft balancing (Jones 2007, Paul 2005) by the Europeans vis-à-vis the US. A more convincing version of this argument asserts that European security cooperation patterns in NATO or ESDP represent a 'reformed bandwagoning for profit' or a 'leash-slipping' strategy. To wit: states form an alliance not to balance or constrain the unipole, but to reduce their dependence and increase their reputation as a credible partner for the unipole by pooling their capabilities (Press-Barnathan 2006; Walt 2009). More recently neoclassical realism, combining the causal primacy of international systemic variables and internal dynamics of states and domestics politics, has also scrutinized states' grand strategies to explain European security dynamics (Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro 2009). The key, as Musu writes in her chapter, may be to distinguish the EU's actorness (or autonomy from member states) from its presence (or influence). In any event, this scholarship suggests that Europe's role in the international system remains a symbolically and politically powerful issue.

In sum, in spite of the erosion of the paradigmatic core of European security studies, it is possible to identify concrete developments in the European security environment since 1989. With the proliferation of overlapping security organizations, the blurring of the internal and external dimension of state security, and the ongoing debate about Europe's objective position in world affairs, we get the impression that the European security architecture lacks a clear structure of political authority. This lack of structure has been captured by the metaphor of 'security governance,' an approach that enjoys considerable currency even though it has failed so far to make very specific predictions about

the direction of European security. For reasons that we will expose below, we believe that an agenda-setting perspective would dovetail nicely with security governance.

Security Governance and Dynamics

A growing number of scholars use the notion of governance, which embraces the multiplication of institutions and actors in an ever more unwieldy decision-making process, to analyse transformations in the production of European security and to understand the specificities of the EU as a security provider (Keohane 2001; Webber 2000; Webber et al. 2004). In a context where risks are evolving, threat producers are no longer only states, and the target of these threats become both state and society, the emergence of EU as a security actor is not surprising. Kirchner and Sperling (2007: 18) argue that 'the obsolescence of alliance theory, with the possible exception of buck-passing and chain gangs (which are in any case independent of the theory of alliances), calls for an alternative method for understanding why the EU has become a security actor and, as such, how it goes about identifying and meeting threats.' To some extent, the notion of security governance seems to fit with the current panorama of European security. Webber and his colleagues (2004: 4) define security governance in a European context as follows: 'Governance involves the coordinated management and regulation of issues by multiple and separate authorities, the interventions of both public and private actors (depending upon the issue), formal and informal arrangements, in turn structured by discourse and norms, and purposefully directed toward particular policy outcomes.' This means that there are more actors, more decision makers, more constraints, but also a greater selection of options. How are we to make sense of this? How or what influences security governance?

Although the concept of security governance strikes us as a sensible and accurate description of the challenges faced by European leaders, it suffers from a lack of determinacy. While the traditional state-based, hierarchical decision-making model clearly looks insufficient, the governance image does not tell us which issues will come to the fore and wane, who is more likely to influence security policy, or what institutions or solutions will be used to tackle perceived security challenges. As such governance analyses remain fairly static. Many trends we have identified in the book – such as securitization – fit in with a dynamic perspective that the concept of governance does not capture comprehensively. The next section

MERAND_UTPID3210.indb 302 10-09-21 12:52

proposes the main contours of a new research agenda that uses an agenda-setting perspective to analyse dynamic elements in European governance. Without showcasing this perspective as the holy grail that will reconcile all IR theories, we believe that it could prove a useful instrument for answering the questions left unanswered in the governance approach with a view to better understanding the present and future of European security.

Who Is the Agenda-Setter?

As briefly referred to at the beginning of this chapter, the agenda-setting framework was developed to analyse the dynamics of any kind of policymaking, but it has never been applied to security policy as such. Yet security (and even foreign policy) issues are often considered to be on top of domestic and EU agendas. How do these issues arise? Which social forces carry them? Let us take Jegen's example of energy security in this volume. The gas crisis that broke out twice, in 2006 and 2008, between Europe, Russia, and Ukraine provides an illustration of the irruption of a new issue within European institutions which quickly reshaped the security policy agenda. For a long time, energy security was not a salient issue, the public paid no attention, and national and EU institutions displayed no inclination to coordinate their policies (that is what Baumgartner and Jones call 'institutional friction'). All of this changed after 2006, with the result that energy security is now tightly linked to European foreign policy. Part of the reason is that energy policy was now associated with Russian power, which, as Pouliot documents, has been framed in an increasingly negative light since the mid-1990s in Europe. But what is also interesting in the 2006–8 critical juncture is the combination of different channels (print and TV media, national governments, Commission, European Parliament) that were forced to engage each other on that issue and, perhaps unwillingly, conspired to put this issue on top of the list of EU priorities. Not surprisingly, this sparked a flurry of academic writings on energy policy in the context of Russia-EU relations. Theorizing agenda-setting dynamics is key to understanding how 'agenda-setters,' be they governments, the media, or EU institutions, prioritize security challenges and the ways (or policies) to address them.

The agenda-setting framework offers three entry points for analysing European security dynamics: the *policy agenda,* the *public opinion agenda*, and the *media agenda,* which can be construed as the three blades that,

together, move the European security propeller. The key insight is that issues, to become relevant, have to occupy more or less the same position in the respective agendas of policymakers, public opinion, and the media. The question, of course, is which agenda drives the others. To explore this, the agenda-setting perspective combines the analysis of the decision-making process (in particular the role of institutional and cognitive friction) with measures of attention (the salience of issues in policy, media, and public spheres). Although this framework has been up to now used to analyse domestic politics, we believe it could be fruitfully applied to EU security policy for two reasons. First, it enables us to conceptualize how security issues emerge in time and space, rather than taking their importance for granted. Given the pluralism that currently characterizes European security studies, the dynamics of agenda-setting should make specific theoretical approaches more relevant than others at different points in time. Second, because an agenda-setting perspective can generate a metatheory of security policy (seeing how the three blades of the propeller move together), it may help us consider and compare issues across institutional contexts.

The analytical value of this perspective is to measure systematically the attention received by security issues across the three main agendas (what we called the three blades). As the different contributions in this book suggest, European security decision makers regularly face new events that may (or may not) become new issues. Such issues do not automatically lead agenda-setters to react. For neorealists, for example, security issues are mostly driven by the international system and long-term strategic behaviour will almost always dominate, while for liberals, international cooperation is the only response to transnational threats. But, whether they act rationally or not, decision makers do react sometimes, at least in words if not in deeds, in ways that do not accord well with these theories. To understand why these issues come on the EU agenda, it is essential 'to look beyond external factors and delve into the process in which issues are defined and selected for decision-making' (Princen 2007).

A full research agenda would begin by distinguishing each component of the agenda-setting process. Indeed, the European elite media (e.g., *Financial Times),* EU-level opinion surveys (Eurobarometer), the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council, national government officials' 'utterances' as well as political parties' manifestos are some of the richest materials ignored by IR scholars. It is possible to develop quantitative measures for each of the three agendas (media, pub-

lic opinion, and policy) on the basis of these and other sources. Tapping into them to understand European security dynamics better, of course, assumes that some of the agenda-setting with regards to security policy now takes place at the EU level, and not only at the domestic level. Not only is this congruent with the security governance literature, but it may also contribute to making its predictions more specific, for example by comparing the role of different institutions and actors in the agenda-setting process.

In particular, the agenda-setting perspective is premised on the argument that public opinion, media, and policy agendas are deeply interconnected. In terms of the public opinion agenda, the literature demonstrates the effect of public opinion attention on the weight policymakers give to certain issues (Baumgartner and Jones 2005). Agenda-setting describes the process by which public opinion signals to policymakers what is important by giving more salience to certain events and issues than others. The public, in turn, perceives the issues that receive the most media attention to be the ones of greatest importance (McCombs and Shaw 1972, Baumgartner and Jones 2005). This implies that heightened media attention to any issue will increase the likelihood that policymakers perceive this issue to be important.

While the precise nature and extent of the impact of public opinion on security policy remain contested at least since the so-called Almond-Lippmann consensus – which argued that the impact was modest at best (Holsti 2004) – we believe it is possible to infer such an impact at least on security policy at the EU level. In the implementation report of the *European Security Strategy,* issued in December 2008, the European Council states that 'Maintaining public support for our global engagement is fundamental. In modern democracies, where media and public opinion are crucial to shaping policy, popular commitment is essential to sustaining our commitments abroad' (European Council 2008: 12). This is more than a theorist on agenda-setting could hope for from an institution involved in a specific policy (security policy in this case). In fact, although there may be an element of window dressing here, European leaders concede that public opinion acts as a powerful medium that exerts a direct influence on the policy agenda. To better understand the contours of European security in the twenty-first century, we must therefore factor in public perceptions of strategic threats and solutions.

But the key for an agenda-setting perspective is to look at sudden changes. By comparing the results of a survey by the German Marshall Fund at different points in time, we observe in table 14.1 that Europeans

and Americans follow the same evolution in their perceived or possible threats but with a different intensity for immigration issues (+25 per cent in Europe) and terrorism (–17 per cent in the US). The table shows evidence that energy dependence is a high-security concern and global warming a rising one. Immigration fears are also increasing: in that regard, the Europeans are catching up with the Americans. These results suggest that terrorism went through a peak in the public opinion agenda, but that attention then decreased or at least stabilized in Europe as in the US. With reliable policy agenda data, we could infer from specific trends that policy actors reacted to public attention by adopting, for example, effective counter-terrorism measures, which in turn lowered the tension in public opinion. We could also see whether attention to immigration or global warming went up. Here again, an agenda-setting perspective would suggest that, because policy actors adapt their own agenda to sudden changes in the public opinion agenda, there will likely be a policy response of the kind that EU leaders (German and French presidency, Commission, Parliament) have pushed forward towards the end of the 2000s, with the rapid development of Immigration Pact and the Energy and Climate Package, two initiatives that dominated the EU agenda in 2007–8.

Now correlation is not causation, and one of the main challenges in the agenda-setting literature is to disentangle the causal links among the three agendas. The role of the media in this story, in particular, is complicated because whether and how they influence public opinion agendas with regards to security policy remain open to question. On other issues, Soroka (2002) concludes that there is no direct link from the policy opinion to the public opinion agenda on the assumption that policymakers can affect the public through the media or real-world factors but not directly. Given the complexity with which public opinion delivers preferences on security issues, a research program on the relationships between public opinion and security would improve the framing of security agenda-setting.

Conclusion

Although the agenda-setting perspective was not developed to analyse theoretical paradigms, it is interesting to note in conclusion that the rise of public opinion attention to issues like climate change, immigration, and terrorism corresponds to the broadening, in security studies, of the concept of security, with the inclusion of soft, human, and environmental security as the kinds of questions that can legitimately be asked in security studies since the fall of the Berlin Wall (the epistemological

Table 14.1
Possible threats to vital interests in 2002 and 2007

	Europe	US	Evolution EU 2002–7	Evolution US 2002–7
International terrorism	65	91	–1	–17
Large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into Europe/US	38	60	+25	+11
Iraq developing WMD	58	86	n.a.	n.a.
Global spread of a disease	57	57	n.a.	n.a.
Energy dependence	78	88	n.a.	n.a.
Major economic downturn	65	80	n.a.	n.a.
Global warning	50	46	+35	+24
Islamic fundamentalism	49	61	+4	+2

Note: Each cell corresponds to the percentage of people telling how likely or somewhat likely they are personally affected by each threat.
Source: German Marshall Fund, *Transatlantic Trends 2007*, www.transatlantictrends.org.

basis of security studies). They also correspond to the blurring of boundaries between internal and external security, and between state and societal security, that calls for security providers other than the sovereign state (the ontological basis of security studies).

Again, we are not arguing the case for replacing extant theoretical approaches to European security with an agenda-setting perspective. But the latter could help put these approaches into a richer macro-context where scientific paradigms tend to be correlated with more practical representations, such as public opinion, media, and policy agendas. Like the dynamics of European security, theoretical fashions come and go; concepts arise and are then discarded; research objects are deemed crucial and finally marginal. As of now, the theoretical landscape appears as fragmented as the security environment, with its diffuse risks, moving targets, and shifting cleavages. The challenge will be to explore how exactly (if at all) theoretical and practical representations are connected to each other.

REFERENCES

Adler, Emmanuel, and Michael Barnett. 1998. *Security Communities.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baumgartner, Frank R., and Bryan D. Jones. 2005. *The Politics of Attention.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

CASE Collective. 2006. 'Critical Approaches to Security in Europe: A Networked Manifesto.' *Security Dialogue* 37, no. 4: 443–87.
Dyson, Tom. 2008. 'Convergence and Divergence in Post–Cold War British, French and German Military Reforms: Between International Structure and Executive Autonomy.' *Security Studies* 17, no. 4: 725–74.
European Council. 2008. *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy. Providing Security in a Changing World* . Brussels, 11 December, S407/08.
Gheciu, Alexandra. 2005. *NATO in the New Europe. The Politics of International Socialization after the Cold War.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Hartley, Keith, and Todd Sandler. 1999. *Political Economy of NATO*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Hofmann, Stephanie. 2009. 'Overlapping Institutions in the Realm of International Security: The Case of NATO and ESDP.' *Perspective on Politics.* 7, no. 1: 45–52.
Holsti, Ole. 2004. *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy.* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
Howorth, Jolyon. 2007. *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union.* Basingstoke: Palgrave.
Jones, Seth. 2007. *A Rise of European Security Cooperation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Keohane, R. 2001. 'Governance in a Partially Globalized World.' *American Political Science Review* 95: 1–13.
Kirchner, Emil, and James Sperling. 2007. *EU Security Governance.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Krahmann, Elke. 2008. 'Security: Collective Good or Commmodity?' *European Journal of International Relations* 14, no. 3: 379–404.
Lobell, Steven, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro. 2009. *Neoclassical Realism, the State and Foreign Policy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
McCombs, Maxwell E., and Donald L. Shaw. 1972. 'The Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media.' *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36, no. 2: 176–85.
Mérand, Frédéric. 2008. *European Defence Policy: Beyond the Nation State.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Paul, T.V. 2005. 'Soft Balancing in an Age of US Primacy.' *International Security* 30, no. 1: 46–71.
Posen, Barry. 2006. 'The ESDP: Response to Unipolarity.' *Security Studies* 15, no. 2: 149–86.
Press-Barnathan, Galia. 2006. 'Managing the Hegemon: NATO under Unipolarity.' *Security Studies* 15, no. 2: 271–309.

Princen, Sebastiaan. 2007. 'Agenda-Setting in the European Union: A Theoretical Exploration and Agenda for Research.' *Journal of European Public Policy* 14, no. 1: 21–38.

Schimmelfenning, Frank. 2003. *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Soroka, Stuart. 2002. *Agenda-Setting Dynamics in Canada.* Vancouver: UBC Press.

Wallander, Celeste. 2000. 'Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO after the Cold War.' *International Organization* 54, no. 4: 705–35.

Walt, Stephen. 2009. 'Alliances in a Unipolar World.' *World Politics* 61, no. 1: 86–120.

Webber, M. 2000. 'A Tale of a Decade: European Security Governance and Russia.' *European Security* 9, no. 2: 31–60.

Webber, M., S. Croft, J. Howorth, T. Terriff, and E. Krahmann. 2004. 'The Governance of European Security.' *Review of International Studies* 30, no. 1: 3–26.