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## European Security Identities

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OLE WÆVER\*

*Centre for Peace and Conflict Research, 4, Fredericiagade 18,  
DK-1310 Copenhagen K, Denmark*

### Abstract

This article undertakes a reading of political identifications in Europe from the security perspective. Who or what exist politically in Europe? This is investigated through the test of whether and how different units are able to carry out the move characteristic of 'security': that is, to say 'our survival is threatened, therefore we have a right to use extraordinary measures against this particular threat'. Europe as an area is marked by a complex presence of different overlapping political subjectivities – security can be carried out most importantly with nation, state, Europe or the environment as referent object. 'Europe' itself is a security referent in a truly original way, where integration through a security argument becomes a matter of survival for 'Europe'. Europe, security, integration and identity have been tied together in a specific narrative. Strikingly, the seemingly purely academic term 'security identity' has a political appearance exactly at this intersection.

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## I. Introduction

The nation-state is the format in which most of our central political concepts were shaped or indeed invented. On closer scrutiny, it is revealed that concepts like community, democracy, security and identity are not only recurrently *applied* to the nation-state, they are also in their very meaning *marked* by it (Walker, 1993). It is therefore not possible to see, for example, the relationship between democracy and the nation-state as an external one, where the challenge is to apply the concept of democracy to new units ('international democracy', 'remedying the democratic deficit of the EU'); rather we face an internal relationship where nation-state thinking permeates our political vocabulary. This, on the other hand, means that it should be possible to throw new light back on the nation-state by studying changes and displacements in other concepts, such as that of security.

The aim of the present article is to survey basic shifts in European security practices, not (primarily) in order to contribute to security debate and policy, but to see what can be revealed about the state of the state and the profile of a possible emerging Euro-polity. The article consists of three sections: first, on the concept of security; second, an overview of who undertakes security for whom and how in the Europe of today and, finally, a brief conclusion interpreting the findings in relation to some of the general themes of this issue.

## II. Security

The concept of security has predominantly been used in reference to the nation-state, and this without even reflecting on the distinction between state and nation: *national* security is the established name for the security of *the state*.

While the traditional concept of security, closely identified with the military affairs of the state, is widely felt to be insufficient, attempts to articulate a 'wider' concept of security have also met with considerable reserve. The widening have been criticized for being unable to specify a clear criterion to prevent everything becoming defined as security.

One approach which probably resonates well with the commonsense of most people and has been given academic vocabulary by peace researchers like Johan Galtung (1980) and Jan Øberg (1983), is to say that ultimately the referent object of security must be the individual, it must be about human security and states must be only the means, not the ends. Usually this approach leads to a concept of security that points to the individual and the global level. If one departs from the 'middle level' – the state – it is paradoxically quite easy to move simultaneously all the way up and all the way down: individual security is the security of the single individual is the security of all individuals is the security of humankind (as 'people', not 'citizens' of specific states; cf. Linklater, 1982) is global

security; q.e.d. But: there are at least three problems with this seemingly simple departure from the state-centric concept of security (see, furthermore, Krause and Williams, forthcoming).<sup>1</sup>

Firstly, this becomes a completely new issue, not one that encompasses the old one plus something more, and therefore this approach usually loses touch with the security establishment and thus with ongoing political debate. It is difficult to see how, from individual(ized) security one can reconstruct the undoubtedly real collectivities of state and nation, and thereby get a handle on, for example, state-to-state interactions. The security of a state cannot be arrived at by adding the security of a large number of individuals: the classical problem of methodological collectivism v. individualism (Wæver, 1995a; Wæver *et al.*, 1993, Ch. 2).

Secondly, it is unclear what individual and international/global security mean. It is too easily assumed that 'security' is a simple word the meaning of which we all know – and thus we can immediately proceed to discussing the questions of who, what and how. The concept of security as we know it from 'security policy' has no basic meaning independent of its referent object, the state. This is the Walker argument from the opening lines: our political concepts have been shaped by the modern, nation-state context. It is naive to assume that the concept of 'national security' (that is, state security) should be understood by detaching 'state' and comprehending it without its security dimension (which is always inherent in the word 'state') and then connect this 'state' to an equally context free concept of 'security'. The two concepts are already present in each other. If this were to be denied, both state and security would have to be reified and naturalized for them to be seen as necessary, ahistorical, constant entities.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is nothing wrong with studying individual or global security. A good case can be made for more security policy for the individual (Booth, 1991, 1995). The critical discussion here is in relation to a definition of security whereby it is *defined* as always ultimately individual, so that all other securities have to be seen as composed of individual security, as only justifiable as indirect ways to individual security. This mix of methodological individualism and political liberalism is often not an 'extension' of security after all, but an alternative fixed ontology, where the place of the state is taken by the individual. This is a possible, but problematic move – and probably the most common of the 'alternative' approaches. The approach outlined below should enable the study *also* of cases where individuals, global security or, e.g., nature become the referent object of security.

<sup>2</sup> Security is anything but a natural aim for social life. Surprisingly few genealogical studies have been made of this concept. James Der Derian (1993) has shown how security from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century had negative connotations of hubris and false surety (cf. various Shakespeare quotes), and thus in good Nietzschean style it has more complex and problematic roots than is usually assumed. Equally Nietzscheanly, Der Derian suggests that security can hardly be a healthy ideal for people who have the possibility of living excitingly, differently, insecurely! With more systematic documentation, Franz-Xaver Kaufman (1970) has shown how it was not until the beginning of this century that security was constituted as a (self-evident) aim of individuals and groups (and, e.g., moves into a central place in psychology and social policy). Only from the 1940s does national security become a key concept in international relations. When it can take such a central place so swiftly and adopt such a 'weighty' meaning, this is probably because a change takes place where an established story about state, defence and war adopts a new name but retains much of its established meaning. Thus, there were fixed arguments and images connected to the state (especially the concept of

At the individual level, there is no clear concept of security, and security therefore ends up meaning everything that is good (and insecurity, all that is bad).

Thirdly, the individualization of security will usually also contribute to a very wide extension of what is security relevant. One dubious effect of this 'alternative' concept of security is therefore that still wider areas are 'securitized': environmental security, immigrants as a security problem, etc. This is not necessarily as progressive as it first appears. By treating, for example, the environment or immigrants as security problems, these issues are conceptualized in a specific way with connotations drawn from 'security': a threat against which to defend, a role for the state, the problem is outside ourselves, etc. (where maybe it was more constructive to locate the environment in an ethical or economic context).

Thus, an analytical as well as a political case can be made for developing an inbetween concept of security, somewhere between the narrow (always state, only military) and the wide (everything people worry about). In order to be able to study what are called the new security questions, one needs such a concept, and therefore one must rethink the basic question, what is it that makes a security issue a security issue? What is the securityness of security? Do security questions have a characteristic logical, rhetorical or semiotic structure that enables us to recognize them when we move outside their original sphere?

The meaning of a concept is in its usage, and not something we can define analytically according to what would be 'best'. This is not the same as asking what people (consciously) think it means. What are the rules that implicitly define when and where the concept of security can be used meaningfully. By taking different kinds of texts and trying to explore their concept of security (Wæver, 1988, 1995a, c), I have arrived at the following:

Security is a practice, a specific way of framing an issue. Security discourse is characterized by dramatizing an issue as having absolute priority. Something is presented as an existential threat: if we do not tackle this, everything else will be irrelevant (because we will not be here, or not be free to deal with future challenges in our own way). And by labelling this a security issue, the actor has claimed the right to deal with it by extraordinary means, to break the normal political rules of the game (for example, in the form of secrecy, levying taxes or conscripts, limitations on otherwise inviolable rights). 'Security' is thus a *self-referential* practice, not a question of measuring the seriousness of various

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*'raison d'état'*) which created a saturated concept of 'national security', whereas it did not create any similar concept of what 'security' more abstractly might mean in a global context. This implies in no way – as will be shown below – that one cannot imagine security connected to units other than the nation-state, only that it is an apolitical fudge to attach security to 'mankind', and that it has so far primarily been the state that had enough political Gehalt to function as reference for security (Walker, 1990).

This whole genealogical problematique is exceedingly complex and far from thoroughly researched. I have treated it in somewhat more detail elsewhere (Wæver, 1995, Ch. 2), and can here only touch on my interpretation. I hope that someone someday will make a more detailed study of this subject.

threats and deciding when they 'really' are dangerous to some object (has anyone ever provided a measure for gauging such objective concepts of security?). It is 'self-referential' because it is *in* this practice that the issue becomes a security issue. What we can study is this practice that *makes* something into a security issue: who can undertake security on what subjects under which conditions and with what effects? Security can thus be seen as a *speech act*: the word security is not interesting as a sign referring to something more real (the security thing) – it is the enunciation itself that is the act. By speaking, something is done (as in betting, promising, naming a ship, etc. (Austin 1975 [1958])).<sup>3</sup>

It follows from the always implied act, that security is about survival. Something is presented as existentially threatened, and on this basis it is argued that 'we' must use extraordinary means to handle the threat. In the case of traditional state security, by saying 'security', a state representative moves the issue into a specific area and demands the right to use any means necessary to block a threatening development.<sup>4</sup> The necessity of an existential quality ('survival') follows from the function of security discourse as *lifting* issues to an urgency and necessity above normal politics. To attempt taking an issue out of the normal weighing of issues against others demands both that it is generally accepted that the threatened has to survive, and that there is a possible point of no return, that it can suddenly be too late, and it is therefore *necessary* to act in time – and therefore legitimate to overrule normal procedures.

With this perspective on security, it is suddenly clear how important a usually overlooked distinction is: that between referent object and actor (Wæver, 1995c). In the literature on 'an expanded concept of security', it is often rhetorically asked 'security for whom?' and it is said that it is too narrow to take only the state as actor, 'others are relevant, too'. What is meant by this? That others are relevant actors in the processes surrounding security policy, or that there are others who should be made secure? It can be argued that many *actors* are relevant, but the best structuring of the field is achieved by focusing on the question, 'in whose name is the security operation conducted?'. Who can you make reference to, and say, 'X is threatened, therefore we have to ...'. Not all collectivities or existing instances have a widely accepted demand for survival. There are therefore only a limited number of possible referents.

The distinction between actor and referent object is important in order to avoid talking about, for example, the security of an identity group (nation) in

<sup>3</sup> More precisely, security is the illocutionary force in specific speech acts; cf. Wæver (1988); Austin (1975 [1958]), pp. 98ff.

<sup>4</sup> In practice it is not necessary that the *word* security is spoken. There can be occasions where the word is used without this particular logic being in play, and situations where security is metaphorically in play without being pronounced. We are dealing with a specific logic which usually appears under the name security, and this logic constitutes the core meaning of the concept security, a meaning which has been found through the study of actual discourse with the use of the *word* security, but in the further investigation, it is the specificity of the rhetorical structure which is the criterion – not the occurrence of a particular word.

such a way that it should come to mean that a nation has collective fears, and 'the nation acts'. In contrast to such reification, the situation is rather that smaller groups (or individuals) act in the name of the collective – with reference to the larger collective – and that the actor obtains social power, because there is general acceptance (a) that the collective has a right to survival (and therefore should be secured), and (b) the actor can act on its behalf. For the state – the traditional referent object of security – there are elaborate rules for who can do this and how. It is probably for this reason that the distinction between actor and referent object has previously been overlooked: there was (allegedly) a formalized relationship between the two, as long as one remained with the case of the state.<sup>5</sup> But also, in this case, it probably often happened that a regime pointed to 'the security of the state' when in reality it was the regime itself that was threatened (for example, the communist regimes during the Cold War). The clue is that a regime as such holds no legitimacy as the referent object of security ('the survival of the regime was at stake, therefore we had to ...'), and so the regime had to construct the threat as aimed at the state (then represented by the regime). When one moves on to other objects, such as 'the nation' (as different from the state) and 'the environment', there are no formalized spokesmen and different groups can attempt to make such appeals. It is then an empirical question whether they are able to mobilize wider groups.

One of the advantages of the securitization perspective suggested here is that it can make politicians, activists and academics aware that they make a *choice*, when they treat something as a security issue. Threats and security are not objective matters, security is a way to frame and handle an issue. 'Environmental security' is a clear illustration – a tempting slogan because it dramatizes the environmentalist cause. It is potentially harmful in the long run, however, because 'security' can tend to strengthen certain approaches (giving a central role to the state, the problem is external to ourselves, we must find technical means of 'defence', etc.) where possibly it would be better to integrate environmental thinking into the economy, rather than security (cf. Buzan, 1992; Deudney, 1990).

Does security then mean the same to these different units? Yes and no. Security is a generic term with a distinct meaning, but its form varies. Security means survival, it means 'this is an existential threat with a point of no return; if we do not handle this in time, if we do not give it full priority, then we will not be here to tackle the other more mundane matters'. But survival does not mean the same to different kinds of units.

Survival to a state means sovereignty. If it is no longer sovereign, it is no longer a state, no longer a subject in the international political system. To a

<sup>5</sup> My colleague Bjørn Møller has nicely phrased a distinction between three modes of expanding the concept of security: (1) procedural (who? i.e. actor); (2) focal (whose? i.e. referent object); and (3) dimensional (what? i.e. military, economic, etc.) (Møller, 1995b, pp. 4–7, see also Møller, 1995a, pp. 294–6).

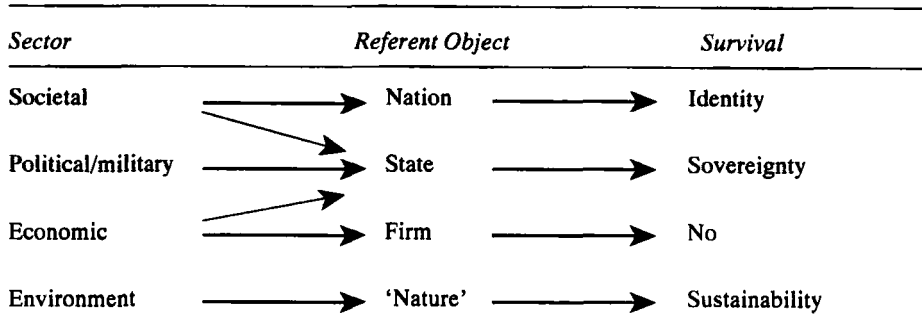


Figure 1: The Dialects of Security

society, survival spells identity. If a society is no longer itself, it has not survived. As with the state: the individuals might have survived as individuals, but the state as state has only survived if it is sovereign, and the community asks if 'we' are here as 'us' – an identity question. In the economic field, the firm – one should think – would be the primary unit, and survival would mean avoiding bankruptcy. The instructive question, however, is whether security discourse has much meaning here. Firms have no legitimate claim to 'a right to survival', and they can therefore not carry out appeals in the grammatical form of security: our survival is threatened, therefore we had to break the law ! Security policy in the economic field is found in relation to the state, i.e. when the state claims that a specific firm or sector is indispensable, and therefore the state is allowed to break the rules to which it should otherwise adhere, for example, GATT/WTO rules against protectionism.

As a final illustration, I take the environment to show how this approach gives a new angle on a security issue. In most attempts to consider whether 'environmental security' should be taken seriously, discussion centres either on whether environmental breakdowns have become as 'big' a threat as military threat (however that is to be measured), or whether environment and resources in the future can be expected to become a source of military conflict.<sup>6</sup> Instead we could focus on the form. Are environmental issues addressed in the form characteristic of security? This is exactly so. Environmental activists claim that we face irreparable disaster: if we do not give absolute priority to this, it will soon be too late, and exactly therefore, we (Greenpeace, Earth First, etc.) have a right to use extraordinary means, to depart from the usual political rules of the game. This is a security question: there is a 'point of no return', and we have to make sure it is not reached. Therefore there cannot be the usual balancing of interests in relation to other concerns.

<sup>6</sup> See, for instance, a number of articles in *International Security*, for illustrations of both approaches – and not least of a mix of the two questions.

Why make these distinctions, why judge, for example, whether the nation or the state is the referent object? Often it is the state elite that uses references to 'the survival of the nation', so the actor and the purpose can be the same whether that elite makes reference to state or nation. The crucial factor here is, however, that these references each involve a specific language game, each has its characteristic logic. Having said 'identity', certain moves are more easily justified than others – other steps follow where it is claimed that the environment or the sovereignty of the state is at stake. Of course, there will be concrete cases where several are combined, but there is reason to expect that security action has different attributes if conducted with different referent objects. Such systematic variation among sub-forms ('dialects') of security, will have to be demonstrated in other studies of securitization, but for the present study this is less important; here we only need to locate *where* this characteristic security logic is to be found in the Europe of today.

By such a neo-conventional security analysis that sticks to the traditional core of the concept of security (existential threats, survival), but is undogmatic as to both sectors (not only military) and referent objects (not only the state), a more differentiated picture of the primary units of the international system is obtained. Who today is able to establish itself with the self-referential gesture of security as a survival-demanding unit? Not only the nation-state, any more. State and nation partly go their separate ways, the EU appears as separate security reference, and other identity communities appear, where most importantly the environment is promulgated with a clear security logic, while economic security is in several places seen as primary but difficult to articulate.

### III. Political Identities in Europe – A Security Reading

#### *Security – the Surprising Surrender of Orthodoxy*

Who or what is constituted as security reference in post-bipolar Europe? An answer to this question will tell us something not only about European security, but also about what Europe *is* politically. It is widely claimed that previous political communities/units have been created simultaneously to their defence. From traditional realists as well as historical sociologists (Morgenthau, 1948; Herz, 1959; Tilly, 1975), the claim is that the criterion for *being* in the political system is the ability to defend oneself, claim one's sovereignty. From more critical writers, it has been asserted that a policy that warns of threats is central in constituting an identity (Campbell, 1992).<sup>7</sup> Both sides point out that by studying who has the will and ability to 'defend', it can be mapped who 'is'.

<sup>7</sup> The sequence 'here is a state, it conducts foreign policy to defend the identity it already has' is replaced by 'through this *foreign* (!) policy, the Other is defined and thereby its own identity'.



In a context like the present, this should seem a promising – but maybe also somewhat optimistic – operation. If the nation-state is yielding in the area of *security*, then something must have happened. Traditionally, it is assumed that security will be the last (and first) refuge of the state. And security *is* in many ways an inherently conservative field (and should be), so it could seem risky to search for change just here: an exercise destined to fail. Actually, conditions appear to be very different. Even during the Cold War, security was only to a limited extent connected to the nation-states: it was blocs, systems and ideologies that had to be defended (NATO, the West, freedom, democracy, the free market v. the Warsaw Pact, the socialist community, the future). The states were still the most important actors, but in terms of referent objects, security mobilization took place in reference partly to interstate partly to transnational communities and principles.

After the Cold War, the referents of security have emerged as a complex pattern of state, nation, Europe, environment, etc. The next section will try to map this – or rather sketch it in the limited space available.

### *Society, Nation, Identity*

Among the most remarkable new features of the security debates in recent years has been an increased focus on issues related to identity, not least national and ethnic identity. In ‘eastern Europe’ many of the most pronounced conflicts have to do with minorities and borders, and therefore are about the relationship between the borders of states and nations, and thus also refer to the nation as a category in itself. Also in western Europe, there have been new incidents. After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the appearance of new potential security problems in the east, a popular reply was to accelerate European integration to keep the continent together. To speed up integration at a time when ideas about nation, self-determination and identity were circulating more widely proved, however, to be problematic. People(s) in the west started to question the integration project. Much of the opposition sprang from a concern for national identity. It is significant here that this concern appears *in the form of security*. It is treated as a question of survival; it is an issue that ought to take precedence over all other subjects, because if this is not handled correctly it will remove the basis for everything else, because then *we* are not here (as us). Identity became a security question, it became high politics.

When such issues are reflected in the security literature, they usually take the form of a casual remark that, ‘security is no longer a military matter alone’ and ‘of the new non-military questions, “identity” is among the important ones’. Less noticed is a shift of *referent object* from ‘state’ to ‘nation’ (and other communities, as will be shown in a moment). It is arguments about the survival of the nation that are mobilized – and in most cases this definitely does not happen from

the usual cockpit of the state. 'The state' – state elites – recommend integration, surrender of sovereignty, a gradual winding up (or Europeanization) of itself, whilst the 'populations' – i.e. self-proclaimed mouthpieces for 'people' and 'nation' – say no. Except in Britain, the limits to integration in the EU are today no longer set where the integration literature always expected (and feared) to find them: by the states defending their autonomy, rather they are set by societies. The fate of the EU is decided less by debates over *raison d'état* and more by struggles over *raison de nation*. Different views compete in defining the future of the nation: can we only survive if we have our own full state too, or can the nations more easily survive on their own and maybe even with a clearer profile if, through integration, they are exposed to increasing contacts and contrasts with other nations? Only the second view will allow for increased integration, whereas the first will call the state back from its integrationist adventure, home to its own nation (Wæver *et al.*, 1993, pp. 70–1, 89–92). The nations have the ability to overturn this order. It is the struggle between different programmes for the nation that are decisive, not the sovereignty conservatism of the states. 'Europe from Charles de Gaulle to Drude Dahlerup'.<sup>8</sup>

If nations panic, this will upset the integration process. If they are brought to the point where they define developments as a security threat, it is possible for them to take dramatic steps, so upsetting the European (integration-based) order. This is parallel to – but in one important sense different from – the traditional 'realist' perspective on international order: if important states feel that an order is unacceptable, this order will be unstable. The novelty of our situation is that more kinds of units can carry out this security act. Not only states, also nations, must be accommodated. Different types of units become bearers of a given order. And their – at least partial – participation becomes necessary for a stable development. Stability depends on what has elsewhere (Snyder and Jervis, 1993) been labelled 'the most vulnerable significant actor'. Where a 'significant actor' previously had to be a state, others can now be 'important enough to trigger a system-wide crisis by [their] behaviour or demise' (Snyder, 1993, p. 2; Christensen, 1993, pp. 329, 340–53). Identity-based communities, such as nations, are one kind of unit that has achieved the ability – if they find the existing rules of the games unacceptable – to deploy extraordinary moves (justified by security rhetoric) and thereby upset the international order.

Many security observers have noticed that 'nationalism' is decisive for security in the Europe of the 1990s. If one has then searched in the professional security and strategic studies literature, one has probably been surprised *how* absent nations and all other identity phenomena have been from the theories.

<sup>8</sup> The first big crisis for integration was caused in the 1960s by the President of France, General de Gaulle, whereas the imbroglio of the early 1990s – over Maastricht ratification and then triggering a currency crisis – was started by a Danish 'No' in a popular referendum, with feminist political scientist Dahlerup as the most visible leader of the 'No' side.

This absence combined with a commonsense idea of connection, has naturally produced a wave of 'x and y' books and articles (security and identity; nationalism and European security, etc.). Usually none of the theories – security/international relations or theories of nationalism – open themselves to the other side, and the phenomena are only externally connected (cf. the penetrating analysis in Lapid and Kratochwil, 1995).<sup>9</sup> In the project group on European Security at the Copenhagen Centre for Peace and Conflict Research, we have tried to remedy this by outlining a theory about 'societal security', where we seek to give this new concept a place in the existing security theory (especially that of Barry Buzan, known from the modern classic, *People, States and Fear*, 1983, 1991) but also to modify the existing theory quite extensively (Wæver *et al.*, 1993; see also the discussion of this in Lapid and Kratochwil, 1995).

Societal security concerns 'situations when societies perceive a threat in identity terms' (Wæver *et al.*, 1993, p. 23). The most powerful types of community in Europe today are national and other ethnic groups, with religion as the only serious competitor. For other historical periods and currently in other parts of the world, it is other types of communities that defend their 'identity' (Buzan *et al.*, 1997, Ch. 5). The definition of societal security does not link it to the nation – only to identity-based communities. It is a contingent, empirical actuality that societal security in today's Europe primarily has to do with nations and ethnic minorities.

Societal security plays different roles in western and eastern Europe. In the west we witness a development where state and nation are decoupled. Much of the power of the state is moved to the EU level. Thereby nations are left with a new vulnerability. If a nation or culture group in 'the old days' felt threatened (by immigration, foreign products, ideas, international co-operation) it could call on its state for assistance: have the border closed for immigration, conduct a protectionist economic policy and withdraw from unwanted co-operation. No longer is this so simple. Border controls and many kinds of economic policy are increasingly moved to the EU level (while many other kinds of interactions generally have become less stoppable), and nations no longer can have the state handle such matters, because the state does not control them – unless the nation makes the state reach for more drastic measures that violate the current rules of the game and thereby roll integration backwards.

<sup>9</sup> More generally, 'identity' is widely admitted into mainstream theory in a form where it becomes yet another variable, influenced by *a* and *b* and itself, with effects on *d*, *e* and *f*. This without an identity perspective on the existing theory, without asking how the other categories and units are constituted politically, how *they* get identity. Such criticism could also be attempted against the current analysis. Is identity not separated out as a specific sector (the societal one), whereby the state is made purely institutional, 'de-identified' (Hansen, 1994)? Hopefully, I rather operate with identity at two levels: it is all placed in an identity perspective – who is constituted as self-referential security objects? – and one of the forms is in addition expressed through the media of identity: in the societal sector identity is thematized by the actors as a 'thing' to be defended (cf. Gellner's argument that nationalism is when a culture is worshipped in its own name, *as culture* (1983, p. 176).

How then can cultures defend themselves today? With culture! If identity is threatened by internationalization and Europeanization, one has to strengthen its national expression. Culture has become security policy. This has been clearly seen in Denmark for the last decade where art exhibitions and TV programmes have relentlessly dealt with 'Danishness' and 'Danish identity'. Superficially, one might register this as anti-EU activity, but mostly it was and is the opposite: reluctant intellectuals who have been brought round to accept the perspective that in the future 'we Danes' will come to live in a more integrated Europe, and the Danish nation will therefore have to be able to get along on its own, with less state. And therefore the Danish nation will have to intensify its cultural self-reflection. All this results from a decoupling of state and nation in the west.

In the east, state and nation are recoupled. Or rather, the dominant *ambition* is for reconnecting. The ideal is every nation should have its state, every state its nation, and coincidence between ethnic and political borders. So we have the classic conflicts: where state and nation do not fit, there will be competing claims over territory, and conflicts over 'minorities', borders, etc. The east is tormented by 'nationalism' due to the attempted coupling of state and nation, where the west exhibits (neo-)nationalism due to the decoupling of state and nation, because the nations increasingly feel vulnerable due to their lack of a self-controlled state.

Tied to European integration is a process whereby societal security emerges as a specific field of reflection, separated from state security. The process of integration probably depends on a willingness by 'the nations' to handle these perceived security risks by their own cultural security policy, and *not* call the state back in (which will mean blocking integration).

In all of this focusing on the security policy of identities, one should not perceive identity as something given. To talk about the security of identities can easily create the image: they are there, normally not threatened and therefore not defended, but when they are about to disappear, they are defended. This might – might! – be the logic for more tangible objects, but the curious self-referential character of identity makes it different.

First, cultures and identities can very well disappear without being defended. It is not that an objective threat leads necessarily to security policy. This is most clear in relation to globalization, westernization and the spread of the McDonalds culture: objectively a global, cultural homogenization is undoubtedly eradicating a number of cultural distinctions. But as long as this is not thematized in security terms by important actors, there is no security problem here. When cultural traits are defended, this is often because the threat can be presented as stemming from 'them' – not just from a structure or a trend – and globalization is viewed as 'Americanization' (as in France) or 'westernization' (in the Middle East). Societal security is hard to mobilize if 'our identity' cannot be presented

as intimidated by *another identity* threatening to replace ours: 'they want to turn us into Xs'; cf. the fear for national in the face of European identity.

Secondly, it is often by talking about threats that an identity is (re-)produced (Campbell, 1992; Coser, 1956). It can be claimed that only by being not totally secure can an identity be sustained. 'Secure identity' is a contradiction in terms.

These paradoxical features of identity stem from the general property that identities are never completely closed, never fully satiated, one is never simply that which one is. One does not speak of something that is unproblematic. Identity discourse is thus always a supplement, about that which we need, because *then* we can fully be what we are – but obviously are not now because we need this supplement. After achieving it, we will no longer be what we were, but something else (Derrida, 1974 [1967]). Where there is self-reflection in identity terms, one is by definition not secure.<sup>10</sup>

If identity security thus is self-defeating (as project), this means that it is also self-sustaining (as praxis). To thematize identity problems can never deliver what is sought, because the longing establishes an indefinite lack. The identity is the difference between what one is and what one wants to be. There can therefore be no solution in movements or campaigns for societal security (cf. Huysmans, 1995). The nation is a circular reference to an empty place – we may think we share something, but if the attempt is made to concretize it, it becomes clear that it is never totally common to us all (Gellner, 1983; Žizek, 1992, p. 196). The more people search for national identity, the more worried they will get, and the more they will strengthen their defence of it. All this, however, is no argument for security researchers not to study societal security. On the contrary, exactly due to these problematic qualities of identity, it is the more important to understand the dynamics of societal security and national identity. Because they can hardly be 'defended' or restored if challenged, it is the more important to understand the dynamics that trigger identity security policy – and thereby try to avoid them.

### *State, Sovereignty, Security*

The test point of the state is sovereignty. For a state, security is in the last instance about sovereignty. Against this, many will undoubtedly protest that sovereignty

<sup>10</sup> This supplemental logic of identity further means that some Other often enters as part of the self-identification. Since my identity depends on this Other, the Other ends up in the dual role of being necessary for my identity, and the one who prevents me from being fully myself. In this frustration over my incomplete identity, an obvious answer is to blame this on the Other, who prevents me from being me (although he also actually is the precondition of my identity). In the extreme, my self-perception will become that if I could just extinguish the other, I could finally be me. 'It is because of *them* that we can't be us'. This is, however, an illusion because my identity is not something resting in itself, it depends on the other, and the further I get in this practice, the more problematic my identity will become. Thus is created an all too familiar vicious circle of accelerating insecurity, scapegoating and extinction policies (Laclau, 1990, p. 21; T. B. Hansen 1995).

is an obsolete concept, and states in our days are no longer sovereign, or at least not as sovereign as they used to be. In such arguments, 'sovereignty' is used in the sense of 'actual full control'. This, sovereignty has never meant, and such sovereignty has never existed. States have always been limited by others; they have *de facto* been forced to accept that many others shaped important conditions for them. What sovereignty did mean was, however, that others could not pass laws on the territory, that there were certain issues that only the state itself could decide (in recent times, for example, conscription of soldiers and taxation). More precisely the range of affairs a state insisted on deciding itself has changed over time. In the seventeenth century it was cardinal that rulers could decide the religion of their subjects (with certain specified exceptions). This they cannot do today. Are the states therefore less sovereign? Have they 'ceded sovereignty'? To whom?

This terminology of 'transferring sovereignty' used especially in EU-related discussions is quite misleading. Who has seen a state with two-thirds sovereignty? Where did the delegated sovereignty go? Did the EU then become one-third sovereign? No, what happens is rather that the states redefine the meaning and especially the extension of sovereignty. States are still 100 per cent sovereign – because sovereignty is an either/or quality based on the recognition as a subject in the community of states – but a collective redefinition occurs regarding *what* a state can claim sole control over, and correspondingly what is no longer claimed. Where this does happen, it still takes the classical form that, on a territorial basis, there is one ultimate authority for this: the state. And there has to be something, because this makes the state sovereign, which it wants to remain. Sovereignty is form, the content changes over time (Wæver, 1995b).

Therefore, states do not necessarily protest when issues leave the field covered by their sovereignty. By participating in the collective process of redefinition, the state retains an interest in attempting to handle challenges without pointing to alleged violations of sovereignty. If, in declaring 'this is a violation of our, X-land's, sovereignty', one has to do something about it, it has to be a matter one can actually control, because otherwise this possibly marginal issue strikes back at the heart of sovereignty. Are you sovereign or not? If one has said that something is incompatible with sovereignty, and then one can do nothing about it, one has placed a very unpleasant question mark around one's own sovereignty. Illustrations can be gleaned from the small Scandinavian states: Finland, during the Cold War, defined the Soviet demand for the right to demand consultations in certain cases as being compatible with Finnish sovereignty; Denmark in 1940 even tried to define the German occupation so that no state of war occurred, Denmark was still neutral, and a promise was extracted from the Germans not to violate Danish territorial integrity or political independence, i.e. sovereignty (Karup Pedersen, 1970, pp. 479–500); if Denmark in the

1940s or 1950s had demanded an American military withdrawal from Greenland (for example, because Denmark had a general policy against foreign bases and nuclear weapons), the result would probably have been that Greenland would today be American (or independent). So Denmark negotiated the concrete issues but announced no violation of sovereignty although a foreign power *de facto* insisted on having bases on the territory. But there is a counter-illustration: Sweden made a fuss about submarine violation of its territorial waters during the 1980s, at a time when it could do nothing about it. Many observers found this bizarre and self-destructive, because Sweden thereby gave voice to its inability to control its own territorial waters (Tunander, 1989, pp. 117–19). They should, of course, have kept quiet (the other party that knew about events could hardly speak out) and waited until actually sinking a submarine, before speaking out loudly (cf. also Weber, 1995, on sovereignty and intervention as mutually constituting concepts).

Other states have at times extended the demand for non-intervention and thereby sovereignty very far. For instance, the Eastern side during the Cold War claimed that trafficking Bibles over the border, transmitting radio, or just putting forward critical opinion constituted intervention, and therefore such things could be stopped by calling on non-intervention and security. That the West at the time had a narrower, more military-focused concept of security (than the Eastern one which encompassed economy, social life, etc.) was not an expression of Western 'militarism', but rather that the West wanted to see these other issues as 'normal interaction', where it was illegitimate to intervene on the grounds of security (Wæver, 1989, pp. 301–3). This illustrates the argument from Section II, that the widest possible concept of security is not always the most progressive, that it can easily be a kind of metaphoric militarization of wider societal fields.

Struggles over political security typically take the form where some state elite uses security rhetoric in the name of the state and with sovereignty as the reference point. Even if their actual worry might be something else – regime stability or economic competitiveness – the fact that sovereignty is an internationally established principle of unique dignity makes this the ideal reference for a securitizing move. The act that one tries to block by this ('the intervention') can sometimes also be based on political security reasoning, but then it will usually be with reference to principles that have international society itself as referent object. Examples of such principles are aggression, non-genocide or human rights on which some state or group of states act; or, most formalized, the security act where the UN Security Council pronounces 'a threat to international peace and security' and thereby formally obtains extensive competences. The typical mobilization of security reasoning around states will thus be with at least one party defending 'sovereignty' and potentially with the other side acting in the name of system-level referents (Buzan *et al.*, 1997, Ch. 7).

This general conceptualization of sovereignty has to be combined with an understanding of specific features in our current period. Since the end of the Cold War, the international society is marked by a relatively high degree of homogeneity organized as concentric circles around a dominant 'westernistic'<sup>11</sup> centre (Buzan, 1993). In addition to demanding market economy and democracy, this hegemonic set of rules prescribes self-opening if one wants to be an 'insider': increased interpenetration and thereby decreasing insistence on far-reaching interpretations of sovereignty.<sup>12</sup> The trend is towards redefining sovereignty in operational terms as a relationship collectively between insiders (the international society) and outsiders – not primarily an attribute of individual countries within international society.

This international society is still based on the principle of sovereignty as a means of identifying potential members. Sovereignty as organizing principle is problematized most markedly in Europe. Here are incipient overlapping authorities, therefore there is talk of the 'new middle ages' (Tunander, 1995). To a degree not experienced since the Middle Ages it has become difficult to say who is sovereign here: the state? The EU? During the modern period, such contested sovereignty demanded a civil war to settle the matter. With the civilizing of relations in western Europe, we have fortunately lost this instrument of clarification. And we have to live with complexity. Here sovereignty as *organizing principle* is contested which, however, does not prevent the states of western Europe from operating so that they retain their formal attribute of sovereignty (Wæver, 1995b).

As an outcome of these processes, security-like references to sovereignty in Europe appear primarily in three specific contexts:

(1) *The outsiders of the international society.* States like Serbia (and outside Europe: Iraq) make frequent use of the slogan 'violating our sovereignty' (and 'intervention', the other side of the sovereignty coin (Weber, 1995)). If accused, for example, of breaches of human rights, they claim the accusation violates their sovereignty, is interference in internal affairs. When such talk is so rarely heard among most European countries, this is primarily caused by the logic of the international society: those states operating *within* the international society are involved in a process of mutual opening, in which it sounds isolationist, self-exposing to insist on sovereignty. An additional reason is the connotative burden from the Cold War use by the Eastern side of such rhetorics.

(2) *The opponents of the outsiders.* Or, more precisely, those who think they can cast a country, allegedly violating their sovereignty, as being outside good company. By way of illustration, Estonia can talk of Russia violating its

<sup>11</sup> Inspired by the concept of 'hellenistic' – as the continuation of Greek culture with the centre of power shifted away from Greece – Buzan (1995) speaks of the present system as 'westernistic': the west is no longer clearly dominant, but the dominant powers use western norms and ideas.

<sup>12</sup> On 'openness', see Segal *et al.* (1992); on societal interpenetration, see Hassner (1993).



sovereignty without thereby defining itself as a strange sovereignty-exaggerating country, because it can present Russia as a country not playing according to the ordinary rules.

(3) *The constitutional concerns of EU members.* EU countries involved in the complex construction of multiple layers, where the EU also takes on some sovereignty-like abilities, will have to consider the long-term consequences for their sovereignty. They are involved in a development that could come to challenge their sovereignty, not only in the (mistaken) extended meaning of 'full control of this and that' but also in the basic meaning: to be, to be an international subject, to have full control of something, not to have another constitution above oneself. It is not that EU integration will necessarily challenge the sovereignty of Member States, but it might. Europe has for a while been systemically post-sovereign while the units have retained their sovereignty. Various recent moves – from elements of the Maastricht treaty to the Maastricht verdict of the German Federal Constitutional Court – show states attempting to draw a line. This line does not prevent the emergence of an independent Euro-polity (and thus multi-layered politics and systemic post-sovereignty), but it is a limit which exactly prevents the EU from acquiring sovereignty, and thus ensuring that the states can retain sovereignty as attribute (Wæver, 1995b). The focus of the German Karlsruhe (Federal Constitutional Court) verdict is that the EU must not become its own source of final authority, it must not generate new competences and decide controversies involving conflict between the levels – it must not acquire *Kompetenzkompetenz*, a phrase Germans are familiar with from its importance in German history for the development in the balance between Länder and central authorities (Nipperdey, 1986 [1980]).

These three activities are of limited magnitude – (1) and (2) are most important outside Europe, and (3) a kind of implicit, lurking activity. The conclusion here must therefore be that state security and defence of sovereignty are not conspicuous on the west European agenda. So far the argument in this subsection has been based on 'sovereignty' as the indicator for state security. As a second check – since it might have been wrong completely to reduce state security to involving contestation of sovereignty – we might examine whether state security is found in other contexts in larger amounts.

Defence is generally assumed to be security policy. Here it is striking how rarely today, in western Europe, defence arguments link specifically to the security of an individual state. Danish military security is mainly enacted in the former Yugoslavia. Somehow this is assumed to be about Danish security, although the politicians have a hard time explaining exactly how this is to be seen (Wæver, 1995d; SNU, 1995). Security is presented as *indivisible*, and therefore the security of the Bosnians is our security. We have to worry about Europe's security in order to secure that of Denmark. The reason for this is that Denmark

as a state under present conditions is more free of military security problems than ever before, but this comfortable situation depends on the current European order being upheld. Therefore, developments in Bosnia threaten us – not us as Danes, but us as Europeans. In the military context, Europe is increasingly constituted as security reference, not the individual state.

What about other sectors then – economic security for instance – and general, non-military, balance-of-power considerations? For instance, in France concern can be found over the long-term effects of growing German economic power, a question often presented in security terms as a fateful question for French independence. Usually terms like domination are used rather than explicit threat/security rhetoric, and the most common existential arguments in France are those of type (3) (EU sovereignty). Other worries such as cultural fear of Americanization belong to societal security. Examples can be found in western Europe of worries about state security but, surprisingly, least of all in the military field – and generally less than one might expect, given that this is the traditional form of security policy.

In eastern Europe it is easier to find traditional security argumentation from the perspective of the state. Countries like Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic claim to have a security problem because they have not been admitted into NATO. More rarely do they point to exactly what threatens them, and how. This is nevertheless an example of the state being presented as having a security problem, and where military matters are presented as relevant to the security of specific states. One interpretation could be that these states are trying to bargain on the basis of something that sounds familiar (military security) and thereby – in Europe's name – put pressure on the west to gain access to desired membership. But in fact the security act is not carried out: threats are not pointed out, existential risks are not painted. One is simply trying to draw on an emerging European responsibility. Thus we are moving on to the next subsection: how do obligations towards 'Europe' – not only state and nation – emerge?

### *Europe: Security without Balance of Power and Cultural Identity?*

The expression 'European security' has always been ambiguous. Did it refer to the security of the states in Europe, or was it really Europe's security, not only the sum of its states? In the first instance, it would be a variation on 'international security' which usually means only stability and a general fulfilment of the security aim of the units, i.e. 'regional international security', whereas the second would make for 'Euro-national security' (Jahn *et al.*, 1987). There is no easy way to document this, but there seems to be a trend towards using the expression increasingly in the sense in which it refers to the security of Europe as more than the sum of its parts – a responsibility for the fate of Europe.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> One way to investigate this would be a study of the metaphors used in relation to European security. Are  
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Many possible arguments can be put forward in the name of Europe, but one in particular should be noted for the way it ties together European integration and European security and furthermore connects to the question discussed below of the European idea. An explicitly European security argument is that Europe needs integration in order to avoid fragmentation. The logic is that Europe for most of its modern history has been a balance-of-power system where a number of great powers compete for influence and allies. The Cold War was an exception where Europe interrupted this internal power balancing (and resulting wars) as external powers 'overlaid' the European system (Buzan *et al.*, 1990; Wæver, 1995b). Without this overlay, Europe after the Cold War faces the basic choice of whether to return to traditional power-balancing or create enough concentration of power to get a centred development (as in North America and a long list of historical cases from other regions (Watson, 1993; Wæver, forthcoming)). In this argument, it is obviously *Europe* which is at stake in some fateful manner: which direction shall European history take? In one direction (integration) there is room for much more 'Europe' than in the other (fragmentation); if Europe were to turn on to one track, it would be difficult to change. This is a security argument that is clearly attached to Europe as such. And appeals to 'European security' increasingly build on this argument (at least if promoted in an EU context; in and around NATO, 'European security' has somewhat different connotations and could until a few years ago even have anti-EU connotations (Wæver, 1995a), but in the context of the EU, European security means 'integration in order to avoid fragmentation').

This ties in a paradoxical way into the history of *the European idea*. Amidst all current talk about European ideas, European values and European identity, one might ask, to what ideas has Europe actually historically been connected? In a recent, inspiring review, Dutch historian Pim den Boer (1993) answers: the European idea has had no constant element, but in alternating mixtures and constellations it has drawn on five meanings: (1) Europe as a geographical concept, (2) freedom, (3) Christendom, (4) balance of power, (5) European culture and civilization. Most of these – maybe all – are at play in the Europe debates of today. But none of them has the power to fill out the meaning of 'the European'.

At first sight (4), the balance of power, is probably a surprise. Was that a value, a specific European quality? It was in the seventeenth and especially eighteenth centuries, the balance of power was constituted as typically European (other regions had succumbed to imperial centralization and thereby stagnation) and it was the guarantee for religious and thereby spiritual liberty (den Boer,

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they drawn from the cluster connected to personification – where Europe has a face, a will, is embarrassed etc. – or is Europe imagined as a family, a system, a structure, a building or something else where it is only the framework for or the constellation of the 'real' units? (cf. Thornborrow, 1993).

1993, pp. 43–4). Balance of power was thus not only a (deplorable but necessary) instrument *vis-à-vis* external threats, it was also a particularly praiseworthy form of organization *internally* among Europeans. In this strong sense, the balance of power has obviously lost legitimacy. From the beginning of this century, criticism of the balance of power as peace strategy began to cumulate, ideas about collective security gained ground, and the balance of power was associated with power politics, aggression and dominance, not freedom and pluralism.

This was expressed even more strongly after the Second World War, where the European idea was to a large extent shaped as a revolt against Europe's own past. Only to a limited extent was the European project promoted as a return to a lost time of greatness, and much more as the possibility that Europeans should learn from their past and set new aims (den Boer *et al.*, 1993, pp. 151–3, 174). The Europe discourse of the 1990s contains a mixture of this future oriented logic and elements of more nostalgic, Euro-national celebration of uniquely European traditions. Precisely in the field of security there is a strong emphasis on the self-negating, self-transforming argument in relation to Europe itself. Europe's 'other', the enemy image, is today to no very large extent 'Islamic fundamentalism', 'the Russians' or anything similar<sup>14</sup> – rather Europe's Other is Europe's own past which should not be allowed to become its future (Baudrillard, 1994 [1992], pp. 32–3; Derrida, 1992 [1991]; Rytönen, 1995).

Europe and identity are finally connected in discussions relating to the issues presented above under the heading of 'societal security'. Whereas Brussels, even a few years back, desperately tried to create some Euro-national identity, it is today much more careful about 'European cultural identity' and tries to avoid

<sup>14</sup> Many critical and/or post-structuralist authors enjoy remonstrating against the alleged 'othering' that is at present taking place in relation to Russia, North Africa or Asia. Many authors – including Campbell – balance between, on the one hand, (formally) saying that identity does not demand an Other, does not demand antagonism, only difference(s) that can be non-antagonistic and, on the other, actually assuming that identity (in international relations) is always based on an antagonistic relationship to an other, is always constituted as absolute difference. In the current situation, because of this unfortunate habit, when one notices that there are efforts in identity creation for Europe, one immediately looks around and asks, 'who can it be directed against?', and then one discovers some more or less well-founded examples of, for example, Russia being castigated as Other. I am not convinced. The dominant aspiration is rather to constitute Europe as a pole of attraction with graduated membership so that Europe fades out, but is not constituted against an external enemy. Some of Europe's mechanisms for stabilizing or disciplining eastern Europe rely exactly on this non-definition of an eastern border, on the image of an open but heterogeneous polity of which some are more members than others, but none is defined as total outsiders or opponents (Wæver, forthcoming).

If some Other is at play, it can be distinguished in time, rather than space: not Russia, but Europe's past must be negated. This is reflected in the rhetoric that Europe has to be integrated, otherwise we will fall back into the power balancing and rivalry of the former Europe – a rhetoric that has probably become a decisive force as a last-ditch argument for integration, especially in France and Germany (Wæver, 1995b).

To the extent that some enemy or at least risk is indicated in Europe's neighbours, e.g. by NATO, Lene Hansen (1995) has argued that this takes the shape of gradual otherness and distance. The three 'discourses of danger' are at the one end eastern Europe, almost a part of 'ourselves'; at the other extreme North Africa and the Middle East which are different; and inbetween, Russia, which is midpoint in both cultural and geographical distance. Accordingly, security and identity are defined differently in the three cases, but not in any clear cut, binary way.

trampling directly in the most sensitive areas of nations. Strikingly, 'identity' is mentioned in only two contexts in the Maastricht Treaty: the need to secure the identity of the Member States (and the regions), and Europe's 'security identity'! The project is increasingly defined as that of securing a European identity which is not similar to that of the nation-states, i.e. leaving room for the nations, while European identity is developed as something *sui generis*. European identity is phrased as a predominantly political identity, while ethno-national cultural identity remains with the nation-states (and regions) – a possible 'division of labour' (Wæver *et al.*, 1993, pp. 76–8). In classical (especially French) state logic, there is a sense in which Europe can exist only if it has a 'defence identity' and is a recognized actor in the international arena.<sup>15</sup> This used to be summarized in the concept of sovereignty, but today this question is posed for Europe without this (sensitive) concept, and directly in terms of identity, defence, citizenship, responsibility and politics.

Some hope and some worry that the EU is at present constructed as a replica state and/or nation. Although a need is often felt for some kind of European identity as underpinning for the construction, a good case can be made against a cultural essentialism like the one used in the nineteenth century to build our existing nations (cf. Derrida, 1992 [1991]; Habermas, 1992; den Boer *et al.*, 1993; Delanty, 1995), against arguing that we Europeans really belong together because we are so alike, share a history and a culture, and we therefore should unify politically.

The present survey of rhetorics of identity and security in the EU indicates that 'Europe' is constituted security-wise *not* as yet another state or nation. It is not 'we Europeans unified in our state' that has to be defended – there is no project to defend a sovereignty (which is not established) or a communal identity (which would anyway be self-defeating because it would challenge the member nations). But possibly a specific 'European' idea is emerging which legitimizes security action. Europe as project, as history, is at a crossroads and security is at play as the question of integration *v.* fragmentation. *Integration* as such is made an aim in itself (because the alternative is fragmentation), and thereby security legitimacy is obtained for the rationale that the EU Commission and bureaucracy have used all along: that any specific policy question should always be subject to a dual evaluation of the issue itself and its effects in terms of strengthening or weakening integration (Jachtenfuchs and Huber, 1993). By adding the security argument, integration gains urgency, because its alternative is 'fragmentation', a self-propelling process that by definition will destroy 'Europe' as a project. Whether 'Europe' exists or not appears as an either–or question, and a question

<sup>15</sup> Marlene Wind (1992, p. 24) quotes an article by Francois Goguel from *Le Figaro* of 4 April 1991 entitled 'Europe does not exist' (reflecting on the feeble appearance of the EU in the Gulf War) and, e.g., French historian François Furet (1995, p. 89) writes, 'Europe now stands at a crossroads, where only by uniting may it still parry its decline. If it cannot accomplish this, the twenty-first century may well take shape without it'.

of security dimensions. The question of integration thus gains a grammatical form that brings it closer to security logic. Integration as self-referential project becomes a 'to be or not to be' question posed security-wise in a triple sense: (1) it is existential, because there is a risk of a development that passes a point of no return, where it will all be lost; (2) it is security dynamics, security policy, and power politics that threaten to tear Europe apart; (3) the criterion for *becoming*, for Europe being created, is in the last instance, partly because of (2), that it becomes a subject in the field of security, an able foreign policy actor (Wind, 1992; Holm, 1993; Wæver, 1995b). Without asking the question in terms of sovereignty, one approaches that which sovereignty used to be the name for, but now evading this epithet: what is needed to achieve international subjectivity? Of course, it is mainly in France (and French-influenced areas) that the question is put with such logical clarity but, in the shadow of Bosnia, the argument has sprung up in more and more places. Hereby, a connection has been made between security, integration and the question of whether Europe exists.

'Security identity' is the general theme of this article where it has been launched as an analytic – maybe somewhat strange-sounding – category, but there is one context where the term (and some close variations) are actually used. Terms like 'security identity' (and 'defence identity') are often used in relation to a possible EU role in security affairs. Despite this unusual phrasing, the problematique of 'security identity' is usually overlooked, and it is assumed that when, in connection with debates over NATO, WEU, and the European pillar, the term defence identity/security identity is used, this is just an awkward way of talking about some kind of weak institution (therefore 'only' identity). Even if this is part of the explanation, it can hardly be coincidence that this specific and peculiar phrasing is used – it is not enough to explain that it is a way to avoid the word institution; many other words were possible, so why 'identity'? The explanation for this has to be found in the connection made between 'security' and the task of Europe attaining a political identity, becoming a subject of international affairs.<sup>16</sup> Security, identity and EU/integration have been linked in

<sup>16</sup> Ulla Holm points out to me that the French have (during 1995) moved towards using the term 'European defence' rather than defence identity. If one focuses solely on identity being adopted as a term because institution was too strong, 'European defence' would seem to be a strengthening, now it is concrete, actual military matters. But seen in the second perspective, it is a weakening: previously one linked on to the project of constructing Europe politically, of giving Europe identity (through defence), but with the general tendency for France to have second thoughts on this and opt for more ad hoc coalitions among the European greater powers, 'European defence' becomes more ambiguous: it is not necessarily Europe's defence, but the defence of a number of Europeans (European powers) joining together, in a loose institutional framework and without a single European international subjectivity being created.

Still, this is not only a matter for the French. It was clear that it was a terminology used much more by the French than, say, the English domestically (as shown in Thornborrow's discourse analysis of French and British press on defence; 1993). It became adopted, however, as standard terminology in declarations of NATO, EU and WEU on 'European architecture' and thus has gained a place in European political language in this roundabout way from French political metaphysics through military communiques into the political

an interesting way as a project, where each of the three can only be explained and imagined by reference to the other two, and only as a project, not as *something* existing.

A number of additional referents are lining up – clearly politicized but not conclusively securitized. Some of these – such as the environment and humanity – have been dealt with in the theory section. Also local ('regional') and trans-regional (for example, the Baltic Sea region) identities are established as political and economic contexts for reasoning, but rarely with security dignity. So far the mutually connected concepts of state, nation and Europe seem to be the most security-relevant. Their relationship is probably grasped best through the seemingly weakest of them: Europe. In this place only, the term 'security identity' appears and to explain this curious linguistic invention in current affairs, one needs to understand the limits posed on Europe by the lurking or actual security actions performed for nations and states, and thereby the specific space available for a construction of 'Europe'. Increasingly a narrative about the available futures for Europe manages to tie together security, integration and the existential question of whether 'Europe' is to be.

#### IV. Security, Politics, Identity, Europe

At least four conclusions can be drawn from this analysis.

(1) Security political conclusions can be drawn. We have found that the nation-state alone is not the exclusive referent object for security. More than one kind of unit exists with the strength that it has security legitimacy, that there is a socially sanctioned demand on survival and therefore the possibility of defending with extraordinary means. Those we-identities make up a complex landscape. There are many, and notably they are not (and do not want to be) 'the same' at various levels; it is not only the fight about whether Brussels, Berlin or Bremen should be sovereign (the rank struggles of subsidiarity). States, nations, EU/Europe, and the environment have different rationales, but are to varying degrees political constructions with legitimacy. Each of them becomes established with a self-referential demand for survival. To this complexity it should be added that survival furthermore means something different to them, i.e. even more complexity.

European stability demands a mutual accommodation among these security able units. If a frame is to be upheld where no one unit in desperation acts singlemindedly to ensure its own survival, a way has to be found for the units to understand each other's rationale. In traditional diplomacy, this was the criterion of a stable order – that the central actors understood they should not put other

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imagery of general Euro-debates. (Maybe it is less fun that the political imagination of France meanwhile become NATO'fied in terms of concrete military meaning, at the cost of political vision?)

central actors in a position where they could not imagine a future for themselves, where developments became incompatible with the 'vision of itself' of a major power (Kissinger, 1957). This led to a perspectivist practice where each had to understand the world as it made sense to the others. Germany and France today have to take into account that Europe *means* something different according to French and German political logic, but they can only together create a European process if this process is meaningful (in different ways) to both of them (Holm, 1993; Wæver *et al.*, forthcoming). This demand is radicalized in the process of integration where the populations grow together, not only the states, and integration is made dependent on referendums. The ratification of Maastricht demonstrated the need for Danes to understand that the others reasoned not as Danes do in their political logic, and therefore the effects of Danish decisions could be very different from what was intended, but it also compelled the others to understand how this small, peculiar people were thinking Europe. Such mutual translation of worlds could no longer be handled by diplomats alone – suddenly many more people had to be able to understand the world from more angles, understand how other political vocabularies operate; the generalized diplomat has become a condition for continued European integration (cf. Ricoeur, 1995).

As if this was not complicated enough, this mutual understanding of the threshold beyond which one pushes another actor into the desperation of security policy, now has to be extended beyond the horizontal constellation of a number of nation-states to a perspectivism that is both horizontal and vertical because it takes place both in various parallel nation-states and between nations, states, Europe (and even completely different units that can hardly be located in a metaphor of horizontal/vertical at all). The political order rests on a complex constellation of units of different kinds, with different political logics, but all able to mobilize enough political backing behind their demand for survival that they cannot be treated ruthlessly without this having shock effects in the system. This mutual regard shows clearly in the way the EU builds its identity in a way that does not challenge the nations frontally but concentrates on political identity, leaving cultural identity for the nations.

(2) A major issue on the European agenda these days is the question of what 'democracy' might mean at a trans- or supranational level (in popular parlance: the 'democratic deficit' of the EU). These discussions often turn on questions like the possibilities of a common European *Öffentlichkeit*, or institutional restructuring of the EU, but maybe the security/identity approach has something to say here. Hannah Arendt has argued that:

Only if we succeed in ruling out war from politics altogether, can we hope to achieve that minimum of stability and permanence of the body politic without which no political life and no political change are possible. (1962, p. 12)



For politics to emerge – not necessarily ‘democracy’, but the precondition of it – we need to eliminate the logic of war, which in its extended sense (‘altogether’) means to stop using the security act amongst ourselves. In war we do not have to discuss with the other, we can eliminate him. We do not move out into the political space between us; pure, self-based power politics rests solely on what we can do ourselves. This self-based transgression of all rules is exactly the security act; and the fear that the other will not let us survive as subject is the foundational motivation therefore. Politics in this sense demands the exclusion of security – the exclusion of security policy as well as of insecurity. This does not necessarily turn EU affairs into ‘domestic’, but it takes away some of the critical marks of ‘international affairs’. It is a well-established argument that the realm of international relations is exactly *defined* by the possibility of war (Aron, 1966, pp. 5–8), and Martin Wight makes a distinction between domestic affairs as the realm of striving for ‘the good life’ and international relations as ‘the realm of recurrence and repetition’, exactly because ‘International theory is the theory of survival. ... [I]t is constantly bursting the bounds of the language in which we try to handle it. For it all involves the ultimate experience of life and death, national existence and national extinction’ (1966, p. 33). If we can in the European political space stop claiming that ‘survival’ is at stake, we have ruled out anti-political acts that previously prevented us from building politics through ‘the bounds of language’, from constructing a European body politic.

(3) The emerging complexity of various co-existing layers of identity forces us to rethink what kinds of identity might be possible to function here. In a post-sovereign space like Europe, identity cannot be connected to the idea of primacy, of the one ‘real’ identity, of identity being correlated to the truth of ‘who I really am’. Identity cannot be something we ‘have’ as a thing, or some inner quality of our own which we are called upon to realize in optimum purity. Instead we have to view identity simultaneously as something impossible to fill, always incomplete due to the presence of the outside in the inside, but also as defined by this impossibility.<sup>17</sup> Identity is therefore contingent and this is in a way which is operative but denied in traditional security thinking: our identity is not (only) threatened by the others, but also possible because of them, they are always already involved *in* our identity. Not that we are one big whole (not the cosmopolitan ‘they too are [like] us’), nor that we will be the more ourselves the more we negate them and negate other identities in ourselves. Campbell talks of ‘radical interdependence’ as ‘the sense in which the origin of an agent or subject – whether that agent or subject be an individual or a state – is to be found in the relationship between self and Other, and not in the uncovering of some auto-

<sup>17</sup> The first moment is the Derridean one (as spelt out in the context of international relations distinctly by authors as William Connolly, 1991, Michael Shapiro, 1991, and David Campbell, 1992, 1993), the second is the Lacanian moment (as presented most clearly by Žižek, 1991, pp. 37, 72–91 and especially n. 35, p. 95).

mous sovereign ground of being removed from that relationship' (1993, p. 95). In contrast to the sometimes slightly quixotic attempts by some post-structuralists to seek identities totally free of negative definitions and ideational violence – or subjects abstaining entirely from identities – we have to act from the supposition that subjects keep striving for identity, keep fearing for these and thus security policy too is an element of these relationships out of which identities grow. In Section III it was demonstrated how especially the project of European identity simultaneously appeared as a threat to nations and states as well as – to the same populations – an attempt to construct a special security identity in the form of a project. Thus, we are this very attempt to be secure against our other political projects in this characteristically complicated political space called Europe.

(4) Finally, we have discovered – and interpreted – a specific narrative which seems to be central in the establishment of 'Europe' as an identity category. 'Europe' is not primarily built as a political category through nation-state imitating rhetorics of cultural identity and shared ancestry, but rather through a peculiar security argument. Europe's past of wars and divisions is held up as the other to be negated, and on this basis it is argued that 'Europe' can only be if we avoid renewed fragmentation. And *if* first fragmentation sets in, it will be a self-reinforcing force that rules out for a long time any possibility of 'Europe'. Integration is thus the referent point for a security rhetoric of 'Europe', and it takes on the existential quality characteristic of security, because integration/fragmentation is not a question of how Europe will be, but whether Europe will be. At this very point security, politics, identity and Europe meet in something which is even self-declared as a project of constructing a 'security identity'.

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