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Securing the European 'Homeland': Profit, risk, authority

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1. Critical Approaches to Security and the State

Introduction
Writing about security in the wake of the 9/11 attacks is fraught with heightened discussion, pitfalls, and opportunities for misunderstanding. Writing about private security, as Rita Abrahamsen and Michael C. Williams (2011, 4) point out, is perhaps even more difficult and prone to misunderstanding. The very idea of private security has a tense relationship to deeply held convictions about the role and responsibilities of modern governments, the rights of citizens, and democratic principles. Private security inevitably generates strong feelings about key issues such as violence and accountability. However, private security also challenges deeply rooted disciplinary traditions and theoretical conceptions in International Relations (IR) and political science. Firstly, private security appears to disregard traditional theoretical conceptions of the state. As awareness of private security/military activities has increased and security privatization is making its way into the IR and political science literature, a key question is the extent to which the so-called state monopoly on the legitimate use of force has been affected. This question is central as the state monopoly on the use of force has been fundamental to the conceptualization of the modern state in the dominant sociological tradition of Weber, Elias, and Tilly. For most scholars, indeed, a logical place to start their enquiry of private security has been with the state. Many of them have concluded that the growth in commercial activity since the end of the Cold War is profoundly transforming the state monopoly on the use of force, even if the latter is by no means disappearing.
Chapter 1

(see e.g. Singer, 2003; Avant, 2005; Krahmann, 2007; Leander, 2006).

Secondly, private security directly challenges narrow conceptions of security, as they are traditionally associated with international strategic studies and the importance of military force and state survival. Private security only emerges as a relevant research agenda in IR and security studies if we widen the concept of security beyond the military sector and the use of force, and if we move beyond a state-centered and zero-sum understanding of security. Private security, as such, is closely related to a broader and emerging “critical” or “new” security research agenda that has called for a “widening” and “deepening” of the concept of security (see e.g. Burgess, 2010; Buzan and Hansen, 2010; CASE Collective, 2006). As this body of scholarship suggests, the commercialization of security should be understood in the context of a progressive blurring of the internal/external or inside/outside distinction, the former traditionally belonging to domestic security, crime, and risk, and the latter to the study of war and the international (Bigo, 2006). But, the study of commercial security also contributes to this critical research agenda by highlighting the ways in which contemporary security politics crosscuts both the internal/external distinction and the public/private divide.

As security has become a market-driven and multinational business that cross-cuts territorial boundaries and the public/private divide, conventional notions of the state and security as conceived by IR theory appear to be inaccurate to capture these developments. IR theory, as Patricia Owens argues (2008, 988), “has not been very good on the history and theory of the public-private distinction or at conceptualizing how force is constituted transnationally.” An important reason for this is that the distinctions between public/private and inside/outside have been foundational to the discipline of International Relations as much as they have been constitutive elements of the international system and the classical notion of the state (Walker, 1993). It is no exaggeration, write Abrahamsen and Williams (2011, 7), to say that the International Relations and the study of security both reflect and help reify these boundaries, with the “inside” covered by the domain of criminology and the “outside” by IR and the study of war (see also Bigo, 2006). To investigate the present-day commercialization of security requires that we cut through the boundaries between different disciplines of knowledge. This chapter calls for such an interdisciplinary approach, breaking down separations between inside/outside, public/private, and the exceptional/everyday.
The previous chapter has identified three gaps in the literature on private security. In contrast, the objective of this chapter is to give an assessment of how the commercialization of security takes key debates about security and the role of the state in IR and political science into important new directions. The chapter identifies four theoretical starting points that will broadly guide the empirical research in Chapters 3 to 6, the first two related to debates about security, and the latter two to debates about the role of the sovereign state. These are: 1) a focus on security as invoked and enacted through discursive practices, routines, and technocratic processes; 2) a conceptual interest in the intersections between market discourse and security discourse; 3) a preference for the terms “commercialization” and “marketization” over “privatization”; and 4) close attention to the networks of commercial firms and EU actors that are operating “above” the state. The chapter proceeds, first, with an overview of the relevant literature on security and a discussion of the first two theoretical starting points. This is followed by an analysis of the contemporary role of the state and an introduction of points 3 and 4.

**Security**

This thesis starts from the widely acknowledged understanding that security is a politically and sociologically constructed phenomenon (Waever, 1995; Bigo, 2002). In more specific terms, following Jef Huysmans, I understand security as continuously invoked and enacted through discursive practices, routines, and technocratic processes. Security, as Huysmans (2006, 6-9) argues, is a “technique of government,” or a “technique of governing danger,” emerging in and through routines and technological knowledge and skills, as well as through technological artefacts (see also Foucault, 1994). Furthermore, security is the outcome of constant struggle between different security experts and their visions of security. Successful claims of security, in this sense, are related to, and structured by, power relations and the ability of actors to mobilize authority, professionalism, and particular forms of knowledge (see e.g. Bigo, 2000; Bigo and Guild, 2003; Huysmans, 2006, 2007). Commercial security firms have an important stake in this competition between agencies and experts.

To conceptualize security in these terms involves a clear move away from conventional understandings of security characterized by a focus on military aggression in an interstate world. By now, the debates in IR about
the progressive “widening” and “broadening” of security have been elaborated in detail (Buzan and Hansen, 2010; CASE Collective, 2006). In short, these discussions revolve around two cleavages. The first cleavage relates to the question of what could and should be studied under the heading of “security.” This has divided traditionalists and the emerging sub-discipline of critical security studies that wanted to either broaden threat definitions (Buzan, 1983), or combine a wider spectrum of threats with a focus on new referent objects beyond the state (Booth, 1991; Wyn Jones, 1999; Krause and Williams, 1996, 1997). A second, but parallel discussion, relates to the struggle over the importance of deconstruction and social constructivism for the study of security (Walker, 1990; Campbell, 1992; Shapiro, 1992; Buzan, Waever and De Wilde, 1998). It splits those who argue that security threats can be measured objectively from those who consider threat and danger to be the outcome of a political process that transforms non-security issues into security issues. This is both an epistemological divide between a positivist and post-positivist approach to security, and an ontological debate regarding the question of the factuality of security threats. While objectivist approaches argue that (in)security has an objective quality, new security studies emphasize that threats are the outcome of a politics of representation and discursive practices.

Crucially, the widening of the security agenda and the inclusion of non-state referent objects has opened up the question of political agency and contestation. It introduced a wider variety of sites in which competing meanings of, and claims to, security are politically constructed and contested. A dominant conceptual approach that grew out of the widening agenda was the idea of securitization, which refers to those processes as part of which “the socially and politically successful ‘speech act’ of labelling an issue a ‘security issue’ removes it from the realm of normal day-to-day politics, casting it as an ‘existential threat’ calling for an justifying extreme measures” (Williams, 1998, 435). Commonly associated with the work of Ole Waever and Barry Buzan, securitization emphasizes that the political significance of events depends heavily on the language through which they are politicized (Waever, 1995; Buzan, Waever and De Wilde, 1998). According to this understanding, (in)security arises not just from institutional and political reactions to an already existing threat, but from the very framing of that same threat through discourses of danger and “speech acts.”
Discursive approaches have put the issue of the construction and representation of (in)security firmly on the agenda of security studies since the 1990s. The central idea of these discursive interpretations is that language is not simply descriptive, but that it has a constitutive significance. Here, we should make a distinction between “thin” or “conventional” constructivism on the one hand (see e.g. Katzeinstein, 1996; Wendt, 1999; see also Buzan, Waever and De Wilde, 1998), and those approaches that point to the performative nature of language on the other (Hansen, 2006, 4; see also Campbell, 2001). Constructivist arguments emphasize (social) construction. In contrast, performativity draws attention to processes of materialization, or the practices through which “discourse stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity and surface” (Bialasiewicz et al., 2007, 407). According to Bialasiewicz et al., those employing the concept of discourse “are often said to be claiming that ‘everything is language,’ that ‘there is no reality’” (ibid, 406). In practice, however, a focus on the importance of discourse does not mean that the world’s existence of the significance of materiality is denied. The point is not that there is no outside reality. It is just that one cannot comprehend non-linguistic and extra-discursive phenomena, “except through discursive practices” (ibid).

This dissertation is located in the tradition of the discursive turn in critical security studies. It subscribes to a “thick” understanding of discourse and works in line with the idea that language is performative. The commercialization of security, it is expected, changes who is able to make claims about what security is (Leander, 2010). In addition, the presence of commercial security raises the question of to what extent market discourse has been integrated into the analysis of securitization, and whether we may witness a move away from an emphasis on national-security-from-violence toward arguments of cost-effectiveness. At the same time, as suggested, my analysis of security moves beyond this research agenda by placing specific emphasis on technological and technocratic processes and on the ways in which security issues are expressed in the practices of bureaucracies and professionals. It draws on the work of a group of scholars who have focused on the ways in which security professionals define and enact security on a daily basis (see e.g. Bigo, 2002, 2008; Bigo and Guild, 2003, 2005; Balzacq, 2005; Huysmans, 2006, 2011). Most notably, Didier Bigo has developed an approach in critical security studies that traces the origins of discourses of (in)security in relation to emerging networks and institutions.
of risk management and assessment (see e.g. Bigo, 2002, 2008, 2012). For Bigo (2002), to analyze security is to focus on the dispersed networks of security professionals that are involved in the everyday and ongoing constitution of what security is, what he calls the “management of unease.” An important theme within this literature is the increasing de-differentiation of internal and external security as a consequence of the transnationalization of former “internal” security institutions and the emerging relevance of non-traditional security actors, such as customs, border guards, immigration officers, and the gendarmerie. The study of commercial security contributes to this literature by shedding light on how contemporary security politics is not only transversal to the internal/external distinction, but also to the public/private divide. Similar to those “new,” internal security professionals identified by Bigo, commercial security actors have an increasingly central role to play in the politics of security.

To examine security as a technique of government has three broad implications for my research agenda. First, such an approach challenges the apparent distinction between the exception and the non-exception and between security politics and normal politics, and brings into view the importance of everyday and routine security practices, including risk assessment. Second, an emphasis on the routinized practices of bureaucracies and security professionals translates to an increased attention to the (uneven) political capacity of making and enacting security or risk claims – that is, to the politics of security. Third, to study security practices has important methodological implications. As will be outlined in the next chapter, it pushes discourse analysis into new directions that are more explicitly concerned with the technical and material aspects of discourse. Whereas discursive approaches tend to have an implicit bias toward high-profile and mediatized political speeches and governmental debates, those who study security practices are more interested in the study of problematizations and the study of “the much neglected world of inscription [and] the eminently technical ways in which the world is represented by means of little things like charts, tables, graphs, numbers, diagrams, and reports” (Walters and Haahr, 2005, 7).

Let me further develop these first two points in this section. First of all, to approach security as a technique of government means moving away from the study of the invocation of conditions of exceptional threat and practices of exceptionalism, as highlighted by the securitization approach.
Relevant for the purpose of this analysis is Huysmans’ (2011, 377) conceptualization of the exceptional as something that “[slips] into daily life without much ado.” Huysmans critiques the way in which speech acts of security “enact a sharp distinction between the exceptional and the banal, the political and the everyday, the routine and creative” (ibid, 375). For him, the speech act approach not only implies an elitist vision of politics that focuses too much on political leaders and statesmen, but it also ignores the way in which banal and daily activities do much of the securitizing work. Huysmans (ibid, 377) refers to these activities as “little security nothings.” These are the many security “devices, sites, practices without exceptional significance. Yet, these [practices] are highly significant, since it is [them] rather than exceptional speech acts that create the securitizing process” (ibid, 377).

To emphasize the importance of everyday security practice does not mean that the discursive articulations of threat and danger are no longer important, but it is to highlight the ways in which instruments of policy implementation often precede and pre-structure political framing in significant ways.

The type of securitizing to which Huysmans refers is a highly dispersed one. Instead of speech acts, “we get the securitizing ‘work’ of a multiplicity of little security nothings” (ibid, 376). A rich body of literature exists that examines the ways in which securitizing in contemporary politics develops through the proliferation of continuous and unspectacular processes and practices of risk. The concept of risk has only recently come to permeate security studies. As risk has long been understood to be related to the insurable, it has been ignored by security studies (Aradau and Van Munster, 2007, 98). Traditional or “narrow” conceptualizations of security did not recognize risk (as it was associated with the logic of insurance) as belonging to their definition of security. Speech act approaches, in addition, could not define risk-based techniques and rationalities if not explicitly named as such. Eventually, the study of risk was brought into the field of IR and security studies by scholars coming from other disciplines, such as criminology, sociology, and insurance and surveillance studies.

Two research directions can be distinguished here. The first is represented by Ulrich Beck’s theory of risk society, which refers to society’s inability to respond to inevitable, structural threats (Beck, 1999). In IR, Beck’s arguments have given rise to a research agenda on “reflexive risk” that focuses on the management of new and transboundary risks (Rasmussen, 2004). A second perspective is to consider risk as a mode of governance rather than
an organizing principle of life. In a reworking of Beck’s risk society thesis, Louise Amoore and Marieke de Goede stress that it is not strictly the case that observable new risks have come into being. Rather, as they point out, society has increasingly come to understand itself and its problems in terms of risk management, or even risk avoidance (see also Éwald, 2002; Aradau and Van Munster, 2007). To examine risk in this way is “to engage with the practices that are enacted in the name of managing risk and uncertainty” (Amoore and De Goede, 2008a, 9, emphasis in original).

This latter approach is more relevant for my analysis as the literature associated with this line of thinking has been more explicitly concerned with the emergence of a more diverse group of actors participating in the formation of risk. In the work of Amoore and De Goede, securitizing takes place through the classification, compilation, and analysis of data and risk profiles (see e.g. Amoore and De Goede, 2008a, b). Similar to Bigo, their work gives emphasis to the existence of a complex assemblage of public and private professionals involved in risk management and the constitution of (in)security (see also Haggerty and Ericson, 2000). According to Amoore and De Goede, “such an assemblage includes government officials, security experts, risk analysts, and information technology consultants, but also the technological constructs articulated and deployed by these experts, including transactions data, algorithmic risk models, network charts, and risk indicators (Amoore and De Goede, 2008b, 178). Beyond Bigo, Amoore and De Goede examine the proliferation of risk techniques as symptomatic for a particular and dominant mode of governing in the context of the war on terror. The identification of risk, they suggest, “draws commercial techniques and expertise into state security in novel forms that are not primarily surveillant” (ibid, 176). The difference with earlier procedures of surveillance lies in the way in which contemporary security politics is explicitly oriented toward uncertain and unknowable futures. Within this space at the limit, new techniques and technologies are introduced, which operate on deployment of imagination, affective perceptions of risk, and on the mobilization of speculative and data-driven associations (see e.g. Anderson, 2010a, b; De Goede, 2008a).

In two ways, then, the proliferation of risk “shifts the security inquiry toward more heterogeneous and diffuse practices that cannot be represented through simple binary dichotomies of normality/exception and politics/security” (Aradau, Lobo-Guerrero and Van Munster, 2008, 149). On the
one hand, the unknowable future captured by technologies of risk are re-inscribed upon everyday objects and normal procedures of practice. Here, preemptive risk “infuses exceptionalism within the governmentality of everydayness” (ibid). On the other hand, the dispersed mobilization of imagination and affective and speculative perceptions of risk in the face of the uncertain future implies a different exceptionalism. In this context, there is no clear-cut decision by an embodied sovereign. The decision is rather dispersed across “a plurality of forces circulating through and under the positional sovereignty of the official arbitrating body” (Connolly, 2005, 145). This has profound political implications, which were already introduced in the previous chapter. Notably, if the question of ‘Who decides?’ is increasingly supplemented by ‘Who gets to imagine/enact the future?’ there is a need for more detailed knowledge about the way in which this plurality of actors is pulled into (re)shaping (in)security (see also Aradau, Lobo-Guerrero and Van Munster, 2008, 149). Questions should also be asked about the extent to which the traditional appeal to accountability or answerability for critiquing exceptional security decisions still holds as securitizing is taking place through dispersion (see e.g. Simon, 2012).

It is in this context that the study of private security raises important new questions. As Anna Leander points out, the supply side (private security companies) and the demand side (security demand) cannot be separated. Commercial security firms are often in a position to directly shape and define security, simply because the task of so doing has been outsourced to them. For Leander, “private firms define security concerns. They are hired to do so. They lobby, consult, and train with that objective in mind” (Leander, 2006, 28). In this context, commercial security can be expected to alter routine type securitizations. To cite Leander (2010, 213) again, this is not because private security professionals “are fundamentally more sanguine, more conspiring or less ethical than public ones.” Rather, it can be expected that the commercialization of security reshuffles political aims and priorities, infusing the security domain with market-oriented practices, such as standardization, benchmarking, and auditing (see e.g. Larner and Walters, 2004). Precisely how this plays out in the domain of security remains unanswered, however. This dissertation responds to this gap in the literature. It does not make any statement about how much influence these commercial firms have exactly, but aims to understand what happens when security discourses come into contact with the marketized domain of private security.
As technologies and experts play a crucial role in modulating social and political practice, it also becomes important to put forward a technocratic interpretation of the politics of insecurity. This brings me to the second implication of analyzing security as a technique of government. To study the routinized practices of bureaucracies and security professionals translates directly into a focus on the political capacity of making and enacting security or risk claims. In fact, not everyone is able to define or enact security in an equal manner (see also Hansen, 2000). The transformative capacity of security claims and practices depends on, and is shaped by, the position of the agent and by the tactics and knowledge-forms he/she is capable of deploying. The more sociological question of how to explain the capacity of those who make and enact security claims in the first place has remained relatively untouched by much of the critical work on security. An important exception is the work of Bigo and his colleagues, which focuses on the relations between security professionals and their status, roles, activities, and institutional settings through the deployment of Bourdieu’s concept of the field (see e.g. Bigo, 2006). For Bigo (2012, 210), to speak of a transnational field of security professionals “implies that the practices of power circulate along specific groups and determine who has authority and who is excluded from determining (in)security.” Within the production of this regime of truth, the relevant security professionals “have the strategy to overstep national boundaries and form corporatist professional alliances to reinforce the credibility of their assertions and to win these internal struggles in their respective national fields” (Bigo, 2006, 8). They draw resources of knowledge and power from this transnationalization. Crucially, this does not mean that a new form of homogenization is taking place: these practices are scattered and dispersed as in a Foucauldian dispositif. In effect, the relevance of a Bourdieuan analysis for understanding the transnational field of security professionals is that it highlights that agency is situated, and that any analysis of security should start from the study of practice and the stakes of security contests (see also Abrahamsen and Williams, 2011).

While the work of Bigo is to a large extent defined by Bourdieu’s concept of the field and field struggles, my own approach is more influenced by a Foucauldian-inspired focus on the production and circulation of expertise in security. According to Huysmans (2006, 9), the modulation and contestation of insecurity does not only happen in highly visible public debates,
“but also in the less publicly visible and even explicitly secret competitions between different visions of professionals.” While these struggles between experts and their visions stay largely below the surface of political debates about security, a key contribution of this dissertation is to highlight how expert knowledge, for example, about risk, is produced in and through technical documents and technocratic processes (Mitchell, 2002; Best and Walters, 2013). In addition, an important objective is to understand how specific claims to expertise acquire political and governmental importance (see also Barry, 2013; Mitchell, 2002). The emphasis on the social and material dimensions of expert knowledge production is particularly relevant as the construction of an EU homeland security “field” by and large takes place through technologically and economically-driven agendas and initiatives. As part of these developments, particular forms of expertise are valued, corresponding to private capacities of innovation, competence, and efficiency. As will be suggested, the ability of commercial security firms ability to display these capabilities is an important power resource. At the same time, the growing relevance of what appear to be primarily private values crosscuts categories of public and private. It empowers those public institutions and actors that are directly embedded in global economic structures, such as finance and trade ministries.

Thus far, this overview of the security literature has highlighted two points. I have proposed to: 1) focus on security as invoked and enacted through discursive practices, routines, and technocratic processes; and 2) pay attention to the intersections between market and security discourse. I will now turn to an analysis of the contemporary role of the state.

The state

Let me know turn to the question of how the commercialization of security takes debates about the role of the state into new directions. A useful starting point, here, is to give an assessment of what Loader and Walker (2007, 19) describe as “the contradictory state of the contemporary state.” On the one hand, there appears to be ample evidence of the reassertion and extension of state capacity and reach over matters of internal and external security in the name of exceptional times and the need to protect citizens against supposedly new, transnational threats. Especially in the wake of the war on terror, novel state security agencies have been created, and existing ones have seen their powers and budget increase extensively. States
of exception have been declared and illiberal, exceptional measures have been introduced, including detention without trial, extraordinary rendition, and other forms of derogation from human rights law (see e.g. Butler, 2004; Edkins, Pin-Far and Shapiro, 2004; Agamben, 2005; Minca, 2005; Sullivan and De Goede, 2013). Forms of surveillance against citizens at home and abroad have intensified, and so has intelligence gathering, data retention, and the exchange of information between states (Loader and Walker, 2007). These developments imply that the state is still very much with us and by no means withering away. At the same time, it has already been suggested that these practices should be uncoupled from statist preoccupations with “the exception” and understood in the context of a different exceptionalism – one in which the exceptional decision is dispersed across a plurality of forces. Security inside the state is divided between a dispersed group of agencies, organized around new mentalities of governance, and often unfolding in opaque forms of governing. These developments suggest that public power is being reconfigured with profound implications for long-standing problems of democratic authorization and answerability.

On the other hand, then, the reassertion and extension of state capacity in the name of exceptional times coexists with the notion that the state as the primary provider of security is under threat as a consequence of conditions of globalization and neoliberal governance. This discussion takes different forms. For example, it involves the broader question of to what extent the political and legal sovereignty of the state is being eroded or threatened as a consequence of complex interdependence and the increase of flows of people, goods, and capital that cross-cut territorial borders. It also relates more explicitly to an emerging plurality of actors providing security beyond the state. This has given way to a security governance that is “beyond the state” in at least three ways: forms of communal or neighborhood policing are working below the state (see e.g. Diphoorn, 2015), private security interests are increasingly operating beyond the state (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2009), and transnational networks of security professionals are operating above the state (Loader and Walker, 2007, 18-19). The latter development is particularly relevant in Europe, where new “internal” or homeland security organizations and networks have emerged that transcend national frontiers (Bigo, 2006).

The classical notion of the state as conceived by IR theory appears to be difficult to maintain in the context of the commercialization and Eu-
Europeanization of security. In a metaphor often cited by criminologists, the emergence of a more pluralized and market-driven environment where the state exists alongside non-state security actors is better explained as a situation in which the role of the state has shifted from “rowing” to “steering” (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993). Again, while these shifts have empowered private actors, they do not automatically diminish the power of the state. Instead, the commercial security sector operates as a “third sector” alongside state security institutions (Garland, 2001; see also Abrahamsen and Williams, 2009). As part of these new arrangements, state agencies seek to build broader alliances, “enlisting the ‘governmental’ powers of private actors, and shaping them to the ends of crime control [and security]” (Garland, quoted in Abrahamsen and Williams, 2009, 4). These complex and hybrid forms of security governance and the enlisting of non-state actors will be conceptualized in further detail below. First, the focus will be on what the commercialization of security means for the role of the sovereign state. I will, then, turn to a discussion of how networks of commercial firms and EU actors are operating “above” the state.

Private security is no longer news. From the activities of the apparent neo-mercenaries in Africa after the end of the Cold War to the substantial and unaccountable involvement of private military companies in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, private security has arguably become one of the most controversial issues in contemporary international politics. Spurred by a great deal of media attention and the critical work of journalists, NGOs, activists, and lawyers, the commercialization of security has moved from being an obscure issue to a highly contentious one (Leander, 2010). In academia, the discovery of private security has been a relatively slow process as a consequence of the ways in which these developments appear to challenge deeply rooted disciplinary traditions and conceptualization in IR and political science. Eventually, statism in IR has resulted in a prime focus on the question of to what extent private security transforms states in general, and the state monopoly on the legitimate use of force in particular.

This focus has given rise to a number of important academic debates. These include discussions about the parallels between private corporations and mercenaries in war and conflict areas (see e.g. Mutheun and Taylor, 2002; Hall and Biersteker, 2002; Verkuil, 2006; Avant et al. 2009); and debates about the extent to which security privatization may provide efficiency, flexibility, and “real [economic] gains” for nations and citizens.
Important questions have also been raised about the legal accountability of private security/military companies and the need to hold security contractors responsible under international human rights law or newly introduced international standards (Coleman, 2004; Chesterman and Lehnardt, 2007). Scholars have further analyzed the extent to which the transformation of the state monopoly on violence is changing politics inside the state, for example the way that policy agendas are set (Leander, 2005), or democratic processes are being challenged (Verkuil, 2007). Finally, an important issue in the literature is the consequences of security privatization for the relationship between states. According to some, private security may enable weak states to strengthen and develop their military forces (Howe, 2001), but more critical voices have highlighted that private markets are, in fact, strongly embedded in longer-existing histories of colonial subjugation. For these scholars, security opens up to new forms of imperialism that further weaken already weak states (Leander, 2010).

The literature on security/military privatization marks important moral and political debates, and there is little doubt that these developments require sustained political analysis. At the same time, much of this literature suffers from a fundamental flaw to the extent that it insists on the importance of the public/private dichotomy. According to Patricia Owens (2008, 979), “there is no such thing as public or private violence. There is only violence that is made ‘public’ and violence that is made ‘private’.” As has been suggested, IR theory has not been very good on conceptualizing the socially and politically constructed boundaries between public/private and inside/outside as these divisions have, in fact, been foundational to the discipline of International Relations. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that, although socially and politically constructed, these separations between public/private and internal/external still have concrete effects. To analyze private security requires an engagement with the ways in which these boundary effects are deeply embedded in modern political institutions and practices, and with how they too are being challenged and rearticulated through contemporary processes of security privatization (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2011, 8).

A useful starting point is to avoid the privatization terminology and to replace it with a focus on “commercialization” or “marketization.” According to Leander (2010), to speak of private security and privatization
inevitably means that there is a tendency to look for an automatic diminishment in the power of the state and for a clear shift from the “public” sphere to the “private.” What is lost in such an analysis, however, is that “privatization” matters primarily because of the shifts in politics that span the public-private divide. Most importantly, the privatization terminology obscures the ways in which the commercialization of security is directly linked to broader political processes and transformations within the state, what Abrahamsen and Williams, following Saskia Sassen’s work, describe as processes of partial state “disassembly” and “reassembly” (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2011, 91; see also Sassen, 2006). In short, disassembly involves the transferal of public functions to the private sector, whereas reassembly refers to the inclusion of new actors and capabilities in global constellations (“assemblages”) that are embedded in national settings but operate on a global scale. Abrahamsen and Williams emphasize that the disassembly of the state is only partial and that by no means the state is disappearing or fading away. In fact, processes of disassembly are “entwined with a restructuring of institutions and power relations inside the state,” empowering those public institutions and agents that are directly embedded in global economic structures, such as finance and trade ministries (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2011, 91; emphasis added). Abrahamsen and Williams’ analysis of these processes of disassembly and reassembly forms part of a broader argument about the emergence of what they call “global security assemblages.” With this term they refer to the formation of new geographies of power “that are simultaneously global and national, public and private” (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2011, 95). The concept of the assemblage is intended to describe the emergence of complex multi-sited institutional orders as part of which “a range of different security agents interact, cooperate, and compete to produce new practices and structures of security governance” (ibid, 95).

Following these insights, in this thesis I avoid the privatization terminology and refer to the “commercialization” or “marketization” of security and to “security contractors” or “commercial firms” instead. To prioritize the concepts of commercialization and marketization over the terminology of privatization is a conscious conceptual move. As an explanatory term, marketization (or commercialization) is expected to better capture the ways in which the current empowerment of commercial security actors is embedded in more complex processes of state disassembly and reassembly, and
how it is, in fact, often actively encouraged by state agents. More than privatization, marketization draws attention to the inadequacy of security accounts that focus only on security institutions, such as the military, police, or ministries of justice and home affairs. It emphasizes that it is imperative to examine those actors who are directly embedded in global economic structures, such as finance and trade ministers, and to bring into view the ways in which, as Sassen puts it, “private logics [of trade and business] circulate through public institutional domains” (quoted in Abrahamsen and Williams, 2011, 95).

Going beyond the privatization terminology allows us to cut through the intellectual stalemate that sees the growth of commercial security as either irrelevant to the enduring sovereignty of nation states, or as the complete and unaccountable transfer of security authority to the “private” sector. But, while the implications of a more pluralized form of security governance have been studied extensively at the domestic level, we know very little about its global ramifications. Abrahamsen and Williams’ conceptualization of global security assemblages is an important exception, however, their empirical work mainly concentrates on states with weak administrative or governing capacities. This is despite their claim that the coming into existence of security practices that are simultaneously public and private is by no means limited to weak states (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2009, 13). My analysis responds to this gap in the literature, and presents an enquiry into the ways in which complex security assemblages are emerging in Europe.

Security governance is increasingly beyond the state in the sense that it is embedded in complex constellations that rearticulate public/private relations. But, security responsibilities have also been diffused upwards to transnational networks of security professionals or bureaucrats. This is particularly relevant in the context of EU cooperation in the domain of homeland security, or what in official EU policy discourse is better known as “internal security” (see e.g. Kurowska and Pawlak, 2009; Wolff, Wichmann and Mounier, 2009; Kaunert and Léonard, 2010). Under the paradigm of internal security, new inter- and transnational institutions and networks have emerged in areas such as immigration, asylum, border control, counterterrorism, crisis management, and critical infrastructure protection (Kaunert, Leonard and Pawlak, 2012; Rhinard and Boin, 2009). This Europeanization of security is not a substantially new development and can be
traced back to intergovernmental security cooperation in what was known as the Trevi group. Established in the 1970s, Trevi served as a forum where EU Home Affairs ministers exchanged information on cross-border crime and terrorism. The intergovernmental nature of this form of cooperation meant that the role of European institutions in these arrangements was highly limited. This changed with the adoption of the Single European Act and the project of gradually abolishing controls on persons at internal borders. These developments gave rise to new discussions about giving more power to the European Community institutions, but it was not until the Maastricht Treaty, adopted in 1992, that concrete decisions were taken. The Maastricht Treaty created the area of Justice and Home Affairs, effectively transferring existing intergovernmental cooperation under the umbrella of the newly established European Union. The intention to cooperate in new areas of “common interest,” including asylum policy, external border control, immigration, policy cooperation, and the fight against crime and drugs trafficking, hereby remained closely connected to the end goal of implementing the Union objectives, in particular the free movement of people (Kaunert, 2005).

The Treaty of Amsterdam introduced a number of other important changes. The most fundamental has been the creation of an “area of freedom, security, and justice” (AFSJ) as a distinct policy area that is decoupled from the single market objective. Under the AFSJ, some policy issues were moved to the Community pillar, such as civil law, external border control and asylum and visa policy. Furthermore, for the first time, the EU acquired legal competence to engage into collaboration with third countries. This has allowed for a more systematic coupling of justice and home affairs with foreign affairs and external security issues (Wolff, Wichmann and Mounier, 2009; Trauner and Carrapiço, 2012). The European Council summit in Tampere in 1999 and the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty have given further impetus to the development of the area of freedom, security, and justice. According to Kaunert (2010), tremendous growth can be expected in this area in the coming years given the fact that the Lisbon Treaty has given new policy instruments to the EU. This is also because the European Commission has developed into an increasingly powerful actor in the internal security domain, reinventing itself as a “supranational policy entrepreneur” (ibid; see also Argomaniz, 2009). As Kaunert argues, via strategic alliances with other institutional actors, the Commission has managed to
bring about a shift toward the acceptance of EU pooling of national sovereignty (Kaunert, 2010; see also Kaunert, Léonard and Pawlak, 2012).

This short overview of the development of EU internal security serves to introduce the idea that EU homeland security is a particularly thriving policy field, driven by the narrative of a permanent “security deficit” after the abolishment of controls at internal borders (Kaunert, 2005, 464). In addition, internal security is also an increasingly pluralistic policy area. The developments in the policy area of justice and home affairs encourage us to understand EU security as a “policy universe” that cross-cuts different institutional set-ups (pillars), sectors, and the distinction between internal and external security (Smith, 2009, 3). For the study of EU cooperation and integration, this implies an increasingly complex and expansive form of EU security governance, with the European Commission as a key driving force even if it lacks the formal capacities to legislate.

To a large extent, the role of commercial security actors within this pluralistic policy area has remained underexposed. From other studies we know that transnational bureaucrats and agencies such as Europol have an important role to play in defining narratives of European (in)security (including the idea of a security deficit as a consequence of the opening of internal borders), and in giving impetus to the overall process of a Europeanization of security. Relevant examples are the literatures on epistemic communities in EU security (see e.g. Davis Cross, 2007), and Bigo’s work on the transnational assemblages of managers of unease. However, to date, there is no systematic study that investigates the involvement of security contractors and the relevance of market discourse operating between and above nation states in the context of the emerging EU homeland security (but, for a useful introduction see Guittet and Jeandesboz, 2010). We know very little about the ways in which commercial firms and EU networks of bureaucrats operate in European security assemblages to pool responsibilities away from national member states, or how they cooperate to facilitate economic activities aimed at a homeland security market deemed as essential to the European economy and to the security of the European citizen.

Finally, we also know very little about the implications of these assemblages for democratic principles and accountability. In the EU internal security literature there is a tendency to view the emerging homeland security domain as an appropriate and positive development. Similarly, while the “new modes of governance” literature in EU studies rightly indicates
that interest groups and civil society organizations are increasingly pulled into thinking about EU policy processes, for example through methods such as the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), these too are fairly optimistic about the likelihood for more democratic forms of governance based on “good governance” and principles such as multi-level integration (Boras and Jacobsson, 2004, 189). That is, the likelihood for a more democratic form of governance as emphasized by the new governance literature may be questioned in the light of the opaque partnerships that are forged between commercial actors and EU networks of experts and bureaucrats, as detailed in the following chapters.

Conclusions
The chapter identifies four theoretical starting points that will broadly guide the empirical research in Chapters 3 to 6. These can be summarized as follows. First, the thesis starts from the idea that security is continuously invoked and enacted through discursive practices, routines, and technocratic processes. Building on the work of a group of scholars who have focused on the ways in which security professionals define and enact security on a daily basis and through seemingly mundane practices, this dissertation contributes to those discussions by analyzing how contemporary security politics not only cuts through the internal/external divide, but also through the separation between public/private. Second, and related, my analysis asks what happens when security discourses come into contact with the marketized domain of commercial security agents. It will start from the idea that the commercialization of security reshuffles political aims and priorities, and introduces new practices techniques, and forms of expertise. The third point relates to the broader relationship between public and private security. I have proposed to avoid the privatization terminology and to replace it with a focus on the commercialization or marketization of security. These terms, it is expected, better capture the ways in which the empowerment of commercial security actors is embedded in more complex processes of state disassembly and reassembly. The fourth and last point concerns extending the concept of the assemblage to security developments in Europe. A focus on Europe is important as, here, distinctive security assemblages are emerging under the heading of European internal security.

To conclude, to study practices of security has important methodological implications. Whereas discursive approaches tend to have an
implicit bias toward high-profile and mediatized political speeches and governmental debates, a focus on practice pushes discourse analysis into new directions that are more explicitly concerned with the technical and material aspects of discourse. In addition, according to a growing literature, the study of practice requires a highly empirical and interpretative approach that combines discourse approaches with ethnographic field research. It is to these discussions about the methodological implications of the study of everyday practices, objects, and procedures of security that I will turn next.
Endnotes
6. As will be explained below, these concepts are not interchangeable.
7. The latter project is generally referred to as “Critical Security Studies” (in capitals), while “critical security studies” defines new conceptualizations to security more broadly.