

**Incoherent securitisation:
The EU and its member states in the Iraq crisis**

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Abstract

The 'great split' in the Iraq crisis 2002/2003 meant a serious setback to the EU's endeavour to become a recognised security actor. Presumably, the EU is still suffering from a deficient common security identity – i.e. a common understanding of 'how the world is' and 'what should be done about it' – which is held to be a necessary pre-requisite for EU actorness.

Hitherto, most studies on the Iraq crisis have dealt with transatlantic relations or focus on single-country explanations. A comparative securitisation approach could help to disclose vertical incoherence by exploring when and how the 'Brussels actors' and eight member states (Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom) securitised 'Iraq' in the run-up of the war.

The findings suggest that the member states' securitisations were largely domestically driven and idiosyncratic. The inconsistent securitisations point to structural deficits of the CFSP since the 'Brussels actors' have no incentive to securitise 'hot issues' and governments still prefer domestic and bilateral forums to European ones when securitising threats.