

Fighting together, moving apart? European common defense and shared security in an age of Brexit and Trump

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The project strives to examine the dynamic relationship between elites and masses in policy-making about common defense in the multi-level European system. Two overarching questions lie at the heart of the project: what and how do elites and European mass publics think about greater (European) defense, security, and military integration? More specifically, the project wants to achieve the following objectives: (1) study what mass publics and security elites understand by "common defense", (2) estimate the level of public support or opposition to a vast array of possible forms of defense integration across Europe, including assessing support for some form of European military, (3) explore differences in citizen perceptions and preferences across regions within the EU, (4) identify individual-level values, predispositions, attitudes, and demographic factors that shape support or opposition to defense integration, (5) examine how elite cues, social cues, and real-world events affect defense integration attitudes, (6) analyze the interplay of media content, individual media exposure, and mass opinion towards European defense and security integration, and (7) evaluate how (and how accurately) elites perceive mass opinion toward European defense and security integration, and vice versa. The project combines qualitative (elite interviews) and quantitative research (surveys with embedded experiments and media content analysis) to examine what factors affect European security policy preferences. The primary focus lies on France, Germany, Italy, and Great Britain, four countries that will play important roles in European defense integration.

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