**New perspectives on an old acquaintance:**

**Exploring the boundaries of politicization in the context of European (dis)integration**

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During the past decade, politicization has become established as a key notion and ‘fact of life’ in the context of EU (dis)integration. This has affected political relationships and policy-making at the regional, national, European and international level in complex ways. Using postfunctionalist and new intergovernmentalist theoretical arguments in particular, a growing subfield in EU studies has produced rich empirical insights across a range of policy fields. Moreover, this literature has inscribed politicization as a game changer in the history of integration and as a critical factor in European post-Maastricht realities and crises. Indeed, developments since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic have corroborated that, going forward, the significance and the broad potential of processes of politicization can hardly be overstated.

At the same time, some limits have become evident in the specific way this research focus in EU studies has consolidated. For example, low levels of conceptual and method(olog)ical diversity and a strong focus on a rather vague threshold of public salience have so far left certain layers, forms, discourses, agents and directions of politicization underexplored. This includes, in particular, sub-state actors, supranational politicization or the interplay with the broader international realm. Furthermore, perspectives that have the political quality of identity formation and governance at their core, have so far not played a crucial role in the pertinent debate. It is therefore essential to deepen existing lines of enquiry and to explore novel areas in the study of politicization.

As a result, we encourage 1.) the further exploration of hitherto under-researched agents, targets, directions and effects of politicization, 2.) the study of politicization in light of the tension between populism and technocratic governance at and between different levels of decision-making, 3.) elaborations of novel conceptualisations and frameworks to comprehend the breadth of politicization and 4.) analyses of the impact of politicization research on other areas of EU and International Relations research and theory.