1 Understanding (in)security

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Since the late twentieth century, research on security issues has become an area of increasing interest to scholars. The concept of security, the framing of security policies, the defining of threats, and the implementation of (in)securitization processes have been approached from a range of disciplines, going from International Relations (IR), psychology and law to history, sociology and criminology. Yet, regardless of its intrinsic quality, research on these issues did not end up with a satisfactory set of interpretations because it relied on single disciplinary analyses.

The writings of IR scholars on security thus borrow only some elements from the psychology and sociology of decision, and ignore the works of sociologists, criminologists and historians on crime, insecurity and crime control issues. Their epistemic community has immediately considered that security is about 'serious' things, i.e. war, death, survival, and not about everyday practices concerning crime, or about the feeling of insecurity, the fear of poverty and illness. The definition of security studies has been mixed up with strategic studies. Other practices have been considered as 'out of the scope' and downgraded to a 'law and order' question irrelevant for security in IR. This 'law and order' aspect has been thoroughly studied by sociologists and criminologists but their analyses never went beyond their respective epistemic borders to cover, for instance, external security issues. On the other hand, security studies (even the critical ones) refused or could not get to grips with the corpus of knowledge already constituted in sociology, anthropology and cultural theory.

Instead of reproducing the usual fragmented interpretation of social reality, this volume seeks to analyse security issues by bringing together conceptual and operational tools borrowed from the realms of IR, sociology and criminology. We are not the first to establish these bonds. Ethan Nadelmann, Malcolm Anderson, Richard Ericson, Kevin Haggerty, and David Lyon have tried to expand criminology beyond the narrow national agenda the discipline often follows.[1] In IR some authors like Peter Katzenstein have tried to combine the individual-societal dimension and sociological approaches with a more traditional security agenda.[2] Rob Walker and Richard Ashley have also more fundamentally questioned the security

discourse of survival, and they have contributed to unpacking the political dimension of the notion of security by insisting on the legitimating effects of the security label on practices of violence and coercion, perceived as the side effect of the necessary protection of a certain political community.[3] The knowledge of who needs to survive, be protected and from what, also supposes knowing who is sacrificed in this operation. That is perhaps one of the limits of understanding security as survival or as protection and reassurance.[4] Security is also, and mainly, about sacrifice. In this volume, we continue on this track but add to the political theory approach a sociological line of enquiry borrowing its epistemological and methodological instruments from a Bourdieuan perspective amended and criticized with some Foucaldian insights.[5]

A central notion for this volume is the field of professionals of the management of 'unease'; we try to define and contextualize this field in relation to the media and political fields, and to relocate it in a more transversal approach, dealing with the contemporary form of governmentality of liberal regimes that we call a ban-opticon dispositif. That dispositif is characterized by exceptionalism inside liberalism, a logic of exclusion resting upon the construction of profiles that frame who is 'abnormal', and upon the imperative of freedom transformed into a normalization of social groups whose behaviours are monitored for their present and their future. All the political and professional uses of technologies of surveillance, which are oriented towards prevention and try to read the future as a 'past future' already known, thus acquire a particular importance.

The study of the aforementioned dispositif with regard to the current counter-terrorism policies in Europe has led us to use the notion of illiberal practices of liberal regimes in order to avoid two main theses.

The first one is that we are in a war, in a dirty war at the global level. Everything potentially useful to struggle against the enemy is then justified insofar as the goal is still to safeguard liberal regimes and physical collective security. This brand of analysis insists on the novelty of the phenomenon, and on the opening of a 'new' era, called hyper-terrorism, which justifies, for the states under attack, radical emergency measures and new relations with the freedom of the population living in their territory and abroad, to counter this extraordinary practice of violence, which has moreover no reasonable claim that can be dealt with by diplomacy. The defenders of this thesis diverge on the intensity of the measures to be introduced but, for all of them, change may be important and long-lasting, thus imposing a new balance between danger, freedom and security that justifies more surveillance and restriction on individual freedom.[6]

The second thesis is that 11 September 2001 has been the testimony of the slow transformation of representative democracy and its erosion in favour of the development of a governmental politics without checks and balances. The critics of exceptionalism accept more or less the novelty of the post-September 11th situation and that insecurity relates to 'terror'.

But they put the emphasis on the reaction of the state and discuss the legitimacy of the 'war on terror'. For them the situation is new, not so much because of al-Qaida, but because of the US' answer to the bombings. The main actors are still the states and the world system, not the network of clandestine organizations. Giorgio Agamben has been one of the first to accurately capture this dimension of war on terror and its ensuing internal obedience turning into feverish support. He has criticized this move towards a politics of exception and has explained its long rising process in our democracies. Along with others he has tried to show how the professionals of politics play with the uncertainty of the timing of the attacks, the uncertainty of who is the enemy, and the uncertainty of the roots of violence in order to establish a 'permanent state of exception' or 'of emergency' – thus justifying the introduction of tough measures in many realms beyond the management of political violence and especially with relation to asylum-seekers and migrants.[7]

The spectrum is wide, from those who partly accept the argument of necessity and complain that the answer is just disproportionate, to those who consider that 11 September has solely uncovered the mask of liberal democracy and shown the true face of modernity (revealed by the holocaust and the reduction of the human to bare life) or the face of global capitalism (with the unification of the global market blocked by the fragmentation in different nation states of the necessary political arena, and the making of a global empire impeded by a coalition of public and private interests of the most powerful).

The critique of the politics of terror is important. It refuses the argument of pure necessity of the authors and actors in favour of a permanent state of exception, and shows that some governments have played with the opportunities of the situation to impose other political agendas. But, in this vision, the source of the problem of illiberalism is related with terror as if it was a malicious code introduced into the society and contaminating a liberal frame. Every problem derives from the counter-terrorism and its reframing of everyday life.

We disagree with both narratives as they put terror as 'the' form of insecurity which is under discussion, blaming either clandestine organizations or governments. On the contrary, we insist on the mimetic relation between transnational clandestine organizations using violence, the coalition of governments of the 'global war on terror' and a complex web of vested local interests. Then, for us, these two broad theses are part of the same general form of aestheticization of the political, resumed into one principle: the obligation to choose who the enemy is and to declare it publicly. The theses of politics of terror, a politics of exception as a generalized exception, are in that sense focusing too much on the spectacular and ignoring the routine, the everyday practices of late modernity, the heterogeneity and multiple lines of flight of these practices. Contrary to that, we believe that it is important to contextualize them, to immerse them into a

'societal logic' and into a political sociology that insists on a different way of conceptualizing the (in)securitization process, far from freedom from fear and terror, but concerned with insecurity as risk and unease.[8]

Following that analysis of a politics of unease, we refute the idea that the present growing restrictions on human rights in Europe stem only from the reframing of counter-terrorism policies in the post-September 11 era. Far from seeing in them a conjectural and, hence, temporarily unfavourable balancing of freedoms in democracy, or as a structural trend of modernity eroding democracy and impossible to modify, we consider them as the result of the very functioning of a solidly constituted security field of professionals of management of unease, both public and private, working together transnationally along professional lines mainly in European and Transatlantic 'working groups'. Though the effects of this field are creating illiberal practices, they are not the result of exceptional decisions taken by the professionals of politics following a master plan. They are heterogeneous, globally incoherent, but nevertheless highly predictable in their local effects for the researchers looking at these different transversal networks. The outcome of this set of interactions and contradictory goals, interests, norms and habitus developed between domestic and EU politicians, police and intelligence officials, army officers, security experts, journalists, and the part of the civil society enrolled into these (in)security games, is neither the implementation of a state of exception decided by an empire in the making, a pooling of sovereign actors, nor a destiny leading to Armageddon or the Camp. A refusal of grand narratives of the global versus the sovereign is necessary for understanding the production and diffusion of (in)security at the transnational level and for resisting these illiberal practices. It supposes a sociology of (in)security producers and of their different audiences.[9]

By emphasizing the social and political construction of (in)security and the role of the professionals of the management of unease, this volume engages with the discussion surrounding European security studies in the 1990s. It recognizes the important work of Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, especially when they introduce the notion of securitization as a social construct linked with a speech act, its enunciators and its audience. We share the view that the pretence of a fixed normative value of security regardless of the actors enunciating the claim and of the context (referent object, historical trajectory, involvement of practices of violence and coercion in the name of protection) has to be abandoned. Security is not a unified practice, is not about survival, is not a common good, is not a specific right, is not the first form of freedom. Security(zation) has neither a positive connotation nor a negative one, even if institutional narratives tend to insist on the first, and 'critical' narratives on the second. The (in)securitization process is then a social and political construction related to speech acts, but these speech acts are not decisive. They are themselves the result of structural competition between actors with different forms of capital

and legitimacy over contradictory definitions of security and different interests. They are also dependent on the capacities of the field agents to patrol the boundaries of the field, to open or to restrict the definition of what security is, to block or limit the alternatives. What we call (in)security is then a field effect and not the result of a specific strategy of a dominant actor. It depends on the transformation of the logic of violence and its (il)legitimacy, as well as on the differential capacities of societies to live and accept some forms of violence, to refuse others and to create social change as a form of violence or not. Hence, the key questions are: who is performing an (in)securitization move or countermove, under what conditions, towards whom, and with what consequences? The proximity with Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde's thesis is then strong, but we resist the idea that international security has a specific agenda, that this agenda is about survival, and that security can be conceptualized as 'beyond normal politics' and as a 'politics of exception'. For us, the existential threat and the politics of terror cannot be distinguished so easily from the simple threat and feeling of unease.

The (in)securitization process has not only to do with a successful political speech act transforming the decision making process and generating a politics of exception, often favouring coercive options.[10] It has to do also, and above all, with more mundane bureaucratic decisions of everyday politics, with Weberian routines of rationalization, of management of numbers instead of persons, of use of technologies, especially the ones which allow for communication and surveillance at a distance through databases and the speed of exchange of information. As such, the professionals of the management of (in)security, the many public and private agencies of risk management, and the audience of a consumer society are, by their routines, framing the conditions of the possibility of the claims (and speech acts) and their acceptance. More importantly, some (in)securitization moves performed by bureaucracies, the media, or private agents are so embedded in these routines that they are never discussed and presented as an exception but, on the contrary, as the continuation of routines (Bonelli) and logics of freedom (Tsoukala), or as forms of democratization (Olsson). Therefore, the result of the (in)securitization process cannot be assessed from the will of an actor, even a dominant one. The actors never know the final results of the move they are doing, as the result depends on the field effect of many actors engaged in competitions for defining whose security is important, and of different audiences liable to accept or not that definition. It is important to understand this dynamic which can be self-sustained if the answer to insecurity is a new pack of security measures. It is not possible to draw a new boundary between internal and everyday politics on one side, and the international and exceptional politics also called security on the other side. The two are intertwined or more exactly related as if in a Möbius strip.

It is then clear that this volume aims at contributing to the debate on

what has been called critical security studies[11] or critical approaches to security in Europe.[12] Critical, here, does not refer to a Habermasian view of critical theory. It refers to a double move. First, to refute an approach in terms of problem solving theory accepting the common sense of a rise in insecurity linked to globalization and the fact that any coercive or preventive move claiming to counter insecurity is by definition a security move, and to open a different agenda for a better understanding of the political realities.[13] Second, to refute the narrative of security studies as a 'branch' of International Relations, and then to contest that IR has a monopoly on the meanings of security, i.e. that security is international security, in order to exclude from security studies historical, sociological, and criminological bodies of knowledge under the pretext that they are dealing with other questions: law and order, surveillance, punishment. The volume is then interdisciplinary oriented and insists on a specific approach common to both internal and external security.

To better study these issues, the book is implicitly divided into a first, broader, and a second, more specific analysis of the present counter-terrorism policies in Europe. In an attempt to overview the whole question, the former part seeks to define the key features of the nature and functioning of the security field, and to highlight the stakes lying beneath the current counter-terrorism frames of action.

In the first chapter, Didier Bigo shifts our attention to the dynamics of a transnational field of security professionals, and to the impact of its internal mechanisms on the everyday work of various security agents as well as on the definition of security threats in both the political and security realms. In shedding light on the combined effect of the processes and relations developed within the security field, and between the field's agents and those of other correlated fields, he shows how this leads to the establishment of a new model of governmentality by unease.

In her analysis of British political discourses on the definition of the terrorist threat, Anastassia Tsoukala focuses on the discursive framing of the alleged core elements of the threat and on the way these are interrelated to a set of other security issues as well as to some key social values. In so doing, she shows how the ensuing attempts to legitimize restrictions on human rights intermingle with numerous domestic political and security stakes, thus uncovering part of the functioning of the political and security fields, and highlighting the role of the audience.

The other three chapters deal with the structuring and functioning of specific security agencies, and with the way these interact with the rest of the security field and/or the political realm. They choose specific loci of the (in)security field to demonstrate the limits of an approach that draws boundaries between internal and external security. The intermediary agencies, which were split as long as national governments were insisting on the difference between 'inside' and 'outside', are now reconfigured and becoming increasingly powerful agents in this transnational field of exper-

tise. Actors traditionally located as external agents seek to be involved in law and order questions, inside the territory. Actors traditionally located as internal agents seek to be involved abroad, thereby obliging the other actors to reframe their missions to resist the move.

Laurent Bonelli thus offers several insights into the modus operandi of French, British and Spanish intelligence agencies. In shedding light on their definitional patterns of the terrorist threat and way they organize their counter operations, he uncovers their embeddedness in a complex configuration of multilevel relations between them, government officials and members of clandestine organizations – all of them being involved in a permanent struggle to defend their respective political and organizational interests. This further allows him to explain the tendency of military and police intelligence services to work more closely together.

Emmanuel-Pierre Guittet shows why and how the army in counter-terrorism want to be involved not only externally but also internally. His analysis of the involvement of the French armed forces in counter-terrorism operations within the national territory calls into question the allegedly exceptional nature of these missions to see in them the outcome of a broader, ongoing merging of police-related and military-related activities.

Christian Olsson also deals with the role of the army in counter-terrorism, focusing on their activities abroad, not when they are on military operations but when they are involved in policing. In studying the relation between the political and war, he highlights the struggles for the political (de)legitimization of the military operations carried out in Afghanistan and Iraq to show how the constant (re)introduction of the political in war affairs complicates the interactions between public and private military agencies, Western governments, NGOs, and local societies.

In conclusion, in this approach, terror is not the central phenomenon; it is one among many elements which create a politics of unease at all levels of the society, and largely beyond any fear of terrorism. Politics of unease is linked with the situation in a risk society and the development of many diverse mechanisms of surveillance, with global capitalism and unemployment, with urbanism and a planet of slums, with the conditions of late modern society and the roots of uncertainty of life.[14] What is central is to understand why and how (in)securitization works at the transnational level and partly succeeds in transforming our way of life. A specific sociology of the professionals of the management of unease at this transnational level is necessary to investigate their capacities and to resist their 'doxa' about a world sliding towards Armageddon. The connection between criminological studies, surveillance studies and critical security studies has to be made, and linked with historical accounts as well as ethical and political theory.

Many books have focused on terror and have considered that a constructivist and critical agenda was unable to deal with security beyond

'soft' or 'human' security. We hope that this volume demonstrates the contrary and shows how narrow the realist agenda is in its scope and referencing system. Terror and the politics of terror are 'plugged' into these structural conditions of the (in)security field and the political subjectivity of the late modern subject living in a ban-opticon form of governmentality. If a politics of terror is successful, it is not so much through successful communication or propaganda of the governments, but more because it shares common elements with unease and the feeling of the misery of the world. It looks like a structural homology between (in)securitization of management of life and (in)securitization of management of death and punishment is at work. Beyond the existence of a transnational field of professionals of (in)security management coming from coercive visions of security, a large 'dispositif' relays and creates the conditions of the 'plug' into various national societies and cultures. It is not a contamination of the liberal society or its essence revealed which is at stake; it is a process of consolidation of different insecurities constructed as if they were unified and global. This construction is certainly a construction by language, but it is also and mainly the use of technologies which unifies different objects under the same logic of surveillance and control, and the political use of these technologies as if they were the only possibility to resolve the question and to remove the uncertainty which is at the heart of modern life. The fetishization of some objects as security objects or including security functions into them creates a link with consumerism and desire going beyond traditional visions of surveillance. This process escapes largely from the professionals of politics and their bureaucracies to include the private sector, the NGOs, and the citizens themselves in their will to be free to move and to be indifferent to others. Far from a politics of terror paralyzing the agency of the individual, or a politics of fear where the agency of the individual is passive or reactive, unease is an active agent of (un)freedom(ization) and the 'ban'.

Notes

1 Anderson and den Boer (eds) *Policing across National Boundaries*; Ericson and Haggerty, *Policing the Risk Society*; Nadelmann, *Cops across Borders*; Lyon, *Theorizing Surveillance*; Ericson, *Crime in an Insecure World*.
2 Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security*.
3 Ashley and Walker, 'Reading dissidence/writing the discipline'; Walker, 'The subject of Security'.
4 Dobson *et al. The Politics of Protection*.
5 Bigo, *Policing (In)Security Today*.
6 On the discursive strategies used to legitimize this thesis, see Tsoukala, 'Democracy against security', 417–439; Tsoukala, 'Democracy in the light of security', 607–627.
7 For bibliographies and articles on these topics, see: www.libertysecurity.org.
8 Bigo, 'Security and immigration', 63–92.
9 Dezalay and Garth, *The Internationalization of Palace Wars*.

10 Bigo, *Polices en Réseaux*; Ceyhan, 'Analyser la sécurité'; Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity*.
11 Krause and Williams, *Critical Security Studies*.
12 Collective C.A.S.E., 'Critical approaches to security in Europe', 443–487.
13 Cox, *Production, Power and World Order*.
14 Bauman, *Liquid Times*.