

Efficiency/Terrorism

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Over the last fifteen years, in a context where several terrorist attacks have occurred in North America and in Europe, States have been allowed to upgrade their anti-terrorist frameworks and increase the amount of technical, human and financial resources allocated to these programs.

Among the fields affected by this unprecedented development of the security space, we can cite: access to personal data and statistical analysis, use of social and public services as an intelligence network to detect “radicalized” individuals, interrogation techniques and extended detention, all covering different aspects of how states propose to approach the very notion of security.

In this article, we will geographically restrict our scope to three cities: New York (US), London (UK) and Paris (France), in order to more specifically assess the way anti-terror and CVE policies have been designed and implemented.

Each state, in its respective context, has developed its own approach to security and ways to protect it. Therefore, there is a specificity of each state’s take on security, further reinforced by local implementations, at the city and/or regional level. Ideas, doctrines and practices on security circulate easily at the global level, through international conferences, as well as a network of security experts and consultants, who inform state policies and define the main concepts and approaches through which notions such as risk, protection or security are defined and then mobilized. There is also a growing co-integrated notion of anti-terrorism, with different countries maintaining formal co-operation and joint initiatives to address current threats, materialized in the form of exchanges of data, techniques and practices, covered under regulatory frameworks and MOUs signed by each country’s respective intelligence agency.

The main aim of the article is to assess the efficiency of anti-terrorism and CVE frameworks, through an analytical assessment of how security and human rights are mobilized as antagonistic and sometimes contradictory aspirations.

By looking at PREVENT for the UK, as well as the state of emergency in France and New York Police’s surveillance program, we will identify the key measures used to achieve and project security, and then draw a qualitative and quantitative assessment of these programs. This will allow us to introduce the notion of efficiency, in the context of anti-terrorism, by showing how security and fundamental freedoms have been used as opposing realities. We will focus on two main aspects:

First, we will look at the means used to reach anti-terrorist and CVE programs’ objectives: what are the techniques used in these programs, how they are supported by a number of think tanks and security experts, as well as a number of political figures. This will allow us to observe the central position of “radicalization” as a preventive paradigm for security. These speeches on “preventing radicalization” disproportionately affect local Muslim communities, by constructing their participation and presence as a public problem or, in the context of political violence, as a threat. These powerful

processes through which Muslims are othered and dehumanized occur in a context where terrorist attacks continue to happen, making it more and more difficult to take a critical distance when assessing the quality of current security frameworks.

Second, we will assess the impact (positive or negative) of these security measures, embedded in anti-terrorism and countering violent extremism programs. In doing so, we will provide an efficiency indicator for these policies.

Finally, we will present some of the civil society responses to fighting terrorism, intolerance and bigotry, showing that, in their struggle to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, local communities and organization are best placed to initiate change.