Title: Terrorism in the United Kingdom: Securitizing Narrative, Surveillance Practices and the Right to Privacy

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Abstract

In the United Kingdom (UK) terrorism is presented, by the British government, as one of the most serious and dangerous threats to national security which justified the introduction of legislative, political and operational measures. The State has the responsibility to protect individuals from threats to security but the duty to protect shouldn't compromise the respect for civil liberties and fundamental human rights. The British securitizing narrative presents terrorism as an existential threat requiring emergency action and exceptional measures because, at any moment, the country can be the target of a terrorist attack. This narrative favours the creation of a state of emergency characterized by a climate of insecurity, instability, fear and suspicion in which surveillance has emerged as a key technological tool in the prevention of terrorism. Surveillance practices have been legitimized by the 'obligation' to protect citizens and to prevent, or respond to, security threats. While action by States is necessary to prevent and effectively sanction terrorist acts, not all means are justifiable. As surveillance powers increase, giving to the British government access to several aspects of the daily lives of its citizens, serious restrictions to the full enjoyment of the right to privacy emerge. To answer the research question: "In the context of the UK's fight against terrorism, what are the effects of the surveillance practices on the respect for the right to privacy of British citizens?" we will apply the theoretical frameworks of the Copenhagen School, by the centrality it gives to the discursive act and for the recognition of the intersubjective nature of the security threats, and the Paris School for its attention to security practices. Through Critical Discourse Analysis we intend to analyse the British securitizing narrative since the presentation and characterization of the terrorist threat by the British political elite and security professionals can influence the perception of the threat. Our aim is to better understand how the securitizing narrative facilitates and legitimates surveillance practices that, in turn, may compromise the right to privacy of British citizens.

Tags: Terrorism, Securitizing Narrative, Surveillance, Privacy, UK.