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Sorbonne

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Civilizing Security in New York: A view from Europe

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What is "risk"?

- Risk: a Kantian category of the understanding.
- Risk: effect of subjective and objective interpretation.
- Not all risks are equal, not all risks are interpreted as dangers.

What distinguishes New York and Paris?

(1) Different national rhetoric

French Approach: “enlightened catastrophism”
(Jean-Pierre Dupuy)

- Reluctance to overreact and to create “moral panics”.
- Culture of secrecy among high-ranking French bureaucrats.
- French state: pivotal role in the production of social trust and solidarity.

What distinguishes New York and Paris?

(1) Different national rhetoric

American Approach: anxiety without an object (Habermas)

- A discourse of “war”.
- A state of constant citizen alert and anxiety.
- The construction of referents of otherness, the alien, dirty and subversive.

What distinguishes New York and Paris?

(2) Diverging national responses and strategies against terrorism

- Strategies related to space and territories.
- Protection of goods and populations .
- Securing critical infrastructure.
- Pursuit of terrorist networks.

What distinguishes New York and Paris?

(2) Paris:

- Highly centralized command at the top of the internal security pyramid.
- Heavy reliance on human resources.
- In 2004, 88 raids in the Paris metropolitan region: 185 people indicted; radical preachers and followers deported; 1 million euros seized.

What distinguishes New York and Paris?

(2) New York:

- Highly complex relationships between federal, city and regional scales.
- Diversity of actors and overlapping authorities.
- Is the magnitude of the Department of Homeland Security an asset or a liability?
Not to mention the role of other agencies...

What distinguishes New York and Paris?

(2) New York: Preoccupied Yet Unprepared

- Most Americans believe the country is not prepared for a terrorist attack; less than a third of families have a plan to evacuate their homes.
- More than 4 out of 5 New Yorkers fear another terrorist attack will occur.
- Only 36% of New Yorkers express confidence that the city's health facilities can adequately respond to a biological, chemical or nuclear attack.
- Only 23% of New Yorkers believe their community has an adequate emergency response plan in place.
- Only 14% of New Yorkers have a household emergency plan in place.

What is Common to New York and Paris?

(3) Local savoir-faire and trust in the city's own resources characterize the culture of both Paris and New York

Terrorists should not be given what they are aiming for:

- changing priorities and life-styles;
- restricting mobility;
- encouraging suspicion and secrecy;
- hindering the movement of tourists and international students;
- disturbing communications and trust.

Civilizing Security

Public Space:

a sense of belonging to a wider political community through “an architecture of sympathy” (R. Sennett).

Security:

a “thick” public good, the most basic instrument to the realization of freedom.



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