Chapter 5

The New Age of Suspicion

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Suspicion and distrust have many faces. Ahmed Mohamed, a fourteen-year-old Texan student who in 2015 built a homemade clock mistaken for a bomb by one of his teachers, became rapidly known as 'clock boy'. Was he a Muslim youth mistreated by overzealous police officers in a town known for its resentment of Muslims or an example of vigilance against potential terrorism? His ingenuity has been praised by President Obama, among others, but for many it would be otiose to say that the danger of missing a real bomb means the threshold for doubt should always be low. While the United Kingdom is welcoming their first child refugees from Calais, a Tory MP has suggested that British authorities should give them dental tests to verify their age. This inappropriate stance by a British MP points to a normalising distrust for refugees' true identities and motives in a growing atmosphere of reluctance and animosity towards migrants across European countries. Perhaps one of the highlights of the ongoing popular American TV reality show *Cheaters* is when the betrayed lover is encouraged to call the deceiver so that everyone can see his or her verbal betrayal in real time. In a recent 2016 advertising campaign aimed at increasing awareness of dangerous and suspicious conduct among their young pupils, a Belgian school pictured a pear cut in half with a kiwi in disguise inside, accompanied with the following message: 'If you see something suspicious report it immediately.' A campaign that is reminiscent of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority's 'If you see something, say something' slogan. The phrase 'unattended baggage will be removed and may be destroyed' will be familiar to everyone who has ever boarded an aeroplane as much as the idea that officers working in an airport are now trained to detect behavioural clues of supposedly malicious intent. Since 2006, the US Transportation Security Administration (TSA) deploys officers to watch for suspicious behaviour. Whether or not the programme

called *Screening Passengers by Observation Techniques* is scientifically sound and worth the cost, thousands of officers are daily deployed and engaging in casual conversation in order to measure reactions and looking for signs of stress or deception. In their attempt to inform and prevent radicalisation, the United Kingdom West Midland Police force reminds its readers on its website that 'There is no single way of identifying someone who is likely to be vulnerable to radicalisation' before adding a couple lines further down that someone who is asking for his passport, saving money, buying new clothes and researching travel plans online are warning signs that 'may provide an indication travel to Syria is being planned'. These different examples of security-awareness campaigns, practices of detection of untrustworthy conducts in public spaces and declarations about unreliable child refugees or deceiving lovers seem to participate to an all-too familiar ongoing normalisation of disbelief, distrust and suspicion across our liberal societies.

Suspicion is certainly a hallmark of police and intelligence services' cultures. Suspicion is their territory and a constitutive feature of their professional identities: people and situations are constantly read as if they are not what they appear to be.[2] 'A cop's talent is in seeing what is hidden or disguised, not what is there', as Crank suggests.[3] Suspicion as a capacity to recognise any kind of unexpected variations in what could be seen by non-professional as ordinary routine is highly regarded among police officers. A suspicion that something exists is more than idle speculation whether something exists or not; it is a positive feeling of actual apprehension or mistrust but without sufficient evidence. As such, suspicion is closely aligned with any modern scientific endeavour, hoping to unlock 'nature's secrets'. It is an invitation to look further or beneath the surface, to explore with a sense of curiosity what seems to be peculiar or unusual. The problem is not suspicion per se but the extent and consequences of a normalisation of suspicion that innervates the social and political fabric of our societies.

The aim of this chapter is to pinpoint how suspicion is the active ingredient of the precautionary principle at stake in our risk societies and the unfortunate, deeply entrenched driving force that leads to a blurring of the boundaries between rationality and panic, between anticipation and anxiety. We argue here that suspicion is the operating principle and modus operandi of security practices. Distrust and anxiety are its foreseeable social and political consequences. When suspicion governs security agencies' scripts and practices and permeates political discourse and ordinary daily practices, it produces an anxious alertness that perpetuates, rather than mitigates, past, present and potential fear.

It is helpful to begin with a brief summary of how Beck's notion of risk society has informed security studies. When the essence of risk is not what is happening but what might happen, it implies that perception of risks is intimately tied to understandings of what constitutes dangers, threats and for whom. When security can be defined as risk management, the quest for maximum information in order to reduce uncertainty and ultimately to eliminate it becomes central. In the second part, we take heed of the underpinning rationale of early detection and prevention one can found in de-radicalisation policies and resilience programmes. Among the different programmes that have been implemented across Europe, we focus primarily on the British 'Prevent' strategy and its early intervention scheme, 'Channel'. We then examine the Belgian resilience toolkits 'Bounce'. At the core of these policies, programmes and tools of de-radicalisation and resilience there is a problematic attribution of vulnerability and suspicion to individuals, groups, communities and spaces already stigmatised and identified as dangerous. The fact that these de-radicalisation and resilience policies and programmes include the establishment of partnerships with community representatives, the enrolment of vast and various professional segments of our societies in the detection of suspicious conducts and the referral of individuals to a de-radicalisation programme is central to the third part. We suggest, then, that suspicion has become a dispositif, a technique of governance which imposes a particular conduct, a new way to formulate truth, trust and normality.

RISK-SOAKED SECURITY: LOGICS AND CONSEQUENCES OF ANTICIPATION

Beck's powerful notion of 'risk society'[4] has significantly impacted upon the ways in which security has been understood and has led to timely and rich analyses. Scholars are now well aware of how risk, perceived as ascertainable, is about 'trying to turn uncertainties into probabilities'[5] and of how the allocation of risks is central to the modern security mantra. The dominance of probabilistic risk discourse against the threat of ambivalence and contingency as one of the main 'foci imaginarii of social order' of our modernity[6] has been the subject of heated academic debate. Eventually it became a key term of reference for scholars as well as a populist term, widely used in the media.[7]

The notion that both national and international security agendas no longer revolve around traditional conceptions of borders and territorialised protection but around anticipating and multifaceted threats stemming from an increasingly globalised and interconnected world is no longer disputed. 'The management of risk and the taming of chance'[8] constitutes the core tenet of how security is apprehended and produced. Security is a 'war bereft of temporal or spatial parameters'[9] where threats are, by their very nature, irregular, incalculable and, crucially, unpredictable.[10] Any understanding of a threat as both dispersed and uncontrollable fosters a mode of security that aims to

identify a peril at an early stage and to intervene accordingly. It implies a more imaginative orientation towards the future and anticipatory devices such as storytelling and the construction of worst-case scenario.[11] As De Goede reminds us, 'Pre-emption does not endeavour to predict the future, but it premeditates the future by mapping and imagining multiple future scenarios that are made actionable in the present.'[12] When risk is presented in a way that includes the uncertain, it creates a reformulated model of risk management which can justifiably include everything from the minutiae of everyday mundane life up to actions on faraway battlefields.[13] This is to say that saying and doing security shifts from the figure of the perpetrator, where the act has been committed and should be punished, to the figure of the suspect, where the action has yet to be committed.[14] Since the publication of Beck's seminal risk society thesis, an increasing number of commentators and scholars place an emphasis upon the extent to which the pursuit of risk reduction contributes to the emergence of societies obsessively preoccupied with the search for safety, expressed in terms of anticipation and early detection. As Wilkinson[15] highlights, our societies are more anxious because they are more risk conscious.

Over the past decade, everyone has become accustomed to reminders that a new type of risk without boundaries has emerged. Precautionary governmental process and the rising cultural prevalence of risk have indelibly transformed our understanding of past, present and future through inductive and probabilistic reasoning on the danger to come.[16] The unpredictability of violence confounds the extents of regulatory institutions, forcing governments to concede that they cannot guarantee public safety unless one opts for an extension of surveillance and control. When the need to manage risk requires greater access to information, technological fixes become the security apparatus, and the language of security technologies becomes the language of risk, which in turn makes the deployment of ever more up-to-date technologies the only desirable and acceptable solution. Our daily lives have become besotted by biometrics, CCTV and new smart ID systems. As Lyon[17] highlights, consumer data are merged with those obtained for policing and intelligence, both nationally and across borders, contributing to the creation of an ever-widening web of surveillance. These forms of mass surveillance result in the aggregation of people who, without doing anything special, come under 'categorical suspicion'[18] or 'social sorting'[19] by virtue of their involuntary contribution to statistical algorithms.

Since the revelations of Edward Snowden in June 2013, no one can ignore the alarming extent of mass surveillance.[20] We know that the American National Security Agency and the British security services are routinely collecting, processing and storing huge quantities of digital communications. The British Government Communications Headquarters mass-surveillance programme, 'Tempora', was recently been declared perfectly legal.[21] Yet, its legitimacy and modus operandi are still highly dubious – and ultimately dangerous especially when members of the Executive themselves do not understand the process and its technicalities.[22] Perhaps the more crucial point is that these practices of surveillance and the underlying logic of anticipation have turned suspicion into legitimate, 'actionable' intelligence.[23] These surveillance programmes are enabled by a culture of fear and suspicion,[24] which mutually reinforce each other. Surveillance fosters suspicion and, in turn, suspicion supports the logic of maximisation of surveillance.[25]

The fact that everyone is always a potential suspect is reinforced by our reliance on automated forms of identification and verification and by the monitoring surveillance technologies we use nowadays. If there is no limit to suspicion, everything and everyone can logically be part of it. On this view, the realm of surveillance ought to extend to a class of putative suspects so large that, in order to monitor and pre-empt their possible future violations, it could be said that it is necessary to survey and scrutinise everyone. This point is sharpened further if one looks at the now-numerous government anti-terrorist and 'be alert' campaigns that have been implemented over the past decade; one should not only remain alert and be aware of one's surroundings at all times but should also report concerns about anything or anyone that might be out of place.

In the wake of 9/11 attacks in 2001, the number of 'be alert', 'see something, say something', 'every piece of information helps' or 'report suspicious activity' campaigns has grown exponentially across Western societies. The 2003 'see something, say something' New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority campaign became a national campaign supported by the US Department of Homeland Security in 2010 and has even been developed into a Smartphone app 'see something, send something'.[26] Every US and British local and national police forces have implemented 'report suspicious activity' campaigns on their websites. The 2002 Australian 'be alert, not alarmed' campaign was supported by television commercials and the production of a booklet on terror prevention. The production of an anti-terrorist brochure covering the basics of first aid, how to respond in the workplace to a major incident and what to have at hand in case of an emergency was also part of the 2004 British campaign.[27] Every single Western government has sought to communicate the risk of terrorism to the public, contributing to a state of constant alert,[28] reinforcing militaristic views about the fight against terrorism and underpinning the idea that every citizen has a new security role to play.[29] As the US TSA website underlines:

> Citizens play a pivotal role in reporting suspicious activities to law enforcement authorities, which may help prevent or deter an attack in places frequented by all of us. (TSA website)[30]

As Mythen and Walklate[31] posit, there is a visible moral dimension at play in these dominant representations of the terrorist risk and in the way citizens have been deputised. Alongside new surveillance technologies, requesting help from citizens is certainly an interesting inflection in how social control is engineered nowadays.[32] The key point here is what Andrejevic aptly highlights when he focuses on citizen-to-citizen surveillance or 'lateral surveillance'.[33] Following Andrejevic's argument, Chan underlines how these anti-terror campaigns legitimate a right to suspicion.[34] A right to suspicion is based on the argument that everyone being part of a community possesses a local knowledge of what is normal and abnormal, acceptable and suspicious.[35]

What we would argue here is that the problem is not one of a transformation of our Western societies into police states where everyone might be an informant, but much more the fact that these campaigns beget a double-edged vexing attitude towards the meaning of daily life and citizenship: there is no such thing as a normal situation for it is always and only seemingly normal one and, by extension, we are all watchers and suspects at the same time. The more incidents of distrust one might witness through the lens of computerised suspicion and patterns of deviance, the more it begets a generalised perception of natural human dishonesty and a tragic understanding of danger as permanent and dormant.

Sarraute's *Age of Suspicion* (originally published in 1956) marked durably the 1950s literary world, initiating what will be soon recognised as the *new novel*.[36] When writing against the assumptions of the classical novel of the nineteenth century, where the author and reader move in a common world of well-known entities and where easily identifiable characters can be understood through the qualities and possessions bestowed upon them, she initiated a new type of novel premised upon a new understanding of the reader.[37] A new reader instructed by very different narrative principles: there is no such thing as authenticity, sincerity and state of grace. Sarraute's assault on classical literature was concomitant to the emergence of behaviourism which dominated scientific psychology in the post-war decades. While behaviourists were inclined to claim that human conduct can be deciphered, analysed and translated, Sarraute's mistrust in the appearance of a cohesive plot and characters was an invitation to write differently about the unfathomable depths of the human mind, the subterranean feelings and thoughts on the outermost fringes of our consciousness. Yet, between the apparently opposed scientific and literary approaches summarised previously, there is a common point of departure: what people say, do (or write) cannot be trusted as such. How this sceptical and pessimistic anthropological assumption about human nature invaded our daily routines is central to our argument. It dovetails neatly with the rather generalised anxiety about transnational forms of violence expressed in terms of '(new) terrorism' and 'radicalisation'.

DE-RADICALISATION AND EARLY PREVENTION'S TOOLS

The evolving trend of deadly attacks carried out across Europe in the last fifteen years has contributed to the imposition of the issue of violent extremism and radicalisation – be it carried out in the name of Islam or originating in far right, far left, anti-Semitic or xenophobic ideologies – as a very guiding principle to the European political agenda. Identifying, detecting and addressing the underlying factors leading some individuals or groups, in particular among the disenfranchised youth of European cities, to participate in violent acts have become critical. In addition to counter-terrorism legislation, European countries have developed numerous policies and programmes for early detection and prevention aiming at preventing 'non-radicals' from being radicalised and to stop them from possibly joining violent groups in Europe and abroad.

In this European trend towards the development of counter-radicalisation policies, the United Kingdom led the way with the *Prevent* strand of its 2005 counter-terrorist strategy *Contest*. The *Prevent* programme came under considerable criticism and the original overall plan *Contest* has since been substantially revised. However, the core dimension of the programme is still very much the same: to identify those at risk of becoming radicalised, to assess the level of risk they might pose and to work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation. Within this architecture, the 2007 Channel scheme is dedicated to providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as vulnerable and therefore referred to it.

The Belgian 2002 'Plan M' (M for surveillance of Mosques) and its successor, the 2005 'Plan R' (R for radicalisation), have received less scholarly attention. The linguistic division between French and Flemish as well as the inextricable tangle of Belgian local, regional and federal levels of decisions does not help. Nonetheless, the Belgian *Plan R* is very similar to *Prevent* and the overall British *Contest* strategy. They both aim at:

> *(1) detecting radicalising (key) actors in an early stage so as to be able (2) to take the necessary measures.*[38]
>
> *The* [Prevent] *strategy also means intervening to stop people moving from extremist (albeit legal) groups into terrorist-related activity.*[39]

Like *Prevent*, the Belgian *Plan R* stresses the importance of developing an integrated collaboration between various public services in the fight against radicalisation and the detection of early signs of radicalisation. The detection of early signs of radicalisation and the management of radicalised people take place within a solid territorial network of *Local Integrated Security Cells*

(*Lokale Integrale Veiligheidscel*, LIVC, in Flemish, and *cellule de sécurité intégrale locale*, CSIL, in French) set up by the mayors in order to exchange information between the various local social and prevention services on one hand, and with the federal level through a territorial network of *Local Task Forces* on the other. Key to the *Plan R* is the two-pronged approach: to deal with 'radicalised' individuals inasmuch as protecting potentially 'vulnerable' individuals from falling into radicalisation.

Under the 2011 European Commission Prevention of and Fight against Crime programme, the project Strengthening Resilience against Violent Radicalisation (STRESAVIORA I), conducted by the Belgian Federal Home Affairs authorities, led to the recent creation in 2015 of three resilience tools: 'Bounce^{young}' (i.e., resilience training programme for young people), 'Bounce^{along}' (awareness-raising tool for parents and front-line workers) and 'Bounce^{up}' (a tool to train the trainers). Within the next years, STRESAVIORA II will aim at implementing and diffusing these tools across European countries.

Prevent has generated a debate on whether the Muslim community has become a 'suspect community'. Pantazis and Pemberton[40] opened the debate when they argued that Muslims have been construed as the enemy within and counter-terror measures essentially directed against them. Being a member of the Muslim community can eventually lead to a suspicion by association. In recalling Hillyard's[41] seminal contribution on how once the Irish community was at the centre of all social and political preoccupations, Pantazis and Pemberton place an emphasis upon the extent to which Muslim communities have been constructed as threat to civil society, resulting in them becoming the subject of negative stereotyping, intelligence profiling and the violent expression of anti-Muslim sentiments. In contrast to the thrust of the argument being made here, Greer[42] emphasises the existence of an Islamist extremism threat and therefore questions the extent to which counter-terrorism measures have impacted negatively on Muslim community. For Greer, feeling under suspicion is significantly different from being under suspicion, whereas for Pantazis and Pemberton[43] the feeling and the experience of suspicion are consubstantial. Breen-Smyth[44] reinforces this point in her contribution to the debates. She argues that a suspect community is generated through national or state security policies and reproduced and reinforced by societal responses and social practices. Even the supposedly clear distinction between 'moderate' and 'extremist' Muslims reinforces the point. As Ragazzi[45] explains, the 'moderate Muslim' implicitly constructs the 'Muslim' as a threat. First, it posits that some Muslims are bound to be extremists and therefore dangerous. Secondly, it tends to stigmatise the Muslim community as harbouring terrorists and radicals. Finally, it tends to convey the idea that the Muslim community is simultaneously inside and outside British society and therefore its relationship to 'western values' is inherently tendentious. Thus, the expression 'British Muslim' can be understood as an exclusionary label despite its seemingly attempt to be inclusive.

The Belgian de-radicalisation strategy is clearly guided by the need to address the issue of foreign fighters and returnees. Belgium has been bashed for having the largest number of foreign fighters as a proportion of its population in the Western world. Recent estimates from both official and non-government sources range between 388 confirmed cases according to Bakker and De Bont,[46] 470 according to Coolsaet[47] and somewhere between 420 and 516, according to Van Ginkel and Entenman.[48] Quite a number of these foreign fighters have come back to Belgium. According to Coolsaet,

> Almost a third (some 130) have now returned, of which a third has been arrested and sent to jail.[49]

Across Europe, the fear of the returnees tipped the scale on the criminalisation side rather than logics of reintegration. In reaction to the November 2015 Paris attacks, the Belgian prime minister, Charles Michel, has declared his 'relentless firmness against the rise of radicalisation' and made it clear that returnees belong to jail.[50] For the purpose of our argument, it is worthwhile to mention here how the Belgian penitentiary administration is categorising these 'extremist inmates' since 2015. There are currently 85 convicted extremists in Belgian prisons, divided in two main groups: the *F section* for the 'foreign fighters' and the *T section* for 'terrorists'. The *F section* is subdivided into four subcategories: 'FA' for the recruiters and/or predicators, 'FB' for the militant returnees, 'FC' for the passive returnees and 'FD' for the facilitators, the ones who have helped in either the departure or the return of the foreign fighters. The *T* section is also subdivided into four subcategories: 'TA' for the 'terrorists' recognised as leaders, 'TB' for the militants who have contributed to an attack, 'TC' for the ones who have offered some logistics in the preparation of an attack and 'TD' for the ones who have offered some support more broadly. Key to these classifications is to separate these inmates into two broader categories: those whose extremist certainties are so ingrained that the system regards them as beyond hope and those who are dangerous but potentially and hopefully salvageable.

At the core of these de-radicalisation programmes and penitentiary classifications there are two implicit suggestions. The first suggestion is that our political institutions and values are fragile. The second one is that there are powerful and volatile social forces in our societies and beyond which, upon hearing a radical message of agitators, are likely to sweep all before them with unstoppable force. Asserting danger, therefore, is primarily focused on detecting early signs and categorising expression of grievances. The multiple indicators punctuating the alleged pathway to radicalisation are very similar

between the different programmes. Whether one takes the three-edged *Prevent* programme,[51] the different *Bounce* resilience tools or even the more recent Canadian 'behaviour barometer' created by the Montreal-based Centre for the Prevention of Radicalisation Leading to Violence (CPRLV),[52] they work within the same rationale: to establish a line between behaviours that should be understood as a cause for immediate concern from the ones that, sooner or later, will be a cause for potential future worries. The CPRLV's four-colour-coded behaviour barometer offers a four-pronged framework: 'insignificant' (code green), 'troubling' (code yellow), 'worrisome' (code orange) *and* 'alarming' (code red). This attempt to clarify the different categories of conduct under suspicion raises yet more questions.

Between *Prevent*, *Channel* and *Bounce* there is a common understanding of de-radicalisation and resilience based upon a precarious definition of radicalisation. The 2014 Belgian *Ministerial Circular on Terrorism and Violent Radicalisation* (known as the 'Circulaire GPI 78') defines radicalisation in those terms:

> [radicalisation is] *a process whereby an individual or a group is so influenced that the individual or group in question is mentally prepared to commit extremist acts, including violent or even terrorist action.*

There has been considerable political and academic interest in studying radicalisation and, very often, radical, radicalism and radicalisation are used as interchangeable concepts and linear processes leading to violence. Yet, the threshold between holding radical views and becoming violent is still subject to discussion. Many scholars suggest that the notions of radicalism and radicalisation have contributed to obscure the scope of the debate rather than to clarify it.[53] The word 'radicalisation' is unsatisfactory for it fails to convey the complexity of a phenomenon that still affects only a small number of people. Part of the problem is that radicalisation is based upon a problematic fusion of certain dominant explanatory models of the 'causes of terrorism' (specifically, 'psychological vulnerability' to 'radicalisation') that have focused mostly on psychology (frustration/aggression, grievances), ideological factors (violence-prone ideologies) and perceived or real social inequality (the 'root causes' models). Radicalisation then works like an optical machine, producing 'visibilities' and 'invisibilities'. While radicalisation highlights the importance of one's opinions, views and ideas, portraying dangerous groups and/or individuals, outlining an escapable pathway to violence, it also ignores the political and social dimensions at stake.

The preventive logic of 'far better to prevent terrorism before it happens than to investigate and prosecute after a tragedy' is, unfortunately, largely shared across most segments of our societies. When looking at how de-radicalisation and resilience schemes rely heavily upon the vigilance and cooperation of social workers, youth workers, health workers and teachers, among others, we would like to argue that suspicion has become a dispositif, a technique of governance which imposes a particular conduct, a new way of formulating normality across society.

Universities, hospitals, educators, local government officials and social workers have been slowly but surely largely co-opted into a larger security apparatus. They have been redefined as the key actors at the 'front line' of the pursuit of de-radicalisation and resilience. The United Kingdom 2015 Counter-Terrorism Act (section 26) imposes new duties on National Health Service Trusts, schools and, more widely, public sector employers and employees. They are statutorily obliged to intervene if they suspect an individual is 'at risk of radicalisation'.[54] Enrolling practitioners into de-radicalisation and resilience schemes has been a consistent trend across European countries. Initiated with the British *Contest* counter-terrorist strategy, the idea that it is of paramount importance to include social workers, religious leaders, researchers and police officers together is also a core principle of the 2011 European Commission's Radicalisation Awareness Network. Training and raising awareness among first-line practitioners was initially received with resistance. Across Western countries, senior academics and academic-related staff have regularly raised strong concerns about the possible negative effects of such policies on academic freedom and freedom of speech. Regardless of these concerns about educators expected to identify and refer students 'at risk of radicalisation', the British education system is now subordinated to a security agenda.

According to recent British press reports putting the emphasis on how the government is stepping up its efforts in the fight against radicalisation, it is no less than 400,000 nurses, doctors, teachers and local government officials that have been trained to deal with individuals who are vulnerable to extremism.[55] In regard to Belgium, it is difficult to assess with precision the number of people who have been trained and/or who are currently contributing to the early-detection programmes and referring. However, like the United Kingdom where all local councils are operating *Channel* schemes, Belgian de-radicalisation programme is based on the territorial network of the *Local Integrated Security Cells*. While there are some disparities between the different Belgian cities, the *Local Integrated Security Cells* usually gather members of the local police, youth support and health department services, street workers, local schools, local houses of Justice and centres for mental healthcare.

Referrals to de-radicalisation programmes rise every year. Thanks to the British 2000 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), we can ascertain the following figures in regard to the United Kingdom: In 2006, when *Channel*

was launched, six people were referred. Between 2007 and 2015, no less than 6,306 individuals were referred (FOI request number 000098/15). For the year 2015 only, the National Police Chiefs' Council has established that 3,955 individuals were referred (FOI request number 000026/16).

SUSPICION AS A TECHNIQUE OF GOVERNANCE

In his thorough assessment of Danish counter-radicalisation efforts, Lindekilde convincingly shows how the lack of consensus on indicators of radicalisation and resilience increases inconsistency in initial assessment and 'constitutes a risk of potential under-reaction (false negatives) and over-reaction (false positives)'.[56] In sum, indicators of (pre)radicalisation and the terminology of radicalisation itself are inconsistent and theoretically impoverished. Nonetheless, these indicators are shaping decisions made by what have been designated as front-line workers.

Bernard de Vos, a well-established and regarded Ombudsman for Children's Rights in Belgium, recently declared in a radio interview that

> I don't think that we are facing a problem of radicalisation but rather a series of explosive individual situations because young people from migrant backgrounds are stigmatised and victimised.[57]

This declaration about 'radicalisation' on one of the major Belgian radio stations just a couple of weeks after the attack in Nice on the 14th of July and a few days after the killing of a priest in Normandy on the 26th of July 2016 sparked a series of immediate and violent rebukes. De Vos' declarations have been largely interpreted as a scandalous infringement of the compulsory expression of solidarity towards the victims of terrorism and immediately marked as off-limits. Collins shows how these rituals of solidarity in the wake of an attack are key elements in the production and reproduction of social order.[58] To defy such an order is to expose oneself to public odium. Clearly, and as can be seen in different interviews carried out since then with other practitioners enrolled in de-radicalisation, the reactions towards De Vos certainly inhibited them from expressing comparable concerns. Members of the Belgian penitentiary staff, probation officers and the social workers working in juvenile detention centres who were once keen on expressing their views have become much more reticent.[59] They were particularly concerned about discussing the inherently problematic dimensions of their daily work when they are required to do monitoring and reporting.[60]

This has important consequences beyond the possibility of being able to express oneself or not. It is how this chilling effect impacts upon professional decisions in regard to day-to-day early-detection and monitoring of radicalisation. It seems that, among the Belgian 'front liners', failing to recognise the possible danger to come – and therefore to report it – is largely perceived as an unsettling situation of potential liability. Belgian social workers are paralysed by the idea that they can forgo acting in a meaningful way, so they refer 'suspects'. They do not refer because they essentially believe in what radicalisation is and how it should be tackled, but rather as a professional defence mechanism. Mills shows how the public sphere is connected with the personal realm of experience.[61] When our daily environment is saturated with the risk of terrorism, the way these professionals encounter and cope with the pressure exercised upon them to be the first line in the defence of our societies is to apply – consciously or not – a strategy of risk displacement. Sharing information, referring an individual allows them to avoid both the present and future responsibility for failing to do it. It allows them to divert and shield themselves from the potential harm of being the subjects of suspicion themselves in the 'always probable case that missing a sign could end up in a bloody disaster'.[62]

This strategy of risk displacement is not an easy strategy to mobilise for most of these professionals. Whether this strategy is put in place and acknowledged or not by its actors, it is an ethical and professional dilemma that haunts them in their daily routines.[63] To refer someone or a situation is to contribute seemingly to the defence of society and the ultimate justification deployed here is very often expressed in terms of contributing solely to avoid a potential and future disaster. But at the same time, this imperative of referral is also understood as a cultivation of liability that undermines their professional identity. Social workers and teachers who share a particular professional *habitus*, a series of codes, traditions and sensibilities for which taking the risk of trusting someone and fostering trust plays an essential role are putting themselves at risk of not being able to carry out their assignments.[64] The dilemma and the anxiety about whether one is doing the right thing is neither cognitive nor affectual but ultimately driven by the necessity to mitigate an imperious command to refer an unusual situation and/or an individual with a necessity to secure a professional identity.

The different variations of 'if you see something, say something' have certainly resulted in plenty of seeing and saying, perhaps even more than the authorities might have expected to hear. The different early-detection schemes have also resulted in a rather spectacular growth in the number of referrals. Yet, the question one should ask is how much of this information has been turned into usable intelligence. Sheptycki[65] underlines that one of the main problems intelligence officers are facing is when they are simply inundated by data. In their well-documented analysis of daily practices within French domestic intelligence services, Bonelli and Ragazzi show

how in a high-tech intelligence-led environment some senior policing officers are turning low-tech; against information collected through referrals, they tend to go back to the old-fashioned technologies such as observation, informant and written memos.[66] When it comes to gathering information and converting that information into knowledge, it is has to be conceded that the different early-detection schemes are, for some analysts, essentially viewed as noise pollution. Bonelli and Ragazzi are not suggesting that this is a well-shared professional move with regard to the reliability of knowledge; it is one particular mode of reasoning combined with a particular set of strategies of enquiry. Furthermore, they underline how the use of low-tech technologies is still driven by a logic of anticipation. Their argument does not undermine the idea that potentiality of suspicion has acquired particular potency in our anxious societies craving for more security.

CONCLUSION

Tempting though it would be to speak of a 'normalisation of suspicion', what needs to be pinpointed here is the corroding influence of a spreading wariness on how we are collectively induced to understand ordinary action (and therefore inaction), the possibility of trusting someone and, last but not least, the presumption of innocence are slowly mutating into a presumption of guilt. As it has been suggested earlier, the different 'be alert campaigns' deployed over the years have given birth to the development of sensitivity towards unintended consequences of our actions. One can see how this sensibility that prides itself on its uncompromising wariness and vigilance is based on the conviction that appearances can deceive. One should question the motives that lie behind action (and inaction), disagreement (and agreement) and conduct. What is left of the rule of proof and the shield against premature punishment when the notion of innocence becomes more and more an inconvenient technicality as opposed to a valued principle? People registered on 'suspected terrorist lists' will inevitably struggle to prove their innocence because, apart from the extremely complex jurisdictional matters at stake, at the very core of these listings of suspicion lies the classic double problem of inductive principle and probabilistic reasoning. In calling attention to the possibility that the future could be different from the past and present in unforeseeable ways, it raises doubts about the very possibility of definitive refutations of grounds for suspicion.

Distrust is not only a central mechanism of how the risk society is policed but also a core component of our ways of seeing and being as ordinary citizens. The complex ways in which we have collectively become embedded in risk assessment technologies and generalised forms of suspicion towards unfamiliar persons, undesirable people and menacing outsiders have reinforced social fragmentation and the dangers of polarisation and exclusion. The overarching question of the efficiency and intended or unintended consequences of these counter-terrorism and de-radicalisation policies is very often left aside; the question of whether these measures could contribute to increase the risk of escalation of violence and the risk of further exclusion of a population already disenfranchised seems almost forgotten. How far can these duties of referral push those who are single out down a path that they may otherwise have rejected? Suspicion is the active ingredient of the precautionary principle at stake in our risk societies and the unfortunate, deeply entrenched driving force that leads to a blurring of the boundaries between rationality and panic, between anticipation and anxiety. When a more or less articulated set of grievances leads to a referral and when, on the other side, a referral is perceived as a rightly acceptable and desirable compliance, one might expect this suspicious posture to remain at the centre of national and international politics for the foreseeable future unless we question collectively the assumptions, presumptions and rationales that underpinned the evolution of contemporary risk society. Unfortunately, the complex mechanism of governance and social regulations are not historically known to be open to such a radical reflexivity.

NOTES

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