Vigilantism and security:

State, violence and politics in Italy and Hungary

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Statement

I hereby declare that the thesis contains no materials accepted for other degrees in any other institutions. This thesis contains no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgement is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between the state and vigilante groups in two situations from Italy and Hungary. It asks the question of the possibility of successful security articulations that emerge from actors endowed with lower levels of social capital. Vigilantism is one such possible security practice. The practices of the vigilante groups that I look at cannot be fully captured if we focus on either state-centred security, or on socially dispersed security practices. Their practices are performed by agents with lower levels of securitising capital than state elites, but with sufficient legitimacy and capabilities to enact security successfully. These practices are not dispersed through 'society', but they are concentrated in groups and patrols with explicit programs, hierarchies and purposes. I argue that vigilante groups can practice security autonomously from the state – even if they have the state's 'blessing'.

I argue that vigilantism is an instance of everyday security. Vigilantism illustrates practices of security with clear goals of providing services to a target audience. Vigilantism fulfils a security demand. Vigilante groups have clearly-defined goals, which are influenced by a guiding ideology. Such programmatic security acts do not sit well with the established literature on everyday security, which diverges from a decisionistic model, and posits the non-intentionality of security practices. I diverge from this position and argue that vigilantism shows how security can be at the same time non-elitist and intentional.

This thesis uses participatory methods to achieve as much proximity as possible to the actants of vigilante security practices. Analysing situations enables me to have a better negotiation of the interplay between local and daily routines and practices on the one hand, and global discourses and narratives on the other hand. For these reasons, I use the concept of security-scape, to delineate situations of security in which my analysis moves constantly between the particular and the general. The two security-scapes I focus on in this thesis are the Milan Central train station and the Hungarian village of Gyongyospata. Through these two instances of vigilantism in Europe, I illustrate non-state and intentional acts of security. Both the City Angels and the far-right patrols of Gyongyospata perform acts of security in the absence of state capacities. Both situations illustrate an ambiguous relationship with the state, in the sense that their relative autonomy coincides with a reinforcement of state practices and discourses. And both are situations of programmatic and intentional security, where the decision to act is based on the clear articulated intention to respond to a security demand.

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Gracias a la vida que me ha dado tanto!

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INTRODUCTION

Can we theoretically envision security practices as emerging from actors which are not endowed with high levels of social, political or symbolic capital – in order words, from non-elite actors? The theoretical imaginary of the two main directions of thought in the critical study of security seem to leave little room for this possibility. On the one hand, the securitization theory relies heavily on state capabilities and support even when it is societal agents that perform security. On the other hand, the authors that have pushed for a more everyday view on security also end up with a version of elitism, grounded in structuralism and thin intentionality.

This thesis argues that vigilantism in contemporary Europe can be thought of as security practices that are performed by actors who do not have high levels of capital, and at the same time act security in an intentional and programmatic way. This is the theoretical contribution of the thesis. I show this in two instances – the Hungarian paramilitary patrols in the village of Gyongyospata, and the Italian group City Angels, in the central train station of Milan. In both instances I highlight the ambiguous relationship that the vigilante groups have with the state, as well as the programmatic character of their security practices. I also argue that vigilantism is an instance of security practices that are exclusionary and oppressive, even if they do not emerge from the state, but from the security demands of the population.

I introduce the concept of security demand as my substantive empirical contribution to the critical security debates. The demand for security is the mechanism that catalyses the social legitimisation of vigilantes. These manage to obtain public support by supplying security to a population that actively laments the insecurity posed by particular groups, such as immigrants or Roma people. I argue that this demand has to be taken seriously, as being autonomous – although not completely separable – from the discourses of security that emerge top-down, from the state representatives. The vigilante

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groups that I analyse in this thesis provide security through a set of discourses that emphasize the inherent criminality of marginal groups, such as Roma or homeless people. The two mechanisms that facilitate this supply are, in the Hungarian instance the far-right ideology, and in the Italian one, the criminalisation of urban poverty.

Methodologically, this thesis will make use of ethnographic methods. It argues that proximity to security practices is crucial for a critical endeavour. Also, understanding the context in which a specific security practice takes place is an essential step for this proximity. I use the concept of security-scape in order to extract and analyse a particular situation of security. The two security-scapes that I analyse are the village of Gyongyospata in the spring of 2011, and the Milan central train station. In both instances I look at the actors involved, their discourses and practices, as well as how the vigilante groups fit and act in these given contexts.

Vigilantism – preliminary remarks

Vigilantism means, in the most diffused popular acceptance, to take the law in one's hands, a sort of do-it-yourself justice when resorting to all other established means fails (Rosenbaum and Sederberg, 1974: 542). Etymologically, to be 'vigil' means to be in a constant state of alert, and therefore vigilantism would denote a phenomenon where groups organise in order to detect dangers.[1] A comprehensive definition of vigilantism is onerous due to the inflation of concepts that have a close meaning, such as: paramilitaries,[2] civil militias,[3] neighbourhood patrols, private security, informal policing,[4] death squads,[5] and even terrorism.

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[1] See also Les Johnston, 'What is Vigilantism?', *British Journal of Criminology* 36, no. 2 (1996): 222
[2] See White,1983; Monaghan, 2004
[3] See Francis, 2005
[4] See Buur and Jensen, 2004
[5] See Sluka, 2000 and Scheper-Hughes, 2006

The idea of taking 'the law' in one's hands, however, opens a Pandora's Box of theoretical and political problems that reach deep enough to challenge established understandings of security. It implies, first and foremost, an engagement with sovereignty. At first sight, taking charge of the law means challenging the state's capacity to implement law and order. And since this capacity is ultimately based on coercion, vigilantism can be considered as challenging the state's monopoly on legitimate violence, which is by all means one of the crucial characteristics of contemporary state sovereignty.

If this is the case and the monopoly is broken, vigilantism would appear as a competitor to the state's agencies in their pursuit of public legitimacy. It would thus seem as if vigilantism is one step short of practices such as coups d'état, insurrections, secessionist movements and so on – practices that seek to ultimately dislocate the state's sovereignty over a certain population or territory. The state would thus appear to feel threatened and attempt to regain its monopoly on violence, most likely through violent means. Yet, in contemporary Europe, from Italy to Greece, vigilante practices have been flourishing, without the state being threatened to a considerable extent, and without these practices being clamped down in any other way than through peaceful law regulations.

The ambiguous relationship between the state as holder of the monopoly on violence and people or groups who take the law in their own hands has been a somewhat neglected object of study. Those few authors that have tackled this problem have tried to push the relationship into one corner or the other, privileging either full autonomy or full complicity.

Context – the transformation of the state

On the one hand, vigilantism is an aspect of neo-liberal self-governance; on the other hand, it is connected to authoritarian societies and political violence. This is because vigilantism stands at the intersection of two trends of state transformation under globalisation: deregulation of security and increased state repression.

The contemporary economic and political context facilitates the deregulation of a number of services that used to be controlled centrally by the state. Under neo-liberalism, the privatisation and delegation of services, policies, infrastructure and provisions is seen as a systemic virtue. The rolling back of the state is meant to keep public costs low, encourage investment and entrepreneurship and at the same time create a more competitive and plural social and economic environment. Public services are increasingly subjected to the market logic of competition, niche-searching and the search for material or symbolic forms of profit.

Security is one of the many services that gets privatised. Security services get delegated to private actors such as security companies. Supplementary, security can also be delegated to the population, to become a 'community' good that is shared in subsidiarity by smaller political units than the state. In this way, the state appears to relinquish its traditional monopoly on security and violence. Through security governance, the divisions between private and public security become blurred. The state now acts in tandem with a plethora of non-state actors. Moreover, security services can be partially or completely outsourced, depending on the situation. These moves are supposed to make security more affordable for the state and somewhat more 'efficient' for the community. For example, Eick (2003) shows how in Berlin, the local administration works in tandem with non-profits, who in turn supervise welfare-recipients, which maintain order and cleanliness in 'problematic neighbourhoods'.

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In other cases, the non-profit organisation helps the police by providing information and social services in areas considered to be dangerous (Eick, 2003: 375). It is estimated that around 700 people are 'employed in the field of (in)security, (dis)order and control services.' (Eick, 2003: 368)

It is in this context that vigilantism appears, as Pratten and Sen (2008: 3) frame it, as a 'cheap form of law enforcement'. When the state withdraws from security provision or outsources security services, it leaves behind a security vacuum. Invited by the state or through self-management, different groups come in to fill this gap.

As an autonomous movement, vigilantism is a form of citizenship that does not need the involvement or authority of the state to achieve its goals (Johnston, 1996: 226). Vigilantism appears as a reaction to the state's perceived inability or unwillingness to enforce the law (Johnston, 1996: 231), and supplies security to the population's demand for crime control (Johnston, 1996: 232). Vigilante groups step in to fill the security gap left by weak, incapable or unwilling state agencies (Sen and Pratten, 2008: 6). The support of the state is on the one hand not required because the vigilantes have the capacity to provide security themselves, and on the other hand it is not feasible because it has been intervening inefficiently or not at all up to that point (Rosenbaum and Sederberg, 1974: 545; Galeotti, 2008). The capacity of vigilante groups to articulate security discourses and perform security practices emerges from a 'myriad of decisions' about what constitutes a threat and a relevant decision about how to tackle it (Doty, 2007: 130). These dispersed and mundane decisions are articulated by actors who do not have high levels of symbolic, cultural, economic or other forms of capital. They are taken at the level of the everyday (Huysmans, 2011) and from within what we would call 'the population'.

The general public, in other words the *polis*, is a distinct element in the discussion about vigilantism. Individuals or groups that aim to take the law in their own hands and carry on security practices and decisions need, theoretically, to have the support of this general population (Rosenbaum and Sederberg, 1974). This necessity has been recognized by scholars of security as well, who have been arguing that the wider population may play the role of the audience that has to legitimize or reinforce discourses and articulations of security (Buzan et al, 1998; Balzacq, 2005; Roe, 2008). Thus, vigilantism would not be possible in the absence of social support from at least some segments of the population. The importance of this support and the participation of the population in decisions and practices of security have been increasing with the expansion of neoliberal modes of governance, which place great emphasis on societal self-management and community empowerment. Security is one of the commodities that social groups have to increasingly provide for themselves, as the state is loosening its grip on services, and privatizing many of its agencies (Eick, 2003). In this way, community security, in the form of neighborhood watch groups, citizens' patrols or indigenous forms of justice become encouraged and legitimate responses to the rolling back of the state.[6]

The argument of the withdrawing state that leaves room for vigilante practices is contradicted by a series of considerations on the increased repressive governance that has escalated in the past decade even in the so-called democratic states. From brutally repressing dissent on the streets, to tightening border controls and surveillance and finally to attempts of controlling entire populations, the 'security' arm of the state is far from being limp. Through security practices, the agencies of the state seek to intervene into the most discrete and quotidian aspects of the society. In this landscape of almost complete state securitization, how can the persistence of vigilante groups be explained?

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[6] The boundary between these forms of security and vigilantism is highly ambiguous and could be perhaps established along the lines of the readiness for the use of force, which is as Johnston (1996: 226) argues, one of the defining features of vigilantism. But what exactly constitutes 'force' is highly contingent on situations, and it can be argued that the intimidation effected by civil patrols amounts to a similarly 'forceful' agency as that of armed vigilantes.

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Certainly not as a response to the impotence of the state. And doubtless, not as a response to the unwillingness of the state to deal with certain security problems.

The increased social inequalities brought about by globalization are causing social disbalances. The current prevailing state policies is to control these tensions through increased repression and control. Governments aim violence at their own citizens. Politically motivated murders, disappearances, torture, incarceration and everyday brutality are all symptoms of the escalation in 'state terror' that can be observed in contemporary states (Sluka, 2000: 2-3). The state-sponsored violence takes the form of abusive police, paramilitary groups and death squads. For example, Nancy Scheper-Hughes describes the violence perpetrated by Brazilian death squads in the poor *favelas*. She shows how these groups were targeting mainly poor black male teenagers living in the shantytowns and housing projects of Brazil. The victims of death squads range from homeless people to street children (Scheper-Hughes, 2006: 153 – 4). Such groups operate outside the established law. They are able to act with impunity because they are secretly fully integrated in the state's regular security network. To quote Sluka (2000, 4 – 5), 'the members of these death-squads […] are part of paramilitary "defence" forces, or civilian right-wing paramilitary groups who kill people the state wants, or doesn't mind being, killed.' Instances of the state silently supporting vigilante violence abound.[7]

The most visible contemporary cases of European vigilantism are the Italian *ronde*, the Hungarian paramilitary groups and the Greek Golden Dawn troops. Without exception, the fundamental security threats that these groups aim to tackle - illegal immigration and/or 'Gypsy crime' are also the top security priorities of their states. The questions that these groups aim to tackle are in the first instance immigration or minority group presence, which often are also key issues of state policies.

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[7] See Oomen 2004 for the case of South Africa, as well as my discussion below, including the case of Greece's Golden Dawn

The vigilante groups seem thus to operate in tandem with the state, as violence that enforces the established order (Rosenbaum and Sederberg, 1974). As Jarman argues for the case of Northern Ireland, there is no 'absolute' gap between the state and those who challenge its monopoly on violence. They are all 'taking different routes to similar objectives' (Jarman, 2008: 336). This possibility is also recognized by some students of security that have tried to conceptualize non-state articulations of threat. Societal security may be distinct from the security of the state, but the logic whereby an issue becomes a threat and the way it is dealt with are both convergent with the state's 'traditional' security practices (Waever, 1995; see also Neocleous, for the argument that security has an universal inherent violent nature). Moreover, many vigilantes depend on the support of the state for their acts (Otto, 2010: 22). The state is an audience of their security discourses – it is asked to legitimize the supplementary policing action that the vigilantes offer. And the state is also at times even willing to facilitate vigilante action, whether merely by 'closing an eye' (Scheper-Hughes, 2006) or more directly by supporting the actions publicly.[8] This facilitation is grounded on a perceived general security problem (the uncontrolled influx of immigrants) to the solving of which the entire population, along with the state, is invited to contribute.

Vigilantism: between state and society

Vigilantism is a security phenomenon that is situated at the intersection of these two trends. It can be at the same time autonomous from the state, when the state is perceived as not willing or able to provide security; and at the same time it can act in tandem with the state, against certain social groups that are perceived as un-wanted or as threatening to the social order. And of course, different

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[8] As it is the case with the Golden Dawn and parts of the Greek political establishment.

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groups are able to move in the interstices between these two positions. As I will show in this thesis, the Hungarian and Italian vigilante groups have an ambiguous relationship with the state, in this regard. In certain moments they may seem to be autonomous and to be able to act independently of the state's approval. In other cases, these groups seem to reinforce the state's oppressive policies, by committing acts of violence against undesirable individuals or groups.

This ambiguity has not been fully explored so far. For example, Roxanne Doty's monograph on the US Minutemen border patrols frames vigilantism as seeking full autonomy from the government. For her, vigilantism can be thought of as 'statecraft from below', in which sovereign decisions become small and local, rather than centralised in the exceptional powers of the state (Doty, 2009: 15). Vigilante groups show how security decisions can be taken anywhere and at any time, to form a landscape of dispersed practices: 'Border vigilantes thus expose a gaping hole at the heart of the belief in a definitive locus of sovereignty. […] Sovereignty is ethereal and hovers unsteadily around us, not firmly anchored, not solely public or private, legal or extra-legal. Everyone is potentially "the police" […]' (Doty, 2007: 132) in this way, Doty conceives vigilantism as a dispersed set of practices and decisions that are not taken from a centralised space – the state – and are not taken necessarily by actors working within the state apparatus.

While I agree with the potential for vigilante groups to enact security outside the state, I seek to problematize this potential. I show the intricate network of alliances and compromises that Italian and Hungarian groups have to make with their respective governments in order to function. If for Doty, vigilantism is embedded in the population and oriented towards the state, I problematise that image, and show how sometimes, vigilante groups can be embedded in the state and be addressing the population. In this way, one of the crucial problems becomes that of the potential for articulating security in parallel with the state.

The practices of the vigilante groups that I look at cannot be fully captured if we focus on either state-centric security, or on socially dispersed security practices. They occupy the large space in between these two poles. Their practices are performed by agents with lower levels of securitising capital than state elites, but with sufficient legitimacy and capabilities to enact security successfully. These practices are not dispersed through 'society', but they are concentrated in groups and patrols with explicit programs, hierarchies and purposes. Vigilantism is not only 'statecraft from below', but can be deeply immersed in the state apparatus.

The problems

From this, I highlight two distinct set of problems that this thesis seeks to address. These are theoretical and political issues.

Theoretical problems

Vigilantism cannot be fully captured using the current elite-centred conceptual frameworks of Critical Security Studies. As I show in the next chapter, there is very little room in CSS for practices of security that are performed by actors with low levels of social and political capabilities. How can the current CSS account for non-state security practices? I argue that vigilante groups can practice security autonomously from the state – even if they have the state's 'blessing'. In the existing literature, this non-elitist manner of performing security has been dubbed 'everyday security'. I argue that vigilantism is an instance of everyday security.

Another theoretical problem is the fact that vigilantism illustrates practices of security with clear goals of providing services to a target audience. Vigilantism fulfils a security demand. Vigilante groups have clearly-defined goals, which are influenced by a guiding ideology. In the two instances that I analyse, this ideology is conservatory, intolerant, and even far-right, in the Hungarian case.

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However, such programmatic security acts do not sit well with the established everyday security literature, which diverges from a decisionistic model, and posits the non-intentionality of security practices. I diverge from this position and argue that vigilantism shows how security can be at the same time non-elitist AND intentional.

Political problems

This thesis nests its arguments in the Critical Security perspective. I choose to call it a 'perspective' because I consider it here to be more than a theory. If I am to take seriously the 'critical' of 'Critical Security', I will try to extend my contribution to be more than an addition to the theory. I would like it to be a political statement that seeks an engagement with the status quo, and an effort to build conceptual tools that enrich a political imaginary of emancipation and improvement. Thus, vigilantism is interesting for me not merely as an interesting illustration of theoretical gaps, but as a political phenomenon that sheds light on some crucial social and political issues.

First, vigilantism illustrates the complicity between certain parts of the state and certain parts of the society, in upholding violence that is legitimised as security. In Italy, this complicity implies that illegal immigrants and homeless people from Northern Africa and Eastern Europe are being marginalized, excluded and aggressed by vigilante patrols, on the backdrop of the state's anti-immigrant discourses. In Hungary, the same complicity implies that far-right patrols harass and beat up Roma people, in the context of a generalized state crackdown on the Roma population.

Second, the complicity between society and the state is guided by a political vision that explicitly targets groups that are economically marginal. Far from being only a matter of conflictual identities, vigilante groups in Italy and Hungary express a generalised antipathy towards the disenfranchised, which are seen as deviant and criminal. While state chooses to increase repression against the poor,

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the society reacts in tandem by regarding these categories with suspicion and fear. In Italy this aspect is more present than in Hungary, and Italian vigilante groups locate their practices in urban settings that are considered to be derelict and in need of renewal. For this reason, I associate vigilantism in Italy with urban (in)security, and dwell more on the effects of gentrification and spatial exclusions through security.

Third, the same complicity is also guided by a shared explicit racism. It is here that the identity function of security is most visible – vigilante groups act in the name of preserving the political privileges of a majority that is ethnically defined, and which perceives its identity to be threatened by other ethnical groups. In Hungary, the far-right patrols have as main objective the fight against what they perceive to be 'Roma criminality'. Thus, the deviance that they securitise in the name of the population is articulated in racial terms. This is done through the far-right ideology that is more present in my Hungarian analysis than in the Italian one. For this reason, I explore the ideological dimension of security, as well as the ways in which the far-right discourse shapes the practices of security.

Fourth, the practice of vigilantism poses the problem of over-policing. In both Italy and Hungary, vigilantism appears as a complement to an existing well-organised and democratic police apparatus. Why do some segments of the population need to form and legitimise groups that supplement this apparatus? I argue for a serious analysis of the demand for security that comes from the population. If in the CSS literature security is seen as inherently oppressive[9], the security that vigilante groups supply does not seem to be problematic for the people who legitimise and support them. Security is being demanded in augmented form, and as a solution to social and economic problems. This is a political problem in the sense that it points to troubling and intriguing issues: security is an integral

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[9] With the exception of those authors that see security as having an emancipatory potential. However, even these authors agree that when it is practiced by the state – including in the form of policing – security can limit emancipation.

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part of the political imaginary of disenfranchised social groups, which are usually themselves the targets of everyday police repression in the name of security. What kind of critique can be mounted against this vision of security? What forms of resistance can we envision?

Finally, the ideological aspect of vigilantism comes again to the fore. Keeping in mind the previous paragraph's arguments on the demand for security, the question immediately arises: how is it that, at least in Europe, the response to societal security demands comes prevalently from the conservatory and far-right political positions? Such far-right positions are notorious for their exclusionary and racist practices, which come from a political imaginary where societies should be homogenous, authoritarian and ruled by fixed sets of ethical rules. Is this the only vision of politics that can respond to the society's security demands nowadays in Europe? Can we not envision alternative ways to ensure security in ways which are not state-based and which also do not resemble the dark pages of recent European history? Are there ways in which we can imagine security provision as being non-authoritarian, non-exclusivist, non-racist and non-militarized?

While this thesis will not be able to give complete answers to all these issues, it will try to open avenues for further exploration. Vigilantism does indeed shed an interesting and important light on the contemporary meaning and practice of security. It is a complex phenomenon that needs considerable more research and attention that what I have been able to provide here. Through the two instances of vigilantism that I focus on in the thesis, I will illustrate the interweaving of theoretical and political issues that lie at the heart of the security practice of vigilantism in contemporary Europe.

Outline of the thesis

The thesis will begin with a brief prelude on vigilantism as a socio-political phenomenon that needs to be discussed from a critical security perspective. I will show the ambiguous relationship between vigilante groups and the state – at the same time embedded and parallel to state apparatuses such as the police and the army. I will illustrate this with the example of the most well-established contemporary group of vigilantes, the Golden Dawn. This is not meant to be a 'case study' of the thesis, since I did not have the opportunity to conduct any research in Greece. However, it is an important instance of vigilantism, and one that introduces the themes that I will analyse later on in the thesis: vigilantism as everyday and intentional security practice, and the importance of security demand and far-right ideas.

The second chapter provides the theoretical backbone of the thesis. It is divided in three sections. The first section inserts the question of vigilantism into the existing debate on Critical Security Studies. I argue here that the two established lines of thought provide a theoretical imaginary that is not sufficient for understanding the instances of vigilantism that I look at. Vigilantism is not security that emerges from the state, but it is a response to popular security demands. And vigilantism is not a set of security routines that are performed non-intentionally, but it is a programmatic practice that uses the far-right ideology as a set of guidelines for action. The concept of intentionality is crucial for the way in which I distance myself from the scholars who strive for a non-elitist view of security. As such, I dedicate the second section of the theoretical chapter to a discussion of intentionality, and its philosophical links to intersubjectivity. This is an effort to highlight the fact that vigilantism can be at the same time intentional and intersubjective, without being embedded in a model of social action where state capabilities determine the success of a securitizing move. However, this discussion of intentionality has deep methodological and political implications. I discuss these in the third section,

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where I also introduce the two instances of vigilantism that I will study. I introduce the concept of the security-scape as a main methodological tool. I conclude the theoretical chapter by outlining the conceptual framework of the thesis. The main concept that I will use is the security demand, which is in a strict connection with the role of far-right ideas in security. The secondary concept is urban insecurity, which is connected to the criminalisation of poverty.

The third and fourth chapters constitute the empirical substance of the thesis. I begin with the Hungarian vigilantism, which has a consistent history. I point to the security-scape provided by the village of Gyongyospata, where in 2011 several groups were patrolling the streets and harassing the local Roma people. Physical acts of violence complemented their spectacular practices of security, which were meant to intimidate and display power. In the second empirical chapter, I look at the Italian instance by using the Milan Central train station as a security-scape. This train station is situated at the intersection of several processes of urban renewal, globalisation and state-led exclusion of disenfranchised people. Vigilantism appears in this context as a set of practices and discourses that work in tandem with the state, yet autonomous from it. I look at one specific group, called the City Angels, which patrol the premises of the train station and combine security with social work. I emphasize how the demand for security is articulated through the criminalisation of poverty.

I. INTRODUCING VIGILANTISM AS NON-ELITIST SECURITY

Can we theoretically envision security practices as emerging from actors which are not endowed with high levels of social, political or symbolic capital – in order words, from non-elite actors? The theoretical imaginary of the two main directions of thought in the critical study of security seem to leave little room for this possibility. On the one hand, the securitization theory relies heavily on state capabilities and support even when it is societal agents that perform security; on the other hand, the authors that have pushed for a more everyday view on security also end up with a version of elitism, grounded on structuralism and thin intentionality.

In this section I show how vigilantism fits into this discussion. Vigilantism is a security phenomenon that runs in parallel to the state's security apparatuses. As such, the actors that perform vigilante security have to negotiate their position in relation to the state's monopoly on violence and security. In this process of negotiation, vigilante actors are by default in an inferior position vis-à-vis the state's capabilities. The vigilantes are always at the margin of the zone of co-option by the state. In this way, the study of vigilantism offers a way to see how security can be performed with low levels of securitizing capital. In what follows, I will trace the complexities of this negotiation process between vigilantes and the state, by using the Greek group Golden Dawn as an illustration. The Golden Dawn has the most complex network of vigilantes in contemporary Europe, with many quite visible activities, and can thus be used to highlight the arguments that I make regarding the relationship between vigilantism and the state.

The first possible explanation of vigilantism is that it appears as a reaction to a security vacuum left by the state. This vacuum is translated in the lack of protection, justice and safety from the competent

authorities of the state. I seek to problematize its relationship with the state. I trace the boundaries between vigilante groups as emanations of the society on the one hand, and their embeddedness in the state apparatus, with its enforcement and coercive capabilities, on the other. The state, in this respect, should be conceived of as a social relation that crystallizes the balance of the dominant forces in a society (Jessop, 1990: 256). Hence, rather than being only a set of administrative institutions that govern through technocratic governmentalities, the state can be thought to incorporate the hegemonic discourses, practices and groups within a society (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Poulantzas, 1978).

The inability of these apparatuses to uphold the law and deliver justice is greatly induced by the neo-liberal policies that entail the withdrawal of the state from certain segments of service provision, including security (Eick, 2007). During the current stage of globalization, this withdrawal is seen as a solution to the destabilizing forces of the global markets. States choose the strategy of cutting back on spending in key sectors, in order to create incentives for direct investment. This leads to the privatization and outsourcing of security to private agents such as security companies (Goldstein, 2003: 23). This in turn leads to an unequal supply of security, based on the ability to acquire services. Gated communities, the mushrooming of private security and military companies – these are all aspects of this phenomenon (Arguetta, 2010; Theodore et al., 2006). Complementary, the withdrawal of the state generates a discourse of self-reliance, in which the idea of 'community' becomes essential (Eick, 2007: 267). As such, neighbourhood patrols and the self-provision of security services at the local levels replace the role of the police (Eick, 2007: 271). At the same time, the state also assumes a neutral role, as a sort of umpire that cannot interfere in the different conflicts within the society, and is thus insulated from any responsibility(Sundar 2010: 114).

The withdrawal of the state is causing severe imbalances in some parts of the world. Outsourcing security means that large numbers of people are left prey to organized crime and local bandits. This leads to a generalized climate of insecurity, in which every day is fraught with threats and risks (Donmez, 2008). For those people which cannot afford to buy security from private actors, such generalized fear is a daily reminder of the disappearance of the state. Such people may sometimes organize in vigilante groups, or can actively support and legitimize groups of vigilantes. Unlike security companies, these groups may protect poor or marginalized people in the absence of remuneration. The state may choose to ultimately support these groups, by acknowledging their role in keeping public order (Smith, 2004).

The destruction of large identities creates a vertical polarization within the society. The polarization separates the elites from the society, creating a cosmopolitan globalized group at the top and an indigenized and localized group at the bottom. This localisation is an attempt to find roots in a de-nationalized state, and it can lead to ultranationalist and pro-racist movements. The common denominator of all these local movements is the belief in the value of the collective, in community and communitarianism. As such, it overlaps with fundamentalism and generates violent exclusionary practices. These localised groups see themselves in a conflict with the globalised and cosmopolitan state.[10]

The climate of generalized fear does not have to depend only on the neo-liberal policies adopted by the state. At times, the state apparatus is perceived to be too corrupt to deal with the grievances expressed by the population. In situations of increased corruption and political clientelism, vigilantism appears as a form of 'social control' for 'fragile communities'. (Sen, 2010: 10) The state can be perceived also as being biased towards certain policies that engender discontent among certain

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[10] This paragraph draws from Friedman , 2003: 25

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groups. For example, the US Minutemen, who patrol the US-Mexico Border, accuse the Washington Administration of being 'too soft' on illegal immigrants (Chavez, 2006; Doty, 2007). The trope of the state being 'too soft on crime' is also a pretext for Hungarian groups to take matters in their own hands (Mireanu, 2013).

Thus, vigilantism can be seen as an activity that is performed by social groups that attempt to enhance the security of their communities. It is a reaction to the perceived outgrowth of deviance. This perception is fuelled by the lack of reaction from the institutions of the state that are legitimately supposed to curb crime, such as the police, the judiciary system, border guards and so on. In this respect, vigilantism is an autonomous activity that: a) does not require the support of the state (Johnston, 1996: 226); and b) can be directed against the institutions of the state, insofar as they uphold or cannot control a perceived climate of deviance and crime. For example, as I will show below, the Greek group of vigilantes called the Golden Dawn does make use of the state facilities, while at the same time employing a discourse that criticizes the state's inability to deal with crime.

In other instances, the inability or lack of will of the state to control the inherent violence in a society gives rise to a daily atmosphere of generalised terror. In such societies, the culture of violence is ingrained in the practices of different groups to such an extent that it goes out of control (Dönmez, 2008: 553). These are militaristic societies, or societies torn by long-lasting conflicts (Turkey, N. Ireland, and Nigeria). Here, vigilantism can take the form of paramilitary groups that reproduce and reinforce climate of generalized violence by terrorizing communities and committing crimes beyond the ones they are claiming to punish. Rosenbaum and Sederberg refer to this as 'establishment violence'. Such vigilante groups do not contest the hegemonic normative framework of a state, but they actually try to enforce it – as it is the case with the Golden Dawn. At most, they question the

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state's ability to uphold this framework and ensure a climate of order and respect for established values (Rosenbaum and Sederberg, 1974: 547).

This opens the way for discussing those forms of vigilantism which covertly or in subsidiary support the state and its agents. Like in Turkey, Greece or South Africa, these groups can contain retired or working police officers, and even people with intensive military training that have a common ideology with the state elite (Rosenbaum and Sederberg, 1974: 563 – 4; Oomen, 2004: 163). Driven by discontent with the impact of globalisation and the limited possibilities of the state to control it, these groups work in tandem or on behalf of the state to neutralize political forces or groups that are seen as undesirable. The vigilante groups operate on behalf of privileged classes, against what is perceived to be social deviance (Oomen, 2004: 161). They perform 'street cleanings', targeting homeless people, sex workers, pan handlers and so on (Scheper-Hughes, 2006: 157). Thus, they attempt to enforce a strict informal code of social morality. At the same time, they can serve as the extension of political battles; during the White Terror in Hungary, the *Pronay* Battalion were targeting Communists and Jewish people, while at the same time 'defending' the estates of the aristocrats from the rebelled peasants (Bodo, 2006; 2010).

A similar situation could be found in Northern Ireland, where both conflicting parties had their own paramilitary wings that were delivering justice and security to their respective communities, while punishing those who were perceived to be informants or just morally or socially deviant. Once the ceasefire was put into place, these paramilitaries started to collaborate with the police and other state authorities in programs of community restorative justice (Jarman, 2008: 336). Despite the fact that these groups start out and gain legitimacy through a discourse that places them in opposition to the ineffective and immoral state, they end up being involved in performances of security and law enforcement that render the boundary between them and the state in a constant state of porosity and

renegotiation (Buur and Jensen, 2004: 144). This situation complicates the alleged conflict between vigilantism and the state, as well as the autonomy of vigilante groups in relation to the state apparatuses. The groups that take the law in their own hand do not do this necessarily as a direct challenge to the sovereignty of the state and its monopoly of violence. Acting in tandem or at the behest of the state, these groups are part of the 'established' order, so to speak.

Illustration: the Golden Dawn[11]

Security in parallel with the state

The Golden Dawn is an instance of such an ambiguous relationship between a vigilante group and the state. Nikos Michaloliakos, the party's general secretary, had close ties to the Greek military junta. He founded the Golden Dawn in 1985, but the party became prominent after 1993. Members of the organization are alleged to have participated with the Greek Volunteer Guard in the Srebrenica massacre.[12] Electoral success came only in November 2010, when Michaloliakos got elected in the municipal council of Athens, with percentages as high as 20% in neighbourhoods of Athens with high concentration of immigrants, such as *Agios Panteleimonas*.

The Greek state is experiencing a well-documented period of severe austerity. The welfare state is shrinking with unimaginable speed, and this led to the precarisation of the working population (Lynteris, 2011). With high unemployment and drastic economic measures, the Greek state is retreating from social services (Matsaganis: 2011). At the same time, due to the increased frequency and intensity of social unrest, the same state augments its repressive apparatus, spending tremendous

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[11] I have received substantive help for this section from Dr. Maria Gkresta.
[12] 'Greece: When the state turns antifa', *Libcom.org*, 26/10/2013

amounts on police forces. However, the authorities are perceived to be impotent. If some parts of the society blame directly the state for the crisis, the widespread feeling is that the large amounts of illegal immigrants are the ones pressuring the welfare state. Gradually, a causal relationship between Greece's financial troubles and its immigrants was fabricated. [13] The Golden Dawn captured this issue started to capitalise on it. It posed itself as the only force that could handle and eliminate the danger posed by the immigrants.

There is a poignant connection between the Golden Dawn and the Greek state apparatus. Since the party got into parliament, it managed to infiltrate a number of institutions. The group can be considered to have considerable influence within the Greek police force.[14] The police had consistently been aiding the group in its actions against immigrants. In Athens, the Golden Dawn set up 'immigrant-free' areas in public squares, with backing from the Greek police. The authorities arrested immigrants who attempted to trespass these areas, and who had previously been violently attacked by far-right groups. In 2009, a church that was sheltering homeless immigrants was set on fire (Vradis and Dalakoglou, 2011: 81). According to some surveys,[15] one out of two police officers voted for the Golden Dawn, confirming the persistence of a historical relationship between the police and the far right in Greece (Xenakis, 2012). Following the murder of Pavlos Fyssas in 2013, a number of reports featured interviews of former Golden Dawn members. They were stating that the party organizes military camps where its members receive training by high ranking officers of the

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[13] One instance of the Greek state's racist policies is the case the immigrant sex workers accused of spreading HIV to Greek families, in May 2012; see Gkresta, 2013.

[14] A notable case is the torture of antifascists by the police in September 2012. Police officers threatened the protesters arrested that they would give their addresses to the Golden Dawn. Maria Marargonis, 'Greek anti-fascist protesters "tortured by police" after Golden Dawn clash', *The Guardian*, 09/10/2012, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/oct/09/greek-antifascist-protesters-torture-police

[15] *To Vima*, 19/06/2012, http://www.tovima.gr/society/article/?aid=463063

army.[16] These revelations pushed Dendias (minister of citizen protection) to order investigations of the army and police, in order to determine whether members of the party were indeed trained by standing officers.[17] As soon as the decision for the investigation was announced, two top officers of the Greek police resigned, citing personal reasons.[18] Also, the Financial and Economic Crime Unit of the Ministry of Finance is undertaking an investigation on the Golden Dawn's funding. The ongoing investigation examines evidence suggesting that businessmen, bankers and members of the clergy were providing funds to the party.[19]

The Golden Dawn group highlights the ways in which vigilante practices are everyday security practices. The group has an ambiguous relationship of simultaneous autonomy and affinity with the Greek state. It would be difficult to argue that its practices challenge the sovereignty of the state, since many of its members are part of the police, and since, as a political party, it is part of the parliament. The Golden Dawn vigilantes operate within the hegemonic discursive framework that the state and parts of the society endorse. This framework engenders xenophobic and racist attitudes, as well as hatred towards immigrants, disabled people and LGBTQ people.

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[16] See this translation of an interview with a former member of the Golden Dawn published originally in *Ethnos*, http://icantrelaxingreece.wordpress.com/2013/09/23/revealing-interview-with-a-former-golden-dawn-member-from-the-local-branch-of-nikaia/

[17] "Έρευνα στο στρατό για χρυσαυγίτες-εκπαιδευτές", *MEGA*, 22/09/2013, http://www.megatv.com/megagegonota/article.asp?catid=27371&subid=2&pubid=32024519 See also: Helena Smith, "Greece launches inquiry into claims Golden Dawn trained by armed forces", 24/09/2013, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/23/greece-inquiry-golden-dawn-armed-forces . On the relationship between the Golden Dawn and the Greek secret services, see: "Call for probe into Golden Dawn links with police and secret service", *Eleftherotypia*, 13/10/2013 http://www.enetenglish.gr/?i=news.en.article&id=1546&utm_source=EnetEnglish+general&utm_campaign=93c5dd865a-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_2d5bc1ed1e-93c5dd865a-23743089

[18] "Παραιτήσεις ανώτατων αξιωματικών της ΕΛΑΣ για τη Χρυσή Αυγή", *Naftemporiki*, 23/09/2013, http://www.naftemporiki.gr/story/703395

[19] "Το ΣΔΟΕ ψάχνει για ύποπτες συναλλαγές και επενδύσεις της Χρυσής Αυγής μέσω εταιρείας–μυστήριο στο Μαρούσι", *iefimerida.gr*, 19/09/2013, http://www.iefimerida.gr/node/126803#ixzz2idmXlTvQ . In the house of one of the businessmen that allegedly could be linked to the Golden Dawn, the police confiscated big amounts of weapons, knives and tasers. See: 'More Golden Dawn members arrested as MPs taken to jail', *Kathimerini*, 04/10/2013, http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_wsite1_1_04/10/2013_521719

At the same time, the group does challenge the established legal system, and it does seek to brand itself as an alternative to the social and security services offered by the state. This ambiguity is highlighted by the far-right politics embraced by the group. As a far-right political party, the Golden Dawn is able to occupy a median position between the state apparatus and the electorate.

Security with clear stated intentions

The usage of far-right discourses to underscore their actions points to the fact that the Golden Dawn has a set of clear and explicit intentions behind its security practices. These practices are in an intimate connection with the political and social beliefs that the group upholds. I will now show how the far-right ideology plays a crucial role in outlining the intentionality of vigilante security practices. Complementary, this argument will lead me to highlight the importance of the security demands that are articulated by the society at large, and are being picked up by groups such as the Golden Dawn.

Its affinities with the far-right ideology render the practices of the Golden Dawn a specific form of vigilantism. These affinities are: the group's adherence to racist discourses that criminalise immigrants based on their perceived cultural and ethnic differences; the group's engagement into practices of extreme violence based on these racist discourses; its discourses that criminalise social deviance, which is perceived to be embodied by LGBTQ and disabled people; its exacerbated nationalism, which takes the form of claims to unilateral property rights for Greek nationals inside the Greek territory; its co-optation of radical elements from the Greek police; its discourses of security, urgent threat and global conspiracy against the Greek people; its social work performed only for 'true' Greek citizens; and its profound antipathy and violent actions towards the radical Left.

In Greece, societal racism is manifested through violence and attacks against immigrants, scapegoating immigrants for the alleged increase in crime and through a general attitude of xenophobia and distrust towards foreigners who are not tourists. In terms of violent attacks, a Human Rights Watch report from 2012 gathered numerous testimonies of survivors, who were attacked not just by Golden Dawn forces, but also by unnamed street gangs. The survivors also speak of instances when they were 'approached menacingly, chased, slapped or otherwise lightly accosted, or spat on'. On the other hand, the report contains testimonies of 'Greek' residents, who claim that they do not feel safe on the streets because of the increasing numbers of immigrants in their neighbourhoods. Violent attacks are the tip of the racist iceberg. The everyday feelings of antipathy towards immigrants and foreigners are latent but consistent in some parts of the Greek society.

The success of the Golden Dawn at the 2012 national elections in crisis-ridden Greece has been partly attributed to the citizens' dissatisfaction with public institutions.[20] The Golden Dawn occasionally patrolled markets and smashed several stalls,[21] because they allegedly did not have the necessary licence.[22] Their acts enjoy the support of Greek vendors, who resent the government's perceived inability to crack down on illegal commerce.[23] The group kept extending its 'disciplinary' security practices, with the police encouraging citizens to seek its assistance in issues related to

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[20] A telling example can be seen in this video, "*The Golden Dawn cleaned up the square*", published on 19/04/2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zgr-fhHvt0. The Minister for Citizen Protection, Michalis Chrisochoidis, is being confronted by two security guards who state that the Attikis Square has been 'cleaned up' (of immigrants) not thanks to his action, but because of the Golden Dawn.

[21] Giorgos Germenis, a Golden Dawn parliamentarian, explained the reasons for these raids in the markets of Rafina (northeast of Athens). He said they reported to the police that some of the vendors were illegal immigrants, and then proceeded to do 'what the Golden Dawn had to do.' See *Euronews* – 'Greece's Golden Dawn attack market vendors', published on 09/0/2012,
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mEJULnQofc. A post related to the incident on the Golden Dawn web page states: 'The Golden Dawn members did tonight what the inexistent Greek state should have done long ago', http://www.xryshaygh.com/index.php/enimerosi/view/chrush-augh-paremporio-telos#.UZKlNMqwDoM, published on 08/09/2012

[22] However, according to Rafina's mayor, the immigrant vendors had valid licences. *To Vima*, 10/09/2012, http://www.tovima.gr/society/article/?aid=474074.

[23] Announcement on the website of the Street Vendors' Union in support of the "spontaneous 'checkmate delivery' by members of the Golden Dawn", 08/09/2012, http://www.sindikatomikropoliton.com/2012/09/blog-post_2561.html

immigrants.[24] The organization is alleged to have been behind attacks on immigrants that were legal residents in Greece, notably in the case of the assault in a house of Egyptian fishermen in June 2012.[25]

The group also explicitly targets homosexuals, as well as people with disabilities or mental disorders. It considers these groups to be responsible for the degeneration of modern society.[26] Recently, on the Golden Dawn website, an announcement was made against the Pride Festival, using vulgar characterizations for gay people.[27] In November 2012, three Golden Dawn MP's protested alongside with priests and citizens in front of a theatre where the play *Corpus Christi* would be staged. The play, directed by an Albanian national, was depicting Jesus Christ and the Apostles as homosexuals. The parliamentarians were filmed verbally harassing the play's participants and boarding on a riot police vehicle to release one of the detainees of the protest, while the police officer did nothing.[28]

On September 18th, 2013 Pavlos Fyssas, an antifascist rapper, was murdered by Giorgos Roupakias, a member of the Golden Dawn, after being confronted with an assault squad of approximately 30 people. In the aftermath of the murder, the Greek police raided the houses of Golden Dawn's parliamentarians, finding weapons and shields with the party's logo.[29] In the house of the MP

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[24] *The Guardian*, 28/09/2012, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/sep/28/greek-police-victims-neo-nazi

[25] *Occupied London*, 'Neonazi thugs of the Golden Dawn break into the house of Egyptian fishermen in the working class district of Perama, heavily injuring one', 12/06/2012, http://blog.occupiedlondon.org/2012/06/12/neonazi-thugs-of-the-golden-dawn-break-into-the-house-of-egyptian-fishermen-in-the-working-class-district-of-perama-heavily-injuring-one/

[26] Post on the blog of the Green Wing, the green part of the movement, 01/05/2007: http://oikologiko.blogspot.co.uk/2007_05_01_archive.html

[27] From the Golden Dawn web page, 31/03/2013, http://www.xryshaygh.com/index.php/enimerosi/view/suko-ki-ela-o-suriza-apeuthunei-kalesma-gia-to-fetino-gay-parade#.UZAwcrWG21y

[28] *TVXS*, 12/10/2012, http://tvxs.gr/news/ellada/kratos-en-kratei-i-xrysi-aygi-me-tin-astynomia-na-parakoloythei

[29] Κατασχέσεις όπλων στα σπίτια βουλευτών της Χρυσής Αυγής, *reporter.gr*, 30/09/2013. Available at: http://www.reporter.gr/Eidhseis/Politikh/item/229881-Mikro-oplostasio-sto-spiti-toy-boyleyth-Chrhstoy-Pappa-sta-Iwannina

Christos Pappas the police found helmets with SS insignia, Nazi flags and wine bottles with depictions of Mussolini.[30]

The Golden Dawn as a supplier of security

The Golden Dawn is able to articulate what 'the society' is – the 'indigenous' Greek population, who is under constant threat from immigrants and other 'enemies'. Using the far-right ideology, the group's practices are meant to provide a certain solution to their electorate's security demands. Rather than taking a security concern that is articulated only from the state agencies, the Golden Dawn claims to respond to grassroots requests for increased security against immigrants. This allowed the group to garner electoral power and infiltrate the state apparatus, thus thickening the legitimacy of its security practices.

The group is engaged in a variety of activities that complement its security practices, and that illustrate this articulation. It organizes food and clothes distributions, as well as blood donations, only for Greeks (requiring an ID card proving Greek nationality).[31] On the 24th of July 2013, the party had announced its intention to distribute food, defying a police ban to all public outdoor events in the area.[32] These Greek-only food hand-outs take place in the areas most affected by the economic crisis, where usually many immigrants live.

The party also set up a program called 'Doctors with Borders', with the intention of treating only Greek citizens and groups of its members visit hospitals to 'check' for undocumented immigrants

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[30] "Ναζιστικό μουσείο το σπίτι του χρυσαβγίτη Παππά (φωτογραφίες)", 30/09/2013, *left.gr*, available at: http://left.gr/news/nazistiko-moyseio-spiti-toy-hrysavgiti-pappa-fotografies.

[31] The Golden Dawn registers the personal data of the Greek citizens who benefit from this food distribution. See, for example, the process in this video, published on 13/11/2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSLYGZZVxrU

[32] 'Golden Dawn moves food hand-out following police ban', *Eleftherotypia* daily, 24/07/2012, http://www.enetenglish.gr/?i=news.en.article&id=1303

that might be engaged as private nurses.[33] It also recently organized the first in a series of 'Greek History Lessons' in a central hotel in Athens,[34] but also classes of Greek history and mythology where children 6 to 10 years old learn about 'the ancient Greek Pantheon and the Christian Faith.'[35] Cases of racist violence that have been documented at schools are attributed to the spread and appeal of the group's ideological positions among students.[36]

Right before the 2012 elections, on April 1st, the newspaper "*Proto Thema*" had on its front-page a picture of two old ladies withdrawing their pension from an ATM, accompanied by Golden Dawn members whom they had called for protection.[37] Prior to the attack on the Egyptian fishermen's house that I mentioned, at a local Golden Dawn meeting, one parliamentarian mentioned a number of complaints directed to the party's members, which were about the 'unaccountability' of Egyptian fish sellers.[38] In an interview taken at a Greek-only food hand-out, one person stated that due to unemployment, many members of the organization were aspiring to become its mercenaries and receive a salary for delivering 'hits' (like the one Roupakias did when he murdered Fyssas).[39] According to him, many people were sympathising with the Golden Dawn, because 'they were promising. They said they could help everyone.'[40]

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[33] *Eleftherotupia*, 10/04/2013, http://www.enet.gr/?i=news.el.ellada&id=356562
[34] The announcement/invitation from the Golden Dawn's webpage, published on 15/03/2013
http://www.xryshaygh.com/index.php/enimerosi/view/jekinoun-ta-mathhmata-ellhnikhs-istorias-apo-thn-chrush-augh#.UZAV7rWG21w
[35] From the Golden Dawn's webpage, published on 26/02/2013
http://www.xryshaygh.com/index.php/enimerosi/view/h-chrush-augh-tou-ellhnismou-pou-erchetai#.UZAUmrWG21w
[36] *Ta Nea*, 23/02/2013, http://www.tanea.gr/news/greece/article/5002747/xrysh-aygh-kai-ratsistikh-bia-eisballoyn-sta-ellhnika-sxoleia/
[37] The photo can be seen here: http://www.gargalianoi.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/70445435.jpg
[38] Video from Ioannis Lagos' speech in Perama, published on 11/06/2012,
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=AP8vIUxJ75k
[39] "ΧΡΥΣΗ ΑΥΓΗ", *enikos.gr*, 23/10/2013,
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=Xhwu_U08bjw
[40] Ibid., on 06:10' approximately.

This excursion through different instances of vigilantism, with a specific focus on the Golden Dawn, served to highlight the main problems of this thesis with concrete actions. In the next chapter, I will provide the theoretical support for my argument that vigilantism is a security practice that is at the same time quotidian and programmatic.

II. THE THEORETICAL AND POLITICAL STAKES OF STUDYING VIGILANTISM

First section: the question of vigilantism in the current debates in Critical Security Studies

Vigilantism is a security practice that is everyday and intentional. This argument diverges from the theoretical imaginaries of the two most established traditions in critical security studies. In this thesis I engage this argument politically and theoretically, in order to give a fuller texture of vigilantism as a security practice.

This chapter combines my theoretical, methodological and political frameworks of argumentation. It will provide theoretical support for my argument that vigilantism is a practice of security that is at the same time non-state and intentional. I show how this assertion cannot be accomodated within the prevailing sets of arguments within the Critical Security discipline. On the one hand, non-state security as a theoretical possibility is quite under-theorised. Using the existing theoretical concepts, it is quite difficult to envision security as being practiced by societal actors without the levels of capital possessed by the state. On the other hand, the concept of intentionality is highly problematic, as it points either to a overly-decisionistic approach, or to a thinning down of agency. I disect this concept in order to underline its important in an intersubjective view on security (one shared by all current lines of argumentation).

At the same time, I show how everydayness and intentionality also have methodological and political stakes for the study of vigilantism. I introduce the concept of security-scapes as a methodological tool used to analyse situations where vigilante groups operate alongside other agencies. Subsequently, I outline my political framework, which operates with the concepts of security demand and urban (in)security.

'Vigilantism is everyday security' (Security beyond the state)

Elitist security

In the traditional paradigm of security, the focus has been almost exlcusively on the state and its survival. Following a line of thought that was rooted in Hobbes and Locke, the discipline of Security Studies saw the reason of all domestic and foreign policy to be the preservation of the state as a form of collective organising that ensures peace within its borders and keeps enemies outside. This was translated as an analytical and empirical concern for national security, as the state was seen as the major actor in international politics (Grieco, 1988). As a correlate, the nation itself was regarded as the fundamental idea behind the state. National security, then, meant making the existence of the nation secure (Buzan, 1991: 70). In a world society of states, when each state successfully ensures its own security, a systemic balance occurs, which leads to peace.

In the aftermath of the Cold War, the pacifying potential of this idea was heavily contested. Critical voices argued not only that nationalism is a dangerous political ideology (Blechman, 1998: 296), but also that often the state is a source of conflict and insecurity for its own citizens. Instead of fulfilling its security/defence function, the state endangers the lives of its constituency. The study of security

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was thought to be too narrow to apprehend this dimension. It was also thought to be too narrow to include threats that do not directly address the 'idea' of the state, but that can damage infrastructure, health, livelihoods and so on.

Increasingly, the idea of the state as the main focus of security started to give in to a more wider concept, which could encompass different other priorities. I am not interested here necessarily in following the debates around the state as the referent object of security. What my purpose is, and what the stake of the previous two paragraphs was, is rather to trace the discussion of whether security can *come* from elsewhere, not only the state. In other words, can other actors have a say in security matters?

The stake here is actually the matter of social capabilities. Of course, the state has the monopoly of violence and also of social capital. As such, it is generally able to obtain enough legitimacy within the population and the international arena, so that its actions gain a wide acceptance and implementation. The problem then becomes whether security can be articulated by social actors that are endowed with lower levels of social capital than state agents. In the contemporary context, as it was outlined in the Introduction, the outsourcing of security to private and non-profit actors provides a way to go about this problem. Non-state actors are constantly practicing security. Yet at first sight it would seem that it these actors need the constant 'blessing' of the state in order to perform their actions successfully. As I will show in this section, non-elitist security practices seem to always 'regress' to some state agency.

One notable attempt to theorise the possibility of no-elitist security came from Barry Buzan and Ole Waever. During the 1990's, they introduced and developed the concept of 'societal security'. What sovereignty is to the state, identity is to society, and therefore the two constitute two different – even if at times intersecting – grammars of security.

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Society is defined by the securitization theory as a group of individuals bound together by a 'sense of belonging together' (Waever et.al., 1993: 17), a so-called 'we-feeling'. Therefore, security for a society will mean situations of threats perceived in identity terms; for a society a loss of identity is equated with a loss of its essential character, and it therefore becomes a threat to its survival. This has prompted consistent criticism that the theory reifies identity, and sees it as something essentially given, rather than as an ongoing practice; identity does not 'exist' as such, it is created and articulated by actors in instrumental ways (McSweeney, 1996). However, the theory emphasizes the sedimentation of identity discourses over time; the identity of a society is more than the sum of its individual identities, it is something new that can be grasped and analysed (Buzan and Waever, 1997). In order to do this, the focus should be on identities pertaining to larger social units, such as 'politically significant' nations, ethnic groups or religious identities (Waever et.al., 1993: 22).

The concept of societal identity has been initially developed outside a full-fledged theory of securitization, in what was still an attempt to make sense of the debate between traditionalists and agenda wideners. In the initial formulation there is a tension within the concept, between objectivism and subjectivism; this is translated as a contrast between 'real threats' and 'perceived threats' (Waever et.al., 1993: 43). Since the emphasis was more on the subjectivist side, the theory was criticised for infusing security studies with a morally problematic relativism, which would turn any perceived social threat – including racist and xenophobic fears – into security problems (McSweeney, 1996: 87 – 8).

However, when the concept was incorporated in the securitization theory (Waever, 1995: 65 – 71), this problem was addressed by positing the intersubjective character of societal security. Thus, rather than being only a matter of objective or subjective threats, the process of societal security was at this point explained through an interplay of subjective discursive articulations which need to become

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embedded in a larger social group in order to become viable, legitimate and 'real'. In other words, securitization shows how actors can 'speak' security on behalf of society through speech acts that follow the logic of establishing an existential threat (to identity) and suggest a set of emergency measures to deal with that threat.

The concept of societal security cannot escape elitism, and this becomes clear in the problem of the emergency measures. The question is: how does society defend itself from the existential threats to its identity? The securitization theory points to two possible ways of dealing with this question. First, society might turn to 'its' (or other) state for protection. In this case, the security of the society would be equated with that of the state, and therefore it would be subsumed under the defence of national sovereignty. The emergency measures needed for this defence would be deployed by the state, through its military institutions. This would, of course, mark a 'collapse' into the traditional military view of security, where the state is the referent object (Waever, 1995: 69).

Second, society might choose to defend itself. What means does society have for such a self-defence? The theory argues that culture is the most obvious way to alleviate threats to identity: 'For threatened societies, one obvious line of defensive response is to strengthen societal identity. This can be done by using cultural means to reinforce social cohesion and distinctiveness, and to ensure that the society reproduces itself effectively' (Waever, 1993: 192). Yet, it is difficult to see how cultural means can be effective enough for this task, ever more so since they can hardly be thought of as 'emergency measures' (Ciuta, 2009: 313). If culture is not a viable way of societal self-defence, what other means to deploy emergency measures does a society have beyond the state? Could the obvious conclusion be that it is not possible for societal actors to successfully securitize, since they do not have access to the state's policy avenues for declaring and implementing exceptionality? (Barthwal-Datta, 2009)

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The case of vigilantism points to a way in which societies might achieve self-defence through security measures. The vigilantes claim a right to 'take matters into their own hands', by using a variety of means which go beyond cultural defence to include policing, patrolling and even violence. Thus, vigilantism appears as a clear 'case' of societal security. Yet, as it will be shown later, vigilante groups still need the legitimacy of the state and of the society at large in order to achieve success for their security practices.

A related problem is that of the social 'voice'. Since society 'does not have institutions of formal representation', securitization theory claims that 'anyone can speak on behalf of society and claim that a security problem has appeared' (Waever, 1995: 69). This claim is consistent with the theory's reliance on the performativity of the speech act, which has, as it has been shown above, the social force to establish meanings without the need of actors having a position of formal authority. The problem, then, is what voices count more than others. The solution is found in different levels of public support some actors might have over others. Societies are comprised of different actors and institutions. In the case of state security, the state would speak for society, having a 'clear focus and a voice'. In the societal framework, the state is just one of many actors striving to be heard (Waever, 1993: 187 – 188). The question of 'voice' becomes one of legitimacy: 'We cannot predict who will voice "societal security" concerns; we can only see, with hindsight, how much legitimacy an actor did possess when s/he tried to speak on behalf of society. Various actors try this all the time, but the attempt becomes consequential on a different scale when society more or less actively backs up the groups speaking' (Waever, 1995: 70).

In spite of the relative complexity of the societal security concept, critics have highlighted the inherent state-centrism and elitism that persists at its heart. Because of the ultimate reliance on the state's capabilities for implementing security and the top-down approach, Ken Booth argued that

'securitisation studies suffer from being elitist. […] Those without discourse-making power are disenfranchised, unable to join the securitisation game' (Booth, 2007: 166 – 7). Barthwal-Datta (2009: 298) argues in the same vein that the situation where only those in power can take exceptional measures, the less powerful are systematically excluded from taking part in security decisions that affect their lives. In a similar vein, others have argued that the reliance on speech cannot accommodate the reality of those whose voices are not strong enough to be heard, or who cannot speak at all (Hansen, 2000). The elitism of societal security enacted through speech acts has been seen in this way as mostly a failure to include actors with less securitising capital.

Everyday Security

A different thrust of the elitist critique comes from an ontological viewpoint: security practices are not, in fact, only the prerogative of actors endowed with agency and capacity to decide. Rather, security is performed through myriads of technologies of surveillance and control that operate at a distance and are embedded in everyday contemporary life (Aas et.al., 2009). These technologies are invisible routines in which decision is dispersed, and the exceptionality of the securitising act is folded within daily transactions (Amoore and de Goede, 2008). In this way, the securitising capital of an actor is no longer important, because decisions are no longer crucial.

The theoretical move here is the 'flattening' the process of securitising in a way in which 'the topography of securitising becomes horizontal rather than vertical.' (Huysmans, 2010: 13, ftn. 12) The political rationale of security does not need to hearken back to a deciding actor or to a systemic purposeful structure, as Bigo (2008b: 124) argues. This argument is compatible with Bourdieu's sociology of the field: 'It is certainly not an elite, a group of the powerful imposing their agenda. It is the field that imposed itself on all the actors in the fields, including the dominant ones (Bigo, 2012:

121).' The 'elite', crystallised as 'the state' cannot be considered an actor, but a field of bureaucratic processes: 'the state does not act.' (Bigo, 2011: 248)

The non-elitist politics proposed here deplores the rupturing potential of the exceptionalist decision, which is associated with the act of speaking security (Huysmans, 2011: 375). Instead, security practices should be 'understood as infinitesimal mediations, as little nothings, dispersed in a continuously developing security bricolage'. (Huysmans, 2011: 378) This move opens up the analysis towards the focus on how daily activities are involved in the process of securitising (Aas et.al., 2009). As I will explore in the next section, this ontology of the everyday is articulated as a counterpoint to the perceived elitism of exceptionality, and its supporting tenet is the non-intentionality of securitising action.

This conceptualization of intentionality is an integral and essential part of the idea of security as an everyday practice. These three concepts – practice, everyday and intentionality – constitute the skeleton on which many of the authors who move away from a decisionist theory of security build their arguments. This is a move towards a sociological 'external' view on security processes. However, this view does not go much farther from the elitism of the Securitization theory. It reinforces the idea that only some actors are able to securitise, in virtue of their privileged positions in the social field. This reinforcement has two sources: the move towards objectivism and structuralism on the one hand, and the move towards non-intentionality on the other hand.

Exceptionality and Decisions

The concept of exceptionality performs two roles within the securitization theory. The first is to provide a way of solidifying the connection between the traditionalist view of security and the new security studies agenda. Exceptionality is equated to the logic of military intervention, which was at the core of traditional studies, and which Buzan et al. consider to be the objective logic of any security move (Buzan et.al., 1998: 26). In this sense, exceptionality implies that an issue becomes so threatening and stringent, that it requires the mobilization of all resources and the suspension of the normal course of action, in order to address that issue. In short, in matters of survival, decision makers have a free hand, since otherwise there will be no normal order to return to.

The second role of exceptionality is connected to the above discussion about speech acts. One of the facilitating conditions for a successful utterance lies in the speaker's position of authority and the social capital that comes with that position. This condition was later relaxed, and Waever claimed that the success of an act depended less on any formal position, but on the performative 'social magic' of the speech act, which is able to 'break the ordinary, to establish meaning that is not already in the context' (Waever, 2000: 286, footnote 7). Therefore, the concept of exceptionality – in its Schmittian definition – provides a grid through which the decisionist and creative nature of the speech act can be perceived (Huysmans, 1998: 579). The ability of an actor to 'create' new security meanings (friend-foe distinctions) through a speech act pertains to a pure (political) sovereign decisional act, as envisaged by Carl Schmitt.

Exceptionality is connected to a state-centred view on security, which coincides to the traditional frameworks of national security studies. The only actors that are apparently able to suspend the normal course of action and to 'decide on the exception' are, following Schmitt, members of a sovereign state. Even if everyone is able to create security meanings through speech acts, the means

to impose exceptional measures lie within the state apparatus. When the referent object ceases to be the state, exceptionality becomes problematic.

The tension between exceptionalism and everyday

Securitization operates, as Waever et. al. (1998) argued, by moving an issue from the political sphere to the exceptionalist and urgent realm, where emergency decisions to tackle the existential threat have to be taken. The speech act through which this move is made enacts a moment of political decision and creation (Huysmans, 2006). The speech acts of security are fundamental and exceptional decisions that belong to the realm of state sovereignty.

Conversely, Huysmans claims that 'securitizing in contemporary world politics develops significantly through unspectacular processes of technologically driven surveillance, risk management and precautionary governance' (Huysmans, 2011: 375). Security does not emerge from a singular and privileged place of agency, from where the speech acts are being uttered. Security decisions are being dispersed to such an extent that their origins get lost (Doty, 2007; Amoore and de Goede, 2008). Hence, Huysmans argues, security looks 'unspectacular, unexceptional, continuous and repetitive; instead of speech acts, we get the securitizing "work" of a multiplicity of little security nothings' (Huysmans, 2011: 376). Huysmans describes a landscape of security that is flattened with mundane and routine actions, where there are no decisive sovereigns, but myriads of activities that have obscure origins, since they are driven by automatism rather than decisionism. The concept that Huysmans uses to describe this landscape is the 'everyday'. This implies for him 'not simply a securitization of daily life […] but the active involvement of daily activities in the process of securitizing itself' (Huysmans, 2011: 377).

Didier Bigo has been researching the European security 'field' for more than two decades, and his observations about the intertwining of internal and external security practices have led him to state

that 'securitization works through everyday technologies, through the effects of power that are continuous rather than exceptional' (Bigo, 2002: 73). For him, security is a practice that involves specific actors with certain stakes that are not necessarily related to the eradication of existential threats. These actors are 'security professionals' that claim expertise based upon their knowledge of the 'field', knowledge that is based in turn on statistics, risk assessments, technological measurements and so on (Aradau and Van Munster, 2007; Daase and Kessler, 2007). Their interests are 'mundane' in the sense that they follow stakes which have more to do with gaining professional and symbolic capital in their own field, rather than with enunciating speech acts about existential threats (Bigo, 2008c: 25, 26). Following Foucault, Bigo and others are quick to proclaim that the 'King's head' was severed, and all that is left is a (political) body operating on its own. As the mechanism of a clock, society works through automated techniques in which all the parts play their own role (Bigo 2008a).

The idea of security as an array of 'everyday practices' is being posited in clear contra-distinction to the emphasis that the Securitization theory of Waever and Buzan places on exceptionalist speech acts. The c.a.s.e. collective manifesto admits a 'tension between exceptionalism and routinization' (c.a.s.e., 2006: 469). This 'tension' has been further elaborated by a number of authors who strive to move away from the exceptionalist view that sees security as articulated from a sovereign place of decision (see among others Basaran, 2008; Salter, 2008; Neocleous, 2006). What seems to be at stake here is not so much a different perspective on security, but one which is allegedly more in tune to the de-centralized reality of a world ran through practices of neo-liberal governance. And even more, for Huysmans in particular, the emphasis on the everyday seems to signify a move away from the exceptionalist politics of authoritarianism and dictatorial decision. This is not only a politics of arbitrarian authoritarianism, but it also implies 'an elitist vision of politics' (Huysmans, 2011: 375).

In this way, the 'everyday' of security practices is supposed to open the door to more casual and grass-root based processes of securitization. It is supposed to shed light on practices that usually do not make the news headlines: routine urban and border surveillance, the daily life in detention centres and prisons, the mundane technologies of passport and visa controls, the routinal security controls on airports and so on. As Huysmans puts it in the same article, these are 'little nothings dispersed in a continuously developing security bricolage' (Huysmans, 2011: 378).

To synthesise, the characteristics of this vision – the everyday practices of security – are the following: first, it implies a continuum of practices and discourses that range from insecurity to security, rather than an exceptionalist moment of rupture (Bigo, 2002: 73; 81). Second, it implies that security practices are being performed on a daily basis, not just in moments of perceived crisis (c.a.s.e., 2006: 466). Third, it implies that security permeates daily life not only through the exceptionalist apparatus of the state – war, military, and state of exception – but also (and mostly) through so called mundane practices and objects (Huysmans, 2011: 377). Fourth, this mundaneity implies that the everyday practices of security are largely un-reflected upon by most of the actors involved, they are taken for granted, seen as banal and even inevitable (Bigo, 2002: 69). Fifth, the everydayness of security fundamentally implies that the decisions that involve security practices and mechanisms are not centralized, they are not taken from single privileged places, but they are dispersed, and can often emerge from unexpected agents. For this reason, the sixth characteristic is the rejection of the elitist exceptional view on security, and the everyday posed as a realm where different actors have the ability to securitize, even in the absence of sovereign attributes, such as those usually possessed by the state (Doty, 2007).

'Vigilantism is intentional security practice'

I argue here that thinning down intentionality cannot provide the basis for a non-elitist perspective on security. Starting from the distinction made in the literature between exceptional and everyday security, this section addresses the question of intentionality. If exceptional security has an implicit programmatic character, this is then criticized and minimised by those who seek a more socially embedded approach. However, this move ends up with a thin version of intentionality that does not sit well with the strategic practices of vigilante groups. Vigilante groups perform intentional security practices, which are goal-oriented, conscious, programmatic and decisive.

The view that considers security as being performed at the level of everyday upholds the importance of context and audience for a successful securitization move. At the same time, this view simultaneously downplays the importance of the speaking actor. An illustrative instance of this is Balzacq's insistence on 'brute threats', which do not depend on language definitions for their existence (Balzacq, 2010: 12; 2005: 181). Balzacq writes that 'analyzing security problems becomes a matter of understanding how external contexts, including *external objective* developments affect securitization.'[41]

While this argument may come from a legitimate ontological standpoint[42], it is hard to see its relevance for a sociological framework of security[43] that posits the intimate interplay of agency and

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[41] In 'A Theory of Securitization', in 'Securitization Theory' , 2010, p. 13 (my emphasis)

[42] It seems to me that this standpoint is most likely close to critical realism, since it similarly emphasizes the existence of sedimented layers of 'reality' that are independent of our perception – an argument constructed in opposition to Kant's noumenal philosophy, and to post-Kantian and phenomenological philosophies (Patomäki and Wigh, 2002). It is useful to keep in mind, however, Jackson's critique (2011: 72-111) of the critical realist project, and also the developments of this project, made in principal by Bob Jessop (2008) and Colin Hay, which are explicitly concerned with the interplay between agency and structure (and on which, for example, Stritzel is much keen to draw on than Balzacq)

structure, ideas and material factors, language and 'out there' reality (Hay, 2002: 210).[44] Such an insistence moves the ontological framework towards structuralism. If this is the case, however, such a move shoots itself in the foot at the exact moment where it aims to correct the Securitization theory's 'elitism'. If in the securitisation perspective it was difficult to see how non-elite actors can successfully securitize, in the perspective of everyday security this possibility is rendered at best as a structural side-effect, and at worst, impossible.[45]

Balzacq is fully aware of this, when he argues that it is easier for elites to securitize because they have better access to means of propagating their ideas, and are also in a better position to gain legitimacy for their arguments (Balzacq, 2011b: 26). This is in tune with Bigo's view, which is grounded on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field. Bigo considers the practices of security to be performed, rather than articulated. However, this performance is done exclusively by state actors and security professionals, who act in virtue of the habitus of their respective fields (Bigo, 2002). Despite the move to the realm of everyday that such an argument entails, it is still hard to see how can actors that do not have such levels of social capital as the 'professionals' can perform security.

I argue that the main reason for this gap is the way in which Bourdieu's theory of social action is used to move the discussion away from Waever's reliance on decisionist speech acts. While Bourdieu's intention was to destabilise the ontology of centralized control and decision, he maintained an elitist position precisely where he was trying to overcome it. By embedding action in its social context and moving it away from self-referential individual acts, Bourdieu focuses on the

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[43] The entire project of opening up the framework to the 'social context' and the audience seems to be endangered, or made futile, by such a 'materialist' move.

[44] 'A dialectical understanding of the relationship between the ideational and the material is logically entailed by a dialectical understanding of the relationship between structure and agency.' (Hay, 2002: 210)

[45] In effect, the critics of Copenhagen School end up by positing all sorts of other agencies, apart from the (elite) speaking actor. See, for example, the recent discussions on materialities and their agency in securitization processes (Aradau, 2010)

sedimented conditions that facilitate performances. These conditions are translated into social positions that actors have. The better the position, the more chances of success the action has. Yet, as Butler argues, 'The force and meaning of an utterance are not determined exclusively by prior contexts or positions; an utterance may gain its force precisely by virtue of the break with context that it performs' (Butler, 1997: 145).

Bourdieu is keen to emphasize the ways in which social power is autonomous from personal agency. However, I am convinced of Butler's critique of this argument: 'By claiming that performative utterances are only effective when they are spoken by those who are already in a position of social power to exercise words as deeds, Bourdieu forecloses the possibility of an agency that emerges from the margins of power. His main concern is that the formal account of performative force be replaced by a social one; in the process, he opposes the putative playfulness of deconstruction with an account of social power that remains structurally committed to the status quo.' (Butler, 1997: 156)

For the proponents of everyday security, action is embedded in, and directed by social contexts. This creates a peculiar situation for agency. In an effort to move away from a decisionist model, agency and intentionality are being separated. Balzacq defines intentions as 'what the securitizing actor wants to achieve in articulating a specific utterance within a societal context' (Balzacq, 2011b: 25). If for Waever, security seems to emerge from an actor that speaks and 'does' her or his own intentions, for those who view security as a flattened set of dispersed practices, actorness and intention cannot be pinned down to particular identifiable places. Intentions get lost, they backfire, or they are determined by structural factors. Even if (some) actors might be free to act within a certain repertoire, their intentions get lost in the effects of the structure. As Huysmans argues, 'the actions of the security professionals resulted in a transnational institutional network that is an unintended effect of their self-interested, instrumental action and professional dispositions.' (Huysmans, 2002: 56)

Far from denying the obvious structural effects on social action, which are able to influence behaviour so that *some* intentions get permutated (Hay, 2002: 127-134), we should still be able to discern a grain of free will in agents' behaviour (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Yet if their behaviour is only guided by habitual and un-reflected practices, the resulting picture is that of automatons who only perform a pre-determined script that they don't even get to choose. This is correlated with a convergent point, which relates to what Bigo and Huysmans actually want to shed light on: namely, the actions of actors that do not belong to the elites or the 'middle-classes', or in Scott's terms, 'of the weak'. But does not such a view of the 'weak' – as non-reflexive, non-intentional, without any vision of 'higher' structures, just living from one day to another, with narrow ('local') horizons (all these are characteristics that are to be found in James Scott's accounts) – merely reinforce a whole set of negative stereotypes about the poor and under-privileged, as being incapable of seeing beyond their condition? (Lipset1963: 109 – 110)

The problem of intentionality is related to the other four established logics of action in International Relations: the logic of consequences, appropriateness, argumentation and the logic of practice. Intentionality is a fundamental assumption of all these three logics. According to the logic of consequences, actors follow their own interests and seek to maximize their gains (Fearon and Wendt, 2006: 61). The choices that they make are 'intentional and anticipatory' (March and Olsen, 1984: 736). The decisions of political actors are a process that is 'developing a sense of purpose, direction, identity and belonging.' (March and Olsen, 1984: 737-8). This of course does not presuppose absolute free agency, as self-interest can often collide with obstacles posed by the environment or context; this may result in a divergence of the consequences from the initial intentions, but this is not to deny those intentions as being prior to action, as the logic of practice does.

Within the logic of appropriateness, actors are following rules, norms and identities that they have previously internalized. Here, action is driven not by strategic calculations, but by the need to adjust the behaviour to existing identities or roles (Fearon and Wendt, 2006: 60). Intentionality can be detected here as well, because even if the normative sets are being completely internalized, actors are still able to choose what behaviour is appropriate in which situation: 'appropriateness need not attend to consequences, but it involves cognitive and ethical dimensions, targets and aspirations' (March and Olsen, 1998: 951).

The logic of arguing implies that actors deliberate between appropriate norms in order to decide what the best way of action is (Risse, 2000: 6-7). Argumentation can lead to changes in preferences, interests and perceptions. Crucially, argumentation implies that actors seek to challenge and justify their interests and values (Risse, 2000: 7; 13). For this reason, intentionality is clearly present here as well, in the form of actors' active and transparent pursue of the determinate goal of convincing and justifying.

I will now turn to the link between intentionality and the logic of practice. In a 2008 article, Matt McDonald discusses the limitations of the Securitization theory, in the form that it has been laid out by Buzan and Waever. He argues that the theory' proponents 'portray a securitizing move as a highly intentional, strategic action' (McDonald, 2008: 569). The entire vision of security as an everyday practice seems to gravitate around this criticism. Security as a mundane practice is a move away from security as strategic and intentional action, performed by goal-oriented actors. Thus, the concept of intentionality becomes the stake of the matter. Balzacq defines intentions as 'what the securitizing actor wants to achieve in articulating a specific utterance within a societal context' (Balzacq, 2010: 25). If for Waever, security seems to emerge from an actor that speaks her or his own intentions, for those who view security as a flattened set of dispersed practices, actorness and

intention cannot be pinned down to particular identifiable places. Intentions get lost, they backfire, or they are determined by structural factors.

The theoretical infrastructure for this view on intentionality is provided by the concept of security as practice. The logic of practice is a relatively new input from other disciplines in International Relations (Neumann, 2007; Pouliot, 2010). Its roots stem mostly from pragmatic philosophy (Charles Peirce and Ludwig Wittgenstein) and the sociology of the everyday (De Certeau, 1984; Scott, 1985; 1998; Bourdieu, 1992). As a general tenet, it intends to look at how social meanings emerge out of the actors' daily activities and interactions. These activities are conducted by 'self-evident' rules and norms that are largely un-reflected upon, rather than by purposeful, instrumental or rule-based action (Pouliot, 2008: 258). The practical knowledge of agents is therefore one not bound by pre-determined theories, but one that is improvisational, non-generalizable, non-representational, one that can barely be expressed in words, and fundamentally, one that is largely un-reflected upon (De Certeau, 1984; Scott, 1988; Neumann, 2002; Merand, 2012).

When it is applied to the study of security, the logic of practice sheds light on an entire array of mechanisms that work behind the designations of threat and emergency measures. Instead of focusing on one particular moment of exceptionality, or on the actual utterance of the speech act, the logic of practice is able to illustrate the continuum of security mechanisms (Stritzel 2007), the processes through which security is embedded in the social and anthropological dimensions (Huysmans, 1998) not just in the political ones. It is also able to account for multiple usages of security, according to different contexts, time frames and areas of activity (Bubandt 2005; Ciută 2009). The logic of practice shows how actors use security artefacts in their daily activities. Thus, more concretely, the focus is moved from 'speakers' of security, to 'doers' of security. These range from the think-tank experts who compile data and risks, to those who design security infrastructure

(such as urban planners or electronic surveillance developers) and even to ground-level employees such as border guards or soldiers.

These categories of agents do not have the social capital or capabilities to securitize an issue in the way that the Securitization theory shows. Rather, their practices are articulated together in what Bourdieu called the habitus of their respective professional field (Bourdieu, 1992). As a set of internalized and un-reflected beliefs, the habitus pre-disposes agents to act in particular ways, with the ultimate goal of maximizing their level of capital. The habitus engenders a severance between the actor's interests and intentions and the outcomes of their actions. As Bigo argues, 'the results of the 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 making, as the result depends on the field effects of many actors engaged in competition for defining whose security is important, and of acceptance of different audiences of their definition.' (Bigo, 2008b: 124).

Borrowing the concept of governmentality from Foucault, the proponents of the practice turn in security studies see the thick structuring effect of security discourses as crucially limiting the repertoire of action for actors. Thus, Huysmans argues that 'the autonomous self-interested practice sustains a structure of interaction that guarantees the free conduct of the individual agencies. This structure is reproduced non-intentionally as an outcome of striving to maximize individual utility. It is beyond the grip of individual agency.' (Huysmans, 2004: 304). Intentionality and agency part ways here. Even if (some) actors might be free to act within a certain repertoire, their intentions get lost in the effects of the structure. Huysmans again: 'The actions of the security professionals resulted in a transnational institutional network that is an unintended effect of their self-interested, instrumental action and professional dispositions.' (Huysmans, 2002: 56)

The concepts of 'habitus' and 'governmentality' guide the argumentation about intentionality in the logic of practice applied to security. This argumentation can be summed up in three main points: First, the interests of the actors are lost in the workings of the structure they reproduce. This is not meant to bring in the un-solvable debate of agency and structure. It is only meant to detach the concept of intentionality from that debate, and follow its usage in the logic of practice. For its proponents, it is not agency per se that is being sacrificed by this logic, but intentional and purposeful action. Second, the practice of agents generates un-intended consequences. This does not necessarily imply a demise of intentionality; on the other hand, individual intentionality becomes again lost, this time in the myriad of practices that lead to unexpected results. Third, the logic of practice implies that action has a certain un-reflexive core. Whether it is called *metis* or *habitus*, this core involves a practical knowledge 'of the game' that the actors cannot explain (Scott, 1998: 329; Guillaume 2011: 461). Or, as Pouliot claims, 'practical knowledge is unconscious because it appears self-evident to its bearer.' (Pouliot: 2008: 271) Here, intentionality is completely abandoned, as agents' actions are driven by internalized practical skills that are performed in an automatic manner (Bourdieu, 1996: 272-3).

Actors and sovereign decisions

The fact that intentionality plays such a crucial role in the everyday sociology of security is due to a certain reading of the Securitization theory, against which the idea of the everyday practices is being posed. This reading sees a strong decisionist kernel in Waever's arguments about the exceptionality of security and speech acts. It is in contrast to this decisionism that Huysmans and the others attempt to 'flatten' security and to show how it works according to less exceptional and sovereign acts, and

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more mundane and dispersed practices. The decisionism referred here is part of the theoretical legacy of Carl Schmitt, who articulated a controversial theory of sovereignty and politics.

The link between the Securitization theory and Schmitt's thought was emphasized by Michael Williams (2003). He claimed that the understanding of security as an exceptional act that brings about a situation of emergency 'has deep roots in Schmitt's understanding of political order'[46] (Williams, 2003: 515). Other critics of the Securitization theory quickly picked up on that (Aradau, 2004: 389), in order to underscore the uni-dimensional dimension of the speech act as depending solely on the speaking actor's decision and intentions, expressed through the performative qualities of the speech act (Balzacq, 2005; Stritzel, 2007, 2012). These critics join their voices in deploring the blindness of Waever's theory to things outside the securitizing actor, such as audience or context.

At a closer and fairer look however, Waever is very careful to avoid the trap of over-reliance on the actor. He states explicitly, albeit in a footnote: 'since securitization is never (in contrast to Schmitt) decided by one sovereign subject but in a constellation of decisions it is ultimately inter-subjective and irreducible to causal background factors.' (Waever, 2000: 286) What is at stake here is exactly the distinction between decisionism and everyday-ness, as used by Huysmans and Bigo, among others. Capitalizing on this contrast is only possible if one brackets out Waever's insistence on this 'constellation of decisions' that make up a security problem. If we indeed attribute the Securitization theory a uni-dimensional focus on the intentional decision of the speaking actor who articulates the threat, then the association to Schmitt and sovereign decisionism may be valid; thus, the door is indeed open to a set of criticisms that touch upon the elitism, lack of democratic sensibility, ignorance of the role of audience and context, and contrast these with the dispersed and mundane

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[46] I am aware of the complexities of Schmitt's political thought, yet due to space concerns I am not able to do justice to the full extent of his theory here.

everyday practices of security. But if we take Waever seriously, we may have to admit that the Securitization theory explicitly avoids this uni-dimensional focus on actors: 'Successful securitization is not decided by the securitizer but by the audience of the security speech act.' (Buzan et al., 1997: 31). Also, 'a successful speech act is a combination of language and society, of both intrinsic features of speech and the group that authorizes and recognizes that speech.' (Buzan et al., 1997: 32)

This is not to say that the theory does not presume a certain level of autonomous decision on the part of the speaking actor – quite the contrary, the speech act is recognized to have the power to break the rules of the game and establish a new order (Derrida; Butler, 1997). But this happens if and only if the securitizing speech act is successful. If it is not, the speech act remains at the level of a securitizing move (Buzan et al., 1997: 25). Anybody can articulate securitizing moves – this is part of a vision of individual agency achieved through language – but it is not given that these moves will result in actual security situations of emergency and exceptionalism. In contrast, for Schmitt, the sovereign decides unilaterally on the exception, without the need for background conditions. He or she has the absolute power to decide between friends and enemies.

It is interesting to observe here that the influence of Schmitt is considered to be doubled through Waever's reliance on Derrida and Butler. Stritzel argues that these two authors' influence on the securitization theory is reflected in its 'stress on the always political and indeterminate nature of the speech act event, whose meaning and performative force is not related to its context' (Stritzel, 2007: 361). However, philosophers like Camil Ungureanu have been carefully distancing Derrida from Schmitt, by arguing that Derrida does not espouse Schmitt's absolutism. Rather, 'for Derrida, the fact that every speech act comes with a criticisable validity claim implies that normative contexts and frameworks are never fully saturated, self-transparent and closed.' (Ungureanu, 2007: 307)

The fundamental difference between Schmitt and Waever is the vision of the political. While for the German philosopher, the political is an autonomous sphere that is defined by conflict with an enemy that poses the threat of death (Schmitt, 1996: 26); for Waever the political is explicitly 'productive, irreducible and happens among people as an unpredictable chain of actions. […] it is always about action that relies on others' actions before it generates some result.' (Waever, 1990: 16; Waever 2011: 468). Quite far from Schmitt, this vision is explicitly Arendtian (or even Habermasian, when Waever insists on the importance of deliberation).

What is at stake here is not an apology of the Securitization theory, or a rehearsal of old debates. Rather, it is to underline the fact that some of its critics have taken a misguiding starting point, and thus ended up at a delusory destination. The idea of security practices as being non-intentional and non-reflective is based on an explicit contrast with a wrongfully assessed perspective over the decisionist aspect of the Securitization theory.

If there is anything rotten in Denmark, it is not the focus on the actor, but the concept of intersubjectivity itself. Posited as a solution to the choice between subjective and objective articulations of security, intersubjectivity as a concept is never explained in the theory. Waever picks it up from a tradition of constructivism in IR that was already flourishing at that time, which uses the term almost as an amulet that can guard off the charges of essentialism and ensure the desired middle ground between this or that other mainstream theories (Wendt, 1992: 394; 401). Therefore, it is essential that intersubjectivity as a concept is further researched and refined. At the same time it is essential to emphasize the role of intentionality within the concept of intersubjectivity. The next section will do just that.

Second Section: Intersubjectivity and intentionality

This section shows how intersubjectivity and intentionality are linked concepts. There is always an intentional moment in the intersubjective construction of social facts. Concretely, this means that once the importance of social intersubjective contexts is upheld, as Huysmans, Balzacq, Bigo and others are right to do, social action cannot be seen as devoid of individual agency and intentional decision. Conversely, this individual agency is never attached to a Cartesian Ego, but is negotiated in a social space, where the self is always fractured and open. More concretely even, if vigilantism is a security phenomenon that is embedded in a myriad of other practices and discourses, it still preserves a programmatic character, which is negotiated as a form of security provision to the population. This conceptual section reaffirms this programmatic character of vigilantism, and it seeks to strengthen the intentional component of intersubjectivity, without losing sight of the social embeddedness of security practices.

Regarding the facilitating conditions of a securitizing speech act, Ole Waever argues that 'securitization is ultimately constituted in the inter-subjective realm and therefore even very important conditions for successful securitization cannot replace the political act as such' (Waever, 2000: 252). And then in the footnote to this sentence: 'Or at the risk of moving very close to a Schmittian *dezisionismus:* the very choice about whether to make something a case of security is irreducible. And – in order to avoid simply moving from objective to subjective – it should be stressed that since securitization is never (in contrast to Schmitt) decided by one-sovereign subject but in a constellation of decisions, it is ultimately inter-subjective and irreducible to causal background factors' (Waever, 2000: 286). Again, in the space of the same paragraph, there is an apparent contradiction – how is this possible?

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How can one put together the decisionist moment of security articulation by the sovereign subject with the intersubjective nature of security? The clue is provided in a future footnote on the same page: 'A speech act holds the insurrecting potential to break the ordinary, to establish meaning that is not already in the context. […] While it is important to study social conditions of successful speech acts, it is necessary always to keep in mind the possibility of failure […] Therefore, the issue of "who can do security" and " was this a case of securitization?" can only be judged in hindsight' (Waever, 2000: 286). Here, Waever engages Bourdieu and Butler, claiming that the former's insistence on social background has to be relaxed in the face of the performativity of speech advocated by Butler.

1. The common history of intersubjectivity and intentionality

Intersubjectivity and intentionality are inter-related concepts. They have what can be called a common history, and they are both deeply rooted in the philosophical school of phenomenology. This section will provide a short sketch of this common history and development, without of course any claim to be exhaustive. This common history will be traced by focusing on two crucial points: the elaboration of the phenomenological theory by Husserl, and the Searle – Derrida debate, which was focused mostly on the problem of intentionality.

The most comprehensive exposition of Husserl's view on intersubjectivity is laid out in the Fifth Cartesian Meditation (Husserl, 1995: 89 - 150). As a starting point, he tackles the fundamental critique against phenomenology: solipsism.[47] If, as phenomenology claims, the world is only a representation of the ego, how is it possible to have other independent subjects, whose existence is

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[47] The challenge of solipsism goes as follows: if, as phenomenology claims, the world is only a representation of the ego, how is it possible to have other independent subjects, whose existence is not the result of the ego's mind? In other words, other egos are not reducible to the representations one has of them. The problem of solipsism can be translated to the Securitization theory as well, in the shape of the emphasis on the sovereignty of the speaking subject. That is to say that the Copenhagen School's idea of the speech act that articulates a threat almost 'ex nihilo', just by the performative power of the speaking actor, suffers from a lack of attention towards conditions and contexts outside the actor's subjectivity.

not the result of the ego's mind? In other words, other egos are not reducible to the representations one has of them.[48] Husserl transforms solipsism from an objection to an argument and a starting point in his demonstration. At first, the subject/ego is abstracted from everything that is given to him/her as alien. As Ricoeur explains, 'this primordial sphere [of ownness] must be understood at once to be the terminus of a purification and the departure point for a constitutional performance' (Ricoeur, 1967: 122). What is at stake now is how, from such pure state of subjectivity, the ego manages to comprehend the existence of the Other, while at the same time remaining within the phenomenological philosophical requirements of the transcendental being rooted in primordial experience. The Other must be grasped as an analogue of the self, thus with the tools of subjective perception alone, without positing any metaphysical existence.

At this point, it is important to underline Husserl's emphasis on the intentionality of the ego. For him, the ability of the ego to be conscious and achieve pure subjectivity is given primarily by intentionality. At the same time, the comprehension of the Other is also given by intentionality, in an outward vector of consciousness towards the objective world (Koestenbaum, 1985: xxvii).

Husserl describes this analogical grasping of the Other in three stages. First, the body of the Other appresents itself (synthetically) to the ego as another life. This body is apprehended as identical to the ego, and at the same time distanced in time and space from the ego – the Other is at first a duplicate of the self. Second, through the perception of the Other body's discordant behaviour – analogous with, yet different from the ego's, the contours of the Other as a different monad become clearer (Husserl, 1995: 114 - 115). Third, the space/time dimensions of the Other become clear to the ego: the subject is 'here', but the Other is 'there'; this 'brings to mind the way my body would look if

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[48] The problem of solipsism can be translated to the Securitization theory as well, in the shape of the emphasis on the sovereignty of the speaking subject.

I were there' (Husserl, 1995: 118). Hence, the realization that the other life is not the self's original production, but a reproduction through imagination and sympathy (Ricoeur, 1967: 129). Moreover, in this way, the Other is apprehended solely on a phenomenological grounding. Yet this entails that the self-other relationship is, at this point, asymmetrical and non-reciprocal, since the Other is only a projected ego.

Husserl brings in the concept of intersubjectivity to describe a 'community of monads'. This community starts from the acknowledgement by the ego that the projected body of the Other and the objective nature of the Other are one and the same. In other words, the Other is not only the projection of the ego, but it has an objective existence as well. As such, the Other shares the objective world with the ego, as the surrounding Nature constituted at first by the physical space between the two bodies (Husserl, 1995: 122). Therefore, as soon as the objective world is separated from the subjective ego's perception, the Other gains a distinct independent existence, transcendentally different than the ego's. Furthermore, the ego soon realizes that as it perceives the Other as a projection of the self, so does the Other perceives the self as its own projection. From this results the crucial conclusion that 'I am Other among Others' (Husserl, 1995: 130; Ricoeur, 1967: 136). Intentionality is intrinsically present in this process of discovering the Other: the existence of alterity can only be consciously apprehended through an intentional discovery of the self-ego, and the conscious experience of ownness (Ricoeur, 1967: 119-20).

The basis for the intersubjective community is thus laid: human relations are grounded in reciprocity of standpoints, because each ego discovers that the same objective world can be grasped from the different point of view of the Other. And even though the consciousness might be different in each ego, the objective world is the same. Hence, between the level of the objective world of nature (which is perceived similarly by all egos), and that of the subjective representations of the ego, there

is the level of the community of monads, which Husserl calls 'transcendental intersubjectivity' (Husserl, 1995: 130). This is constituted as the same community in every ego, but with a different subjective mode of appearance. Such a community entails a reciprocity of standpoints that leads to objectifying equalizations among the subjects (Ricoeur, 1967: 136). In other words, there can be no more privilege of a single ego's perspective. At the same time, reciprocity leads to the objective categorization of all the subjects as Others.

Jurgen Habermas uses Husserl's idea of an intersubjective world to derive his theory of communicative action. He starts by providing a twofold critique of Husserl: his phenomenological insistence on subjective apprehension actually 'begs the question of intersubjectivity, which he cannot derive on the assumptions of assumptions of a philosophy of consciousness' on two accounts. First, the relation of similarity between the ego's body and the Other's can only be perceived after the ego has objectified its own body as an element of nature (Habermas, 2001: 40). Second, there is an inherent asymmetry between the self and Other, resulting from the methodological postulate of the phenomenological solitary subjective reflection (Habermas, 2001: 43). The point of reference for the phenomenologist's perception is always the 'ur-ego', the primordial self. Having said this, Habermas outlines his theory of communicative action on the basis of what he perceives as missing from Husserl's account on intersubjectivity: 'identical meanings', as communicated and shared by subjects, having the same validity for all of them. Consequently, he focuses on speech and discourse as the vehicles that convey such meanings, and puts forward the idea of speech acts as mediating society's constitutive processes (Habermas, 2001: 85). Any rational consensus within a society – any intersubjectively established meaning – must be based on the anticipation of an ideal speech situation. This entails a 'symmetrical distribution of opportunities for all possible participants to

choose and perform speech acts' (Habermas, 2001: 98). It also entails that speakers deceive neither themselves nor others about their intentions.

Hence, for Habermas, intersubjectivity presupposes a strict equality of opportunities and positions among subjects, with the ultimate purpose of enabling rational discourse and communication. In his account, the intersubjective level consists of free, equal, self-sufficient subjects that have shared subjective understandings. The constitution of these subjects is, similarly to Husserl's account, taken for granted as a given. It is the work of Jacques Derrida that challenges this hypothesis, and provides arguments for the incompleteness of any ego.

Derrida starts from Husserl's distinction between indication and expression, between non-discursive and discursive signs (Derrida, 1973: 20). While expression is connected to language and exteriorization, indication is the basis for the analogous apprehension of external objects as similar to the ego – as discussed earlier. This distinction leads Derrida to question the entire notion of speech in Husserl's theory of intersubjectivity. In taking solipsism as a starting point and grounding the experience of the Other in a primordial state of independent ego that speaks to itself (soliloquises), Husserl attempts to exclude indication from speech, and to favour expression (Derrida, 1973: 48). In the soliloquy, the ego communicates nothing to itself, because there is no need of it. The ego only represents itself, as presence of consciousness is identical to self-presence of experience. This identity occurs instantly, 'in the blink of an eye' (Derrida, 1973: 59). However, Derrida questions this non-alterity, arguing that the actuality of the living present cannot be accepted, since there is always a 'trace' of the past and the future in any ego. In other words, the actual present always escapes the experience, and so the possibility of repetition ad infinitum that non-alterity should grant, is rendered impossible (Derrida, 1973: 67). Derrida uses the concept of '*differance*' to capture the

infinite alterity present in the repetition of conscious presence: the possibility of identity is always deferred by an intrinsic difference within the subject/ego itself (Derrida, 1973: 100-2).

As such, for Derrida, the subject can never be fully autonomous, and the ideal monologue within the self, as a form of speech with, through expression, constitutes the Other, is impossible. The subject is always incomplete, always exposed to the exterior world. Crucially, this exposure is done through speech, as the contingency of discourse always leaves a trace of incompleteness. To quickly glance back to the Securitization theory, it is here that the divide between subjective and intersubjective can be bridged. Contrary to what the critics of the theory argue, there is no contradiction between the subjective articulation of security speech acts, and the need for security to be intersubjectively amended by the audience. Following Derrida, no speech is purely subjective, and no ego is fully autonomous from the already existing intersubjective community.

Judith Butler takes Derrida's conclusions further, and argues that the openness of the (speaking) subject means a loss of control over the speech. This loss of control means that speech may be thought of as having an independent force of its own. In Butler's words – 'agency begins where sovereignty wanes' (Butler, 1997: 16). She conceptualizes the intersubjective realm as a plane of existence where context is never static, and speech is always able to shape reality.[49] 'Not only defined by social context, such speech is also marked by its capacity to break with context. Thus, performativity has its own social temporality in which it remains enabled precisely by the contexts from which it breaks' (Butler, 1997: 40). Moreover, a speech act is able to return to its own speaker in a changed form, thus questioning the performative agency of the subject. The speech act is 'deflected' by the addressed, acquiring a new 'excitable' force (Butler, 1997: 39). Finally, the subject

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[49] Contra Balzacq, which claims that discourse has no power over subjective reality (Balzacq, 2005: 181). In many ways, this is a legitimate theoretical option, but as it is argued here, it is not compatible to the general thrust of the Securitization theory.

itself – as can already be seen from Derrida's account – has no meaningful existence before speech; the subject is constituted through speech and interpellation (Butler, 1997: 33-4). Therefore, social capital or capabilities are exceeded by the force of the performative discourse, thus allowing for those who are not authorized, to speak, to articulate, to talk back and to resist interpellations (Butler, 1997: 159).

The concept of intersubjectivity is not merely a bringing together of subjects. It entails a double supplement – one exterior and one interior to the intersubjective community. The exterior supplement is the resulting set of meanings and understandings that are more than the sum of individual subjective perceptions. They constitute a delimited world – always in flux – a social context, which is at the same time obstructing and enabling behaviour. The interior supplement is the circulation of discourse among subjects, a discourse which always acquires new meanings and new power than it was originally intended. Thus, discourse is not of the subjects, but between them, as a distinct force that constitutes subjects and identities, and allows space for these subjects to act meaningfully.

The concept of *differance* is used by Derrida to question Husserl's (and the phenomenological tradition) dependence on the intentionality of the ego. He poses the following problem: how is the intention of the ego (and thus its identity) communicated in the absence of the ego – in the case of written text, for example? (Derrida, 1988: 7) *Differance* ('distance, divergence, delay') is the absence of the writing ego for the reader, and of the reader audience for the writer; and this *differance* 'must be capable of being carried to a certain absoluteness of absence' in order for written communication to exist. Writing must continue to be readable, repeatable and iterable and express intentions even in the absence of the author or the receiver (Derrida, 1988: 8). From this property of the text results its autonomy, its ability to 'break with its context' (Derrida, 1988: 9). Thus, cutting short Derrida's

argument, the conclusion is that intentionality gets subdued; it loses its primary role in the communication of the ego (to itself and to the other). The ego cannot ensure the immediate fulfilment and actualization of its intentions, because speech and text acquire a meaning of their own, independent of this intentionality (Derrida, 1988: 56). 'What is limited by iterability', he argues, 'is […] its character of being conscious or present to itself (actualized, fulfilled, and adequate)'. (Derrida, 1988: 105)

The intentionality of the actor cannot be separated from an intersubjective ontology of social action.[50] Intersubjectivity cannot legitimize structural arguments that do away with intentional agency. Neither can it support a purely subjective view of solipsistic intentional action. I am thus not arguing here for an unconditional appraisal of intentionality. What I highlight is the necessity to be reflective about the interplay between an actor's intentions in realizing her actions, and the hurdles and limitations that render this realization insecure. The problem of intentionality does not end here, however, and the next section will take the discussion to the level of micro-actions.

2. Self-referentiality and programmatic action

John Searle provided one of the most resonant critiques of Derrida's view on intentionality. He argues that Derrida is misled to posit the waning of intentionality in the absence of the writing actor, because 'intentionality plays exactly the same role in written as in spoken communication' (Searle, 1977: 201), and what is different is merely the role of the context in the case of writing. Searle posits

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[50] As argued, for example, by Guzzini (1993: 465).

that there is no 'gulf at all between the illocutionary intention and its expression' (Searle, 1977: 202). The intentions are being formed in the process of articulating the speech. However, he also argues that intentions do not need to be all conscious, and his general theory of intentionality expands and explores the conditions under which meanings and actions are being (per)formed. In particular, he posits the existence of the 'background', which is 'a set of nonrepresentational mental capacities that enable all representing to take place', and which consists of abilities 'that are not themselves Intentional states' (Searle, 1983: 143).[51] Furthermore, Searle argues that the meaning of intentional acts have to be recognized as such by some audience (Searle, 1983: 171). He does not deny the existence of unintentional actions, but claims that these actions do not signal the fading away of intentionality, only that there can be features of action that are not 'within the field of possibility of intentional actions of the agent as seen from our point of view' (Searle, 1983: 102).

Searle distinguishes between prior intentions and intentions in action. The problem with his account comes when he claims that 'both prior intentions and intentions in action are causally self-referential' (Searle, 1983: 85; see also Harman, 1999: 55). He sustains this argument by looking at speech act theory, which claims that the performative effect is dependent on the audience to which it is addressed, and can even – in Derrida's view, for example – fail if the audience does not respond.[52] However, Searle, argues that even in the case of a speech act failure, self-referentiality means that the intentions behind the speech act are still valid and noteworthy, because the prior intentions act causally upon the intentions in action (idem: 86; 94).

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[51] The idea of background pre-intentional meanings gets very close to the concept of habitus behind the logic of practice. Yet there are crucial differences. Whereas Pouliot, for example, claims that the background is 'nonrepresentational and prereflexive [being] only activated in and through practice' (Pouliot, 2008: 267), Searle argues explicitly that the background 'enable[s] Intentional contents to work' (Searle, 1983: 158). The array of intentional acts (in Searle's parlance, the 'network') 'shades off' into the background (Searle, 1983: 151).

[52] For example, if an actor A gives and order to actor B, the success of the speech act depends on B obeying the order. But if B had already intended to perform the action even prior to the order, or if B simply refuses to obey, then the speech act fails, because its perlocutory function is not fulfilled.

This view came under attack from those philosophers of action who distinguished between the behaviour that follows a plan and the behaviour that fits a plan (Mele, 1987: 312). There can be cases where an actor may intend to follow a plan, but ends up in an almost accidental way performing an action that coincides to the initial intentions, but cannot be thought of as intentional.[53] We end up, therefore, with non-intended actions that still achieve the intended plan of action (Harman, 1999: 48). This argument opens up Searle's reliance on self-referentiality, and demands a serious approach to non-intentional acts. As we have argued, non-intentionality is an important stake in the logic of practice, where certain acts are based on habit and routine, without being reflected upon by their agents. Un-intended effects occur 'when agents are unaware of their capacities and their consequences' (Guzzini, 1993: 461).

However, when we introduce the concept of 'plan' in this discussion, the un-intended effects can still be incorporated into a view of intentional action. Intention means planning an action, and planning means a commitment to perform that action. Even if 'accidents' and unexpected consequences occur along the way, the initial intention of the plan cannot be denied. In Bratman's words, this implies a 'pro-attitude' in favour of the action, a 'practical commitment [...] that goes beyond mere desire' (Bratman, 1984: 389). Un-intended action can be explained as action that is intended (as a potential[54]) but not performed intentionally (Bratman, 1984: 395-6). What does this imply for political action? We argue that it relaxes the pragmatical thesis of non-intentionality, by correlating it with the idea of planned potential action, which is intentional. In other words, when security actors act based on habits and routines, the effects of their actions do not always have to be non-intentional

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[53] Such as, for example, when an actor plans to shoot a target with a gun, and then seconds before, due to excitement or stress, she accidentally pushes the trigger and shoots. We can say that she indeed intended to shoot the target, but that her shooting the target was not intentional.

[54] Bratman talks about the 'motivational potential', which is a possibility for an action to be performed in accordance to one's desires and beliefs.

and de-void of responsibility. Rather, we argue that taking into account the planning and the potential of action brings back intentionality, and moves us towards a view of security as a field of practices where some actors actually take intentional and responsible decisions.[55]

3. Grasping intentions

Another crucial issue at stake in the discussion about intentionality is concerned with the possibilities of recognizing the intentions behind an actor performing an action. In all honesty, this is a fundamental problem of understanding social action, and I do not claim to resolve it here. However, it is possible to sketch out a certain line of argumentation that leads into some of the earlier discussions of this chapter. As early as 1946, Wimsatt and Beardsley decried the 'intentional fallacy', which for them meant that the intentions of an author to write a text can never be known and are therefore not important for the analysis (Wimsatt and Beardsley, 1946: 470). This thesis has been taken aboard and discussed at length in the context of philosophical and historical studies by Quentin Skinner. He makes use of the speech act theory to demonstrate that the illocutionary act of creating a text can only be intentional, and that understanding the meaning of the text is equivalent to understanding the intentions of the author (Skinner, 2002: 99-100). Interpreting a text must include 'the recovery of the author's intentions *in* writing what he or she wrote.' (idem, 101)

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[55] Although, cf. with Guzzini (1993: 468, footnote 76): 'For both the intended and the unintended consequences of action, the capacity to effect an outcome is a necessary but not sufficient condition for an actor's responsibility.' However, Guzzini discusses at length Susan Strange's concept of structural power, and refers to her when he argues (461, ftn. 48) that 'nonintentional power is very unevenly distributed throughout the international power structure' – and, we would add, throughout the social world as it is. If this is the case, however, then we admit the existence of hierarchy and therefore we should consider the argument that since some acts are taken from privileged positions, we have to acknowledge their intrinsic interest in certain outcomes – hence, a 'plan' and a clear 'potential'. We support this claim with arguments extracted from Gramscian thought, on which Strange and Guzzini also rely.

Skinner highlights the privileged role of the actor in interpreting her or his own intentions. It may be that an external observer would be able to give a better account of the actor's doings, but this in no way implies that such an account could use 'criteria of description and classification' that the actor does not have. He argues that 'any plausible account of what the agent meant must necessarily fall under, and make use of, the range of descriptions that the agent could in principle have applied to describe and classify what he or she was saying or doing.' (idem, 78) On the other hand, Skinner argues that the external observer may choose to ignore the actor's own account of her doings because 'a writer [or actor] may not fully understand his/her intentions, or may be self-deceiving about recognizing them, or may be incompetent at stating them.' (idem, 101) Furthermore, since the meaning of action is intersubjective, intentions can be 'inferred' from the external context (idem, 120). There is no need for an 'empathic' introspection in the actor's head, but rather for an understanding of the established cultural and social sets of assumptions that governs the social world of the actor (idem, 142).

In contrast to this, Martin Hollis argues that interpretation of meaning cannot go as far as to establish the motives of the actor.[56] No matter how deep one manages to interpret the context, there is an underlying covert meaning that cannot be deciphered (Hollis, 1988: 138). Furthermore, with Steve Smith, he argues that 'action must always be understood from within.' (Hollis and Smith, 1990: 72) Individual intentionality may be indeed impossible to fully assess from an external position. However, shared intentionality,[57] that is, the intentionality of groups, can be inferred 'through the rules constituting the groups.' (idem, 187-188) The crucial argument here is that such inferences are most suitable to anthropological approaches, which transform the philosophical problem of 'Other minds' to the sociological problem of 'Other cultures.' (idem, 188)

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[56] See also Hollis and Smith, 1990: 176. The distinction between motives and intentions is taken from Skinner, 2002
[57] The theoretical grounding of shared intentions appears in Bratman, 1999 and Veleman, 2000

Assessing the (non)intentionality of an action is not an easy task. It cannot be achieved deductively from a set of theoretical precepts. The external observer does not have full access to the actor's covert intentions, even if this observer has better explanatory tools – in our case, due to her/his privileged position in the apparatus of knowledge that is the Academia. In arguing that security practices are performed in the absence of intentions, security scholars fall into the methodological trap of 'reading into' other minds. This problem will be further analysed in the next section.

Third Section: The Politicality and Criticality of studying Vigilantism

The discussion on intentionality is important for the way in which I use critical security studies to look at vigilantism. The way in which intentionality is theorised in the literature raises problems that go beyond conceptual incongruity. I will begin this section by highlighting the methodological and political problems of a thin view on intentionality: the issue of reading in people's minds, and the issue of responsibility.

1. Methodological considerations

The methodological implications of intentionality

Methodologically, the thinning down of intentionality raises a major problem. How can we as social researchers infer anything out of agents' behaviours if they themselves are 'at loss' to explain it? Even if we posit a chasm between representational and practical knowledge, as Pouliot does, we may still have to admit that any written depiction of practice, whether academic or not, requires representation. But we cannot have access to people's minds, we can only interpret whatever they do or say. And yet, if agency is deprived of intention, will not anything that we interpret be solely the fruit of our own imagination? We cannot 'read into' social facts any more than we can read people's minds. We need, therefore, to take for granted that the ways in which the actors themselves explain their world is *their own* purposeful interpretation, and not the product of a super-structure, or of our interpretation. We cannot deny the responsibility of the academic observer in generating knowledge.

If the logic of practicality strives to gain a less elitist view on human action, it takes a wrong turn exactly when it posits non-intentionality, because as such, it indirectly posits the observer as the only one who can bring the threads together and generate a coherent picture of the social reality, to which the actors seem to have no access to. For example, when talking about resistance, James Scott claims

that everyday acts of defying the system are by default silent, they 'evade the written record', they are not even called 'resistance' by their perpetrators. (Scott, 2008: 49) If this is indeed so, then who, if not the researcher, can uncover these disparate acts and put the label of 'resistance' on them? Indeed, Scott himself is now seen as a general theorist of 'resistance', as someone who clearly articulated a theory about what resistance 'really' is. (Hollander and Einwohner, 2004: 539; Richmond, 2011; Campbell and Heyman, 2007).

A thin view of intentionality also poses serious questions regarding responsibility. Following this view of intentionality, outcomes of actions cannot be traced back to their original agents. Moreover, in the absence of intentionality, even if the outcomes are traced back, no clear connection between action and actors can be established, because 'this is how things are done'. Accountability and responsibility vanish, and so is any possibility for social change. In the concrete case of security practices, if we admit that from a normative point of view they run against democratic norms, then how can we hope to adjust them? Since these practices are performed un-reflectively, the possibilities of change are yet to be illustrated by the proponents of the logic of practicality.

Theoretical premises

The theoretical premises of my methodology are: post-positivism, criticality and an ontology of the everyday. Through a post-positivist methodology, I aim to challenge the boundary between research subject and object. I subscribe to a view that refuses to see research in social sciences as a value-neutral endeavor, where the researcher is able to observe coldly and detached the actions of other people. In social sciences, agents naturally resist any impartial observation, in the name of 'science'. They speak back, re-interpret and challenge the tools and premises of the researcher.

Second, I situate myself within a tradition of critical theory, and my preoccupation for security studies is similarly set under this umbrella. For me, criticality implies that any academic knowledge can have an empowering and emancipatory role. Knowledge is not gather for its own sake, nor is it gathered merely to be passed further in a pedagogical endeavor. Knowledge is power, and it can serve those who need it the most – agents from social groups that are under-privileged and dis-empowered. My methodology is guided by a concern for minimizing hierarchical distances between the researched and researcher, and emphasizes a conduct of the process of gathering data that does not reinforce these distances, and that preferably helps to narrow them.

Methodology and politics are not separable. I am studying vigilantism with political aims in mind, not just theoretical. I am less interested in gathering knowledge about an interesting phenomenon, as I am in uncovering the mechanisms of violent repression that lurk behind right-wing community policing. I underline the exclusions that are at the heart of vigilantism in Hungary in Italy. These exclusions are as important for me as the theoretical implications of the practices of these groups. I show how these mechanisms of exclusion and repression are embedded in larger global structures that establish boundaries between deserving and un-deserving people. I expose these boundaries along with the violence of the vigilantes in order to show that ultimately, groups such as these are an expected result of the contemporary economic and political system.

Methods can be used as tools that can facilitate political engagement and gathering knowledge about the ways in which oppressive powers work. We could strengthen our methods and make them better tools for locating 'the practices of power that appear only in the abstract value-neutral conceptual framework favoured by dominant social institutions (Harding in Steinmetz 2005: 355). The political struggles of oppressed groups both produce and necessitate scientific knowledge. A strong critique of rigorous science is a luxury that un-privileged groups cannot afford. Scientific knowledge is still

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reserved to only a few communities. Further depriving those who have no access to it, in the name of epistemological distrust for positivism is a cynical and arrogant stance (idem, 359).

Thirdly, the ontology of the everyday, to which I subscribe, implies that the research is focused on the mundane practices that are performed by agents with low levels of social capital. I keep in mind the caveats concerning intentionality that I mentioned before. The ontology of the everyday pushes for a methodology that is attuned to the daily routines and mundane practices of social agents. For this reason, the research should be conducted as close as possible to the arenas where social practices are being performed. This proximity is meant to replace the 'critical distance' that is somehow still an imperative in critical studies. This distance is used in an attempt to gain a sort of objectivity that would enable the articulation of general laws. However, if post-positivism is taken seriously, the objectivity given by distance becomes an illusion.

The high level of abstraction and remoteness from empirical research (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000: 110 – 1) has been seen as a necessity for achieving the 'critical distance' that is the basis of critique (Selgas in Harding, 2004: 294 – 5). This has especially been the case in Security Studies, which suffer from a pathological distrust towards engagement, despite their increased reliance on the everyday (Bueger and Mireanu, 2014). If we are to develop critical research, we need methods that can attune our practices to the daily experiences of people whose bodies are exposed to the effects of security. We need to be able to understand the ways in which security permeates daily life, by situating ourselves as researchers in the multiplicity of flows of this daily life (Sylvester, 2012).

Studying security critically implies a considerable degree of proximity with the processes and practices under scrutiny. This implies an acute sense of the context and setting in which security practices and discourses unfold in their everydayness, as well as a familiarity with the different

factors that influence security. If the focus on exceptional speech acts is to be replaced with a search for the dispersed, repetitive, mundane and quotidian processes of securitization, then a critical inquiry will not be able to detect these processes unless it situates itself alongside the flow of everyday life. What is required is much more than physical presence on the site. There is a need for a constant and fluid interaction with the daily situations of which the securitization processes are a part of.

Research strategy

My research strategy is deeply influenced by ethnography and its adjacent methods: fieldwork, participatory observation, immersion and so on. I would hesitate to call it ethnography, for reasons that will be sketched below. My main research preoccupation was how to combine the local practices and discourses of security of the vigilantes with the more global discourses and practices of the state. For this reason, I prioritized proximity and ethnographic methods, but I always complemented these with the analysis of wider discourses.

Studying security critically implies a considerate degree of proximity with the processes and practices under scrutiny. This implies an acute sense of the context and setting in which security practices and discourses unfold in their everydayness, as well as a familiarity with the different factors that influence security. If the focus on exceptional speech acts is to be replaced with a search for the dispersed, repetitive, mundane and quotidian processes of securitization, then a critical inquiry will not be able to detect these processes unless it situates itself alongside the flow of everyday life.

Proximity implies getting close and experiencing situations of security. As a research strategy, I placed myself in such situations. These I delimited myself to a certain extent, and to another extent,

they were delimited by factors of time and space that I took as given. Spending time and researching the overall quotidian practices plays the role of a 'situation' for me. Focusing on situations is not meant to replace the study of the vigilantes, but to shed more light on it.

I refer to these situations as security-scapes. In the security-scapes, I observed and experienced the mundane practices of security, the daily rhythms of performances from actors, contexts and discourses. I observed the intersections of practices of security with other daily practices and discourses. I also used the situations of security to observe the intersection between local and global practices and discourses. I also located key actors, whom I attempted to talk to. I performed interviews and free discussions.

Initially I thought of this as an ethnographic endeavor. It appeared to me that the method of ethnography, as it is currently used, could serve as an umbrella for the tools and observations that I used – fieldwork, observation, participation, interviews and discussions. After another reading, however, now I am reluctant to delineate my methodology so specifically as to name it 'ethnography'. This is because my research strategy was less and more than ethnography. It was less because I did not spend a considerable time in the field, I did not fully immerse myself as it is usually the custom, and I did not always 'go local'. For the political and ethical reasons that I will outline below, long-term fieldwork along the vigilantes always seemed problematic for me. However, I compensated this with an investigative stance. I tried to follow as closely as possible the practices of the Italian and Hungarian vigilantes. At times, this implied observing them without being observed. At other times, it implied asking local people about their practices. And at other times, it involved a close attention to their presence in the written and recorded media. For these reasons, I would definetly say that my research strategy has been heavily influenced by ethnography, yet it is not fully an ethnographic strategy.

In an attempt to follow the local discourses, I followed the local media, reading newspapers and blogs. This I did in order to understand how the security scape functions, how vigilantes operate alongside other practices, and in what discourse they are embedded. I did the same for the global discourses, by combining international media with second order literature.

The instances of vigilantism that will be analysed in this project are taken from two distinct social and political settings. Hungary provides the first setting. I have chosen it because I have been living in this country for quite a few years. During this time, I was directly and indirectly exposed to the discourses, practices and rituals of the Hungarian Far-Right. As a student of security, what was immediately striking for me from the beginning was the emphasis on threats and defence. Security permeates almost every aspect of the Hungarian Far-Right. As an individual with a set of political beliefs that fundamentally diverges from those of the Far-Right, I was, like others, perplexed when the first vigilante patrols appeared. I was immediately willing to start studying them for my project.

More than this, security is a central concern for the Hungarian government, for the administration of Budapest and for the mayor of the district where I have been living for the past four years. From installing CCTV cameras on every street corner, to daily harassment of homeless people because they are considered to be criminals, security is an integral part of the Hungarian state's policies, and an important part of my everyday life in Hungary.

For the first setting, I made use of my own participatory observations, conducted mostly at Far-Right rallies, but also in two of the villages where the patrols were more present in 2011. In these villages I have participated 'on the human rights activists side', so to speak. Complementary, many observations were gathered during daily life in Budapest and other Hungarian towns. I have also used information gathered from newspapers and news portals. I have had discussions with people that

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were living in villages where the patrols were active, but I hesitate to call these interviews. I have not conducted any interviews in Hungary.

The second setting is Italy. Chronologically, however, I had been initially interested only in Italian vigilantism. This was chosen mostly because of the outrage that was stirred in 2009 and 2010 when a few Italian Neo-Fascist groups started wearing uniforms and patrolling the streets. During the next period, more of these groups appeared. What was immediately disturbing for me was the fact that they were explicitly targeting Roma people from Romania. Several settlements have been burned down, and the patrols were aligning themselves, as in Hungary, with the official discourse of the Italian state, that was condemning immigration, with racist overtones.

I have chosen Milan as the setting for the study of vigilantism in Italy because I knew that the city was a focal point of Far-Right activity in Northern Italy, and also because several groups had been active before. As a matter of fact, upon my arrival in Milan, and after the first days of walking around the city, I understood that I had to change my focus, and pay more attention to the urban context in which the Italian vigilantes operated. I have travelled twice to Milan, each time spending most of the day in the central train station, which is also the main focus of the chapter dedicated to Italian vigilantism. There I found the organisation called City Angels, which seemed to me like a suitable entry point for understanding vigilantism in Italy. I have also travelled once to Torino, because I had some information that more patrols operate there. However, upon my arrival and stay there, I have not found anything relevant for the project. Moreover, the local people that I have been talking to in Torino convinced me that the Far-Right is considerably weaker there than in Milan.

Since my Italian language skills are far more advanced than my Hungarian ones. I have spent more time talking to people in Milan and Torino. I have conducted two interviews with the head of the

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City Angels, Mario Furlan, and with one other member, Luigi Agarossi 'Koala'. Many of the insights I have outlined in the Milan chapter are my own observations from the central train station and the surrounding area. I have also used a considerable amount of local press, in order to understand the local discourse and the narratives that are used in Milan.

The two instances of vigilantism share a few similarities. First, they are both instances of Far-Right practices, and thus guide my argument about the important nexus between ideology and security. Second, they share a certain degree of racism, whether it is implicit in Italy or explicit in Hungary. The 'targets' of vigilante groups in both cases are mostly Roma people. Third, these targets are predominantly in a precarious and vulnerable state, living in spaces that are marginal and stigmatised. In Milan, these are the spaces of the shanty-towns of the Roma people and the space around the train station, while in Hungary, these are the spaces situated on the periphery of the villages. In this way, both cases help me illustrate a number of connections between security, poverty and space. More importantly, both instances of vigilantism offer broad avenues for exploring the ways in which the population articulates demands for security that are picked up and answered by Far-Right groups.

However, there is a number of important differences between the two instances. To begin with, at the time of my study, in Italy the 'phenomenon' of vigilantism was already fading out, and I could not have many direct observations. The only group that was still considerably important and active was the City Angels. In Hungary, on the contrary, I have been able to observe the full thrust of the vigilante period, and to attend several important occasions where the patrols were present. Second, while the Hungarian patrols are extremely violent and ready to do 'combat' with their 'targets', the vigilantism I have studied in Italy is mostly peaceful and un-armed. And while it is true that the style of combat called krav-maga is common to both instances, the readiness to engage in close combat is

higher in Hungary. Third, while the Italian patrols operated mostly in urban settings, in Hungary the vigilante groups were mostly active in the rural areas. For this reason, as I will show below, the concept of urban security is more useful in the Italian case.

Research ethical considerations

As I have already mentioned, I situate my methodology within the theoretical parameters of post-positivism and critical theory. These parameters reject the desiderate of scientific neutrality and objectivism. As such, I allow my research to be exposed to my own political beliefs and to other external influences. I assumed from the start the probability that my research would be affected by what I think about the vigilantes. I had a number of strategies to temper this influence: I talked to as many people as possible, and listened to as many voices as I could. I read media from all political positions. Some of these precautions are visible in the content of the thesis. In the Hungarian case, I have included a section that details the exaggerated reactions of the international media to the patrolling groups, labeling them as 'neo-nazi' without any thorough analysis of their actions. Similarly, in Italy I am underlining the alarmed reactions of the international media to the uniformed groups on the streets of Milan. Despite these precautions, I am aware that some of my conclusions may be biased in one way or another. I accept this bias and take full responsibility for it. For me the endeavor to analyse the actions of vigilante groups is underlined by a political motivation to expose their violence and start thinking about ways to end it.

On the other hand, the immersion within the daily routines of security is a problematic practice. Studying the security practices of vigilante patrols opens a set of thorny issues with regards to ethics and politics. Since these patrols commit violent actions against marginalized groups, there is always the risk that the researcher participates in such actions through her or his methods. This is why the

politics of methods must be carefully negotiated so that the researcher avoids becoming an accomplice to oppression. Therefore, I argue that the (ethnographic) study of the security practices of vigilantes is not an innocent endeavour. It needs a constant negotiation of its political implications.

The groups analysed in this thesis in particular share a number of far-right ideas. This raises important ethical and political issues. To begin with, the most important thing for me during fieldwork was that participation in the patrols' practices would entail complicity. I declined an invitation from the City Angels to join them in their patrols in Milan because I was appalled by the consequences of such a decision. Despite the fact that it would have provided invaluable insight for my thesis, it would have been a seriously problematic endeavour. The City Angels, like other vigilante groups that patrol the streets of Northern Italy, are known for their tough hand on what they perceive to be delinquencies committed by marginal groups such as Roma people and illegal immigrants. Going along with them would have placed me in a position to reinforce, if not actually perform the same practices that I seek to criticise with this project.

Second, gaining access to far-right vigilante groups is problematic from my standpoint as a researcher. In Hungary I have experienced a severe lack of trust towards me, as a Romanian student, enrolled in Central European University. This was the case because one of the tropes of the far-right discourse in Hungary is an undisguised antipathy towards people coming from the countries that have gain Hungarian territories after 1918. Moreover, having credentials from a university that has some reputation for being 'progressive' and financed by George Soros did not help either. Indeed, as Blee (2007) argues, most ethnographers find it hard to cross the numerous barriers of access to far-right groups. These barriers have to do with the antipathy that these groups generally feel towards what they perceive to be 'left-wing' academics. There are also barriers that have to do with the subculture character that most of these groups have, which make them extremely secretive,

suspicious and hard to access. Of course, these barriers can be lowered in some cases, when the group thinks it can be in its advantage. My interview with Mario Furlan, the leader of City Angels started with his disappointment that I was not a journalist, but 'only' a PhD student.

But most importantly, the greatest barrier is constituted by the divergence in political affinity between myself as a researcher, and the members of these vigilante groups. This is a barrier that I was not always ready or capable to negotiate. Scholarly research requires a certain degree of empathy or sympathy for the social actors under scrutiny, in order to get the gist of their motivations. I have tried to maintain this at all times. I resisted the temptation to engage in activist research, which would have made me focus solely on the social movements that oppose the vigilantes. Yet I could hardly maintain at all times an attitude of respect and solidarity for those that have been harassing, terrorising and at times even murdering innocent people on the account of their ethnicity or skin colour.

This is a normative dilemma of writing critically about security – one among many others. I have experienced a severe antipathy towards those that I was writing about, interviewing and observing. In this respect, I share this feeling with someone like Herbert Kitschelt, whose positivist scholarship is marked by a much bigger distance towards the Far-Right, and who nonetheless admitted in a preface to one of his studies: 'Politically, we find the preoccupation with the extreme Right in Western Europe thoroughly distasteful.' However, I have very little scruples because of this antipathy. I consider that this is a more honest attitude than the one where I would attempt to empathise with the vigilantes. I do not want to deprive these people of their political agency. I do not want to undermine the importance of their political actions. I take them seriously, and as such, I position myself in stark political opposition to them.

In the end, this is also another way of breaking with the elitism of so much of critical security studies, a direction that I have attacked in the previous sections. On the methodological front, the struggle against elitism has to take into consideration the scholar's attitude towards her or his 'subjects'. And in this case, being empathetic towards the vigilantes would be equivalent to reading their minds. And as I have already argued, I find this endeavour to be profoundly elitist. In this project I preferred a humble, honest but direct attitude towards these people, one in which we are situated on equal positions, and one in which I, as a researcher, admit the fundamental gap between our political positions. These positions are irreconcilable, and I must be honest about that. In a way, this is an agonistic argument that brings us back to Carl Schmitt, but this is another issue.

Situated research and situations of the everyday

The researcher is situated among a myriad of vectors of power, contexts and histories, to which she brings her own background and experiences. It is usually assumed that there is a power asymmetry between the ethnographer and the researched group that dates back to the times when ethnography was helping colonialism. There is always an implicit privilege of the participant-observer in relation to the ones she is observing, if only for the fact that at the end of the day she can always exit the field at her own will and return to her career, while for everybody else the 'field' constitutes their everyday reality. This is explicitly obvious in settings where violence is a tragic part of people's lives, while for the observer it is just a temporary engagement. There is always the need for reflexivity and lucidity about one's situatedness in such contexts, and how this is negotiated.

Yet the asymmetry can function the other way around as well. In many instances the ethnographer can find herself – even against her will – in a position of power inferiority. This can happen, for example, in the case where the 'informants' are high-positioned actors – politicians, leaders, and

generally people with more capabilities than an academic, which is not hard to envision. Such actors might even try to get the researcher's adherence to their agendas. The danger of being 'co-opted' in this context is worth considering, and many questions about the effects of participation arise. This is especially stringent in the security field, where participation may easily translate into complicity (Gusterson 2013; Zehfuss, 2012: 185).

I suggest the concept of 'situatedness'. I propose that we analyse the practices of the vigilantes in terms of concrete situations, in terms of the situatedness of security among different other parallel practices, and in terms of the situatedness of the researcher. Initially suggested by Donna Haraway (1988), the idea of 'situated knowledge' refers to the impossibility and undesirability of gaining an objective gaze over our inquiries. Knowledge and its tools are always dependent on the position of the researcher, on the social, political and economic context of the researched and researcher, and on a series of other contingent factors. Unwrapping this idea, I suggest that the concept of 'situation' is able to reflect the multitude of ways in which practices and knowledges are dependent on circumstantial and contingent elements.

To begin with, the concept of the situation helped me to balance the tension between universal and particular. The question of weaving together global discourses and practices of security, with local articulations of everyday panics is a crucial one. Isolating situations enables me to have a snapshot of how these levels interact and influence each other. Methodologically, it allows scaling between micro and macro levels, by following objects, metaphors, people or discourses that traverse multiple sites and temporalities (Marcus, 1995). Moreover, situations may shed more light on the concrete background conditions and elements that set up what we call 'the context'. Also, analysing a concrete situation allows me to decipher the interaction and co-existence of security practices with other daily practices, and thus the diffusion of security in everyday life.

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Analysing situations enables me to have a better negotiation of the interplay between local and daily routines and practices on the one hand, and global discourses and narratives on the other hand. Understanding how practices of security operate in concrete situations, to which the vigilantes belong as well, allows for a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which these practices are being legitimized. Consequently, it sheds a different light on the ways in which vigilantism is situated between the need for support from the state and the need to be an autonomous expression of societal demands for security.

Vigilantism can hardly be conceived only as a practice directed against the state. Instead, vigilante groups are often dependent on the state's support for their actions. The state delegates security prerogatives to vigilante groups, while at the same time retaining and (ab)using its monopoly on violence. Therefore, the actions of the vigilantes cannot be separated from those of the holders of this monopoly. Moreover, there is an uneasiness in operating with loose concepts such as 'the state' and 'society' and trying to understand how vigilantism is placed between these two. Instead of trying to untangle the complex entangled relationship between state and society, looking at situations attempts to see how different actors and agencies perform security, and observe the various collisions, alliances and points of rupture that occur in a certain context. Also, looking at situated practices takes the research a step away from the official discourses of the actors involved. As I will show in the case of Milan, the discourses of community and social empowerement are contrasted with the practices of exclusion and intimidation performed by the patrols. Looking at situations allows for a critical distance from the official narrative.

The concept of 'situatedness' is tangential to the process of generating and representing knowledge. Thus, the concept highlights the contextuality of any research work. The situatedness of the researcher becomes a central question in how situations are explored. In analysing the interaction

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between audiences and securitizing actors, I am not only delineating situations, but I am myself situated as a researcher, in a certain context and set of contingent factors. Negotiating this situatedness requires reflexivity and criticality. As it was argued, reflexivity generally refers to the awareness of the constellation of positions that the researcher and the researched occupy – positions of status, capital, class, race, gender, history and so on. Criticality goes a step further, and supplements this awareness with an actual practical engagement with the researched realities, with possible emancipatory aims. This is to say that when I am looking at discourses and practices of security, I am not just objectively assessing causalities or impacts, processes or relationships between elements and actors; but I am actively engaged in producing situations and knowledge, I am consciously performing actions from a set of positions that influence my 'results'; and also, I am (hopefully) engaging and participating in struggles for resistance and emancipation.

Security-scapes

The concrete situations that I use in this thesis are the Milan train station and the Hungarian village of Gyongyospata. I look at these situations through the lens of a securityscape. For Appadurai, the suffix '-scape' points to the array of intersubjective relations of a social entity or phenomenon. These relations are 'inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts of actors' (Appadurai, 1996: 33). The '-scape' suffix is related to different historically situated imaginaries, varying from ethnicity to media, technology, finance and ideas (Appadurai, 1996: 34-6).

In particular, Gusterson uses the concept of 'securityscape' to focus on the 'asymmetrical distributions' of security (in a military sense) resources among 'local and global imaginaries of identity, power and vulnerability' (Gusterson, 2004: 166). Thus, he directs the attention to key actors and the micro-worlds in which they move and 'clash'. The security-scape includes not only material

capabilities of security apparatuses, but also the discourses, practices and imaginaries that accompany their use. In other words, it also includes the ways in which the security apparatuses are situated in their contexts. A security-scape is an assemblage of techniques, practices, infrastructures, materialities and governmentalities of security.

To these aspects, I find it useful to add another dimension that is missing from Gusterson's account, namely territoriality. As the name suggests, security-scapes are not merely symbolic mappings of security networks, but also have a poignant spatial element. Security dispositifs and the imaginaries adjacent to them are concretely situated in spaces, they have a territorial logic. Security produces space, and space produces security. For this reason, the following discussion on urban security is crucial, because it helps clarify the ways in which security practices and discourses are articulated in a specific territorial scales.

Therefore, I argue that the concept of securityscape points out to how security apparatuses are situated in their respective contexts. Securityscapes are assemblages of techniques, practices, infrastructures, materialities and governmentalities of security (Bigo, 2002; Huysmans, 2004). At the same time securityscapes presuppose a territorial (geographical) dimension. Practices and dispositifs of security produce spaces and territories, and in turn, geography is able to produce security practices.

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2. The substantive concepts of security demand and criminalisation of poverty

In this section I will outline the substantive concepts that I will be using while studying vigilante groups in Hungary and Italy. These concepts and the ways in which they will be used are in harmony with my methodological premises. My preoccupation for urban imbalances and for security articulations from the grassroots level emerge from the critical and methodological aspects of vigilantism that I have just outlined.

2.1 Security demand

The demand for security has the main analytical status in the development of my argument. The vigilante groups that I study in Hungary in Italy are able to perform everyday and intentional practices of security because they position themselves as suppliers for the security demands that come from their target social groups.

In this section, I will develop this concept and show how it functions as a legitimising factor for the far-right type of vigilantism that I analyse in this thesis. In order to fully understand this, I will first make an excursion through the role that ideology plays for European vigilante groups.

Ideology and vigilantism

I will start by discussing the position of vigilantism between 'left-' and 'right-wing' politics. This distinction underlines two mechanisms of vigilantism. This difference is visible in the modes of operation, justifications for actions and the type of relationship that these groups have with the state. While many groups explicitly state their intentions to abstain from party politics, the ideological difference transpires either through their association or co-optation with/by different political forces, or through their choice of targets. For example, left-wing vigilantism can take the form of guerrilla

units that try to sabotage infrastructure (some forms of Animal and Earth Liberation activities can be included here, generally considered under the umbrella of eco-radicalism), or revolutionary groups that ensure security and protection for the self-organized para-state communities (the Hungarian Lenin Boys, the Spanish Anarchist armed patrols and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation can be given as examples here). As in the case of the Pink Sari Gang in India, the actions of self-declared politically neutral groups may be interpreted by the authorities as being 'leftist' ('Maoist', in this case) because of their focus on empowering the low castes (Sen, 2012: 8). Moreover, Marxist political parties have also been known to support vigilantism (Sundar, 2010: 115).

In terms of right-wing vigilantism, the situation is slightly more complex, but also more transparent. Far-right groups are more visible and their actions get more media attention. As Sundar points out, 'the media coverage of actions by right-wing vigilantes gives them and their views (their so-called "hurt sentiments") a prominence they do not actually possess in society. […] Left-wing organized vigilantes never get the same kind of approving media space.' (Sundar, 2010: 117) The actions of right-wing vigilante groups range from enforcing anti-abortion legislation (and at times killing or assaulting doctors who perform abortions) (Mason 2000: 15 *et passim*), to attacking political adversaries (the death-squads in Brazil were attacking radical environmentalists and left-wing militant groups) (Scheper-Hughes, 2006: 152) and in extreme cases, to upholding a far-right political regime through violence and intimidation (as it happened in Nazi Germany, Hungary and Romania).

Generally, right-wing vigilantism is concerned with surveying and punishing social deviance, seen as the divergence from the hegemonic attitudes and discourses within a society. As such, it is inherently conservatory. Although a strict correlation cannot be established, it is clear that right-wing vigilante groups are allied with the dominant groups and ideologies of a society, and are engaged in what Rosenbaum and Sederberg called 'establishment violence', and 'social group control vigilantism'

(Rosenbaum and Sederberg, 1974: 551 – 556). The actions of such groups are motivated not so much by a perceived failed or incapable state, but by the 'irrelevance' of its policies.[58] As the state's policies encourage the upward mobility of certain groups, through redistribution or social justice mechanisms, the established strata of the society may display resistance and react violently (Rosenbaum and Sederberg, 1974: 551).

Far Right groups with a specific view of security cannot fit in a framework of security in which ideologies and practices are separated, and the emphasis is placed on the latter. These groups articulate a certain vision of security that cannot be connected solely to the discourses on national security, where the state is the main referent object. Far-right beliefs are formed and upheld at the societal level, and they are spread throughout the society, in a relative autonomy from the state's direct intervention or indoctrination (Inglehart, 1990: 272 – 3). These beliefs form more or less coherent societal demands for action against the discontent that is articulated in far-right ideas: the eroding importance of national identity and its related forms of affiliation, the eroding economic and social protection guaranteed by the welfare state, growing multiculturalism, increased poverty and unemployment and so on.[59]

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[58] I am not arguing that right-wing vigilantism is essentially 'pro-establishment', while left-wing vigilantism is essentially anti-system. However, there is an ideological difference in how what we usually call the 'left' and the 'right' relate to the state. I translate this difference in terms of the view on property. If generally right wing ideas tend to uphold property as a fundamental value that needs to be guarded at any cost, even if it is a human cost, left wing ideas are known to favour more distributive policies in which surplus is shared according to needs. Right-wing vigilantism is therefore more prone to defend established social groups because these have a fixed status given by their access to property. It is worth reminding that status and hierarchies emerge even in regimes that call themselves 'leftist', and so a pro-establishment vigilante action there can easily be considered 'right-wing' and conservatory. Ultimately, the ideological dimension of vigilantism is given by the way it relates to the state and society.

[59] Norris, 2005: 132 – 4; it is worth noting that the economic factors are not the only sources of far-right discontent. There is a consistent body of scholarship, now largely discarded, that focuses on psychological factors, such as an authoritarian personality, cognitive rigidity, repression of emotions and so on. The classical references are *The Authoritarian Personality*, by T. Adorno et. al., and *Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, by G. Deleuze and F. Guattari (as well as Foucault's '*Preface*' to this book). For a synthesis, I use Michi Ebata, 'Right-Wing Extremism: In Search of a Definition', in '*The Extreme Right. Freedom and Security at Risk*', edited by Aurel Braun and Stephen Scheinberg, Harper Collins, 1997, pp. 22 – 4

The role of far-right ideologies in security articulations has not been explored further than as one of the many forms of catalysing state action. For Bigo, far-right ideologies cannot fully explain the climate of everyday insecurity, since this climate is sustained by the practices of security professionals and state officials (Bigo, 2002: 65). As such, far-right discourses are a by-product of these practices, along with the generalised intolerance towards immigrants that follows the logic of creating a continuum between insecurity and security. For Waever, far-right ideologies are one of the ways in which security can be articulated from the societal level (Waever et.al., 1993: 188 – 9). However, these articulations have to rely, ultimately, on the support of the state, in order for them to be successful (Waever, 1995: 69).

Security underlines the far-right political project by positing the existence of an enemy that needs to be eliminated through violence. During the Nazi regimes, the state officials used the logic of security in order to legitimize numerous acts of exclusion that led to the 'final act of extermination'. (Neocleous, 2011: 190) In my research, I show how contemporary Hungarian far-right groups use spectacular features in their actions and appearance in order to gather support for their security actions (Mireanu, 2013). Conversely, the racist logic of the far-right project is reflected in the contemporary security practices of the liberal regimes (Foucault, 1997: 254 – 5; Mutimer, 2007). Through racism and security, the Golden Dawn posits itself as an intermediary between state and society.

Far-right ideology is a crucial element in understanding the ambiguous position that vigilante groups have in the society. Their racist and ultra-nationalist politics allows them to perform programmatic and patterned security practices on a quotidian level. These practices are non-exceptional and autonomous from the state, and yet they reinforce the state official discourse. Moreover, these practices interpellate the population in a specific manner, and thus create legitimacy for the groups

through the demand for security. In what follows, I will expand on this mechanism, and show the ambiguous relationship that these groups have with the society.

Delivering security

A far-right version of security articulates its public as a homogenous group that is equivalent to 'the nation'. This articulation is vital for the support of vigilante groups. This support comes from the security demands of actors which could otherwise not easily transpose their fears into action. These fears are deeply rooted in the society, and they usually take the form of racism, which is compatible with the far-right security discourse.

The practices of vigilantes are meant to supply security to a target audience that perceives the existence of a security deficit. Whether they respond to the withdrawal of the state and the need to supplement the diminishing police forces (Goldstein, 2003: 23), or they respond to a climate of generalized violence and rampant crime (Oomen, 2004: 155), or they enforce order in a perceived deviant social milieu (Buur and Jensen, 2004: 144), vigilante groups deliver security (Chavez, 2006: 35), justice and peace to their target communities. They constitute themselves as a response to insecurity (Oomen, 2004: 160). They claim the same roles as police forces – to maintain order and to prevent outbreaks of public conflicts (Jarman, 2006: 31).

Yet when these groups adopt a far-right ideology it means that the security supply is of a different nature than the one that may be offered by either the police or private security companies. Far-right security is inherently and explicitly exclusionary, violent and discriminatory, with straightforward racist and homophobic overtones. Such articulations can be seen as providing security to a community that feels threatened and that demands security. Groups like the Golden Dawn are there

to 'rescue' society from a common enemy, against which the state is either helpless, or in complicity with. They exploit deeply rooted fears, which they are able to articulate and unify in a single ideology.

The far-right vigilante groups do not address the entire population, but only those people that can resonate with their far-right politics, and whose support the groups are able to use to legitimise its actions, precisely because of this resonance. Generally, the actors that aim to take the law in their own hands and conduct security practices and decisions need to have the support of the general population. This excludes the members of the state apparatuses, such as police or judges (Rosenbaum and Sederberg, 1974). Vigilantism would not be possible in the absence of social support from at least some segments of the population. This support can come in diverse forms that are dependent on the image and the spectacle the vigilantes generate (Mireanu, 2013).

Moreover, this support comes from actors that do not have the structural position, the privilege to speak with authority and expertise, or the high levels of social capital that are usually thought to be a pre-requisite for 'speaking security'. This moves the focus away from the professionals of security, who have the necessary level of symbolic capital to articulate and practice security, to the 'professionals of nothing' (c.a.s.e., 2006: 459), who do not have a powerful voice in the struggle for security definitions. These are actors generally seen as passive receivers of security policies.

Yet these actors articulate security demands, which can be picked up by vigilante groups. These demands are behind the resonance of some people with the far-right security that the vigilante groups supply. The security articulations of these groups do not need only the 'approval' of the relevant societal audiences, but they are rooted in deep-seated perceptions of fear and insecurity that come

from everyday interactions and routines at the societal level (Ochs, 2011). The most widespread instance of such rooted perceptions is racism.

Security Demand

In the instances of vigilantism that I study below, in Hungary and Italy, people come together in order to provide security to a population that laments the inability or unwillingness of the state's apparatuses to cope with an exceptional situation. I refer to this process as the demand for security. I argue that it has to be conceptualised as distinct from the actions of the state. The demand for security is articulated at the level of the population, among agents with low securitising capital. This speaks directly to the problems outlined earlier, and moves the focus of everyday intentional security beyond the vigilantes, towards more diffused security practices.

Juliana Ochs (2011) spends a considerable attention to the ways in which everyday security is being articulated by the population of Israel. In the context of a hyper-militarisation of this society, the actors she interviewed go beyond reinforcing the security discourses of the state. They add new meanings and practices, which often run in parallel to the state's official position. As she puts it, 'the security that materialized in everyday habits and desires tended to extend, rather than oppose, sovereignty and violence' (Ochs, 2011: 4). In this way, security goes beyond the practices of the state apparatus, and also beyond corporate private security agents, to be embraced by a population that perceives itself to live under constant threat: 'Security transcended its position as state domain, swelling larger than the state to generate and sustain sovereignty.' (Ochs, 2011: 5)

In the work of Bigo (2002) I trace the same concern, albeit analysed from a different angle. For Bigo, societal demand for security is a by-product of the state's practices and discourses. The state sustains a constant 'climate of unease' that in turn predisposes the population to react favourably to the

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practices enacted by the security professionals. As the synthesis written by the c.a.s.e. collective (2006: 461) puts it, 'the securitization of societal issues raises the issue of protection by insecuritizing the audience the security discourses are addressing. This insecuritization will translate into a social demand for the intervention of coercive state agencies through reassurance discourses and protection techniques.'

However, Bigo's argumentation underscores the importance of people's fears and vulnerabilities, by considering them to be only a product of the state's action. I suggest that we take societal demand for security seriously, not entirely driven by the state, and not entirely autonomous. In this way, I refer again to one of the problems of this thesis, namely the possibility of non-elitist security. Politically, I want to take seriously the possibility that people might experience fear and insecurity without being 'brainwashed' by politicians and experts. As Booth (2007: 105) puts it, 'insecurity obstructs the opportunities for victims to achieve self-realisation in their lives.' While I do not fully concur with security as being an emancipatory practice, I do insist that the fears exploited by vigilante groups are authentic.

Therefore, I see two aspects of the demand for security: first, this demand can appear in societies where violence is the norm, and security is sought for as 'freedom from fear'. We cannot take seriously enough the dramatic existence of people who live in a constant daily state of fear because of state violence, wars, domestic and racial violence, rape, abuse and so on. The security demands of these people are urgent. Second, the demand for security can appear in those societies where the neo-liberal state has outsourced and privatised security. In this way, only some people can afford to be protected, while the rest live in a constant state of danger and threat. In this case, it is clear that the more vulnerable groups would articulate a demand for an improvement in their situation.

The question then becomes increasingly delicate, since the ways in which the vigilantes respond to security demands are inherently exclusionary and violent. At the same time, these groups claim to act in the name of a community that legitimizes their actions. Therefore, politically, we must ask the very important question of whether (in)security always has to elicit violence and exclusion. Can we envision forms of community justice that do not reproduce the brutality of the police apparatuses? These are not questions that can be solved within the space of a doctoral thesis. Yet they are in the backdrop, and constitute one of the political motivations for writing this project.

2.2. The Criminalisation of poverty

The Context of Security Practices

The concept of urban insecurity and the related discussions about the criminalisation of poverty play a secondary role in my argument. They provide a theoretical framework for the analysis of the Italian instance of vigilantism. Urban insecurity shows how the practices of vigilantism are situated in a context in which other security actors operate. This context is the globalised city space, where security becomes a value that is attached to urban renewal. In the process of this renewal of the urban infrastructure, the poor and disenfranchised dwellers of the city become a nuisance and a security threat. Vigilantism in Italy, and to a certain extent in Hungary, functions on this backdrop of criminalisation of poverty in urban (or urbanising) spaces.

In order to highlight the way in which I am using the concept of urban (in)security, I will turn now to the problem of space. I will show that the spatial contexts in which the vigilantes operate account for

the intentionality of their practices. The vigilante groups I study in this thesis follow the logic of spatial exclusion. They constantly create and reinforce the borders between included and excluded social categories. In the Italian case, the excluded are the poor and the homeless. In the Hungarian one, the excluded are the Roma people. In each case, the vigilantes 'patrol' the border and make sure that it is secure. In this sub-section I want to discuss this spatial logic, and highlight its embeddedness in the wider discourses of globalisation and criminalisation of poverty. I argue that the spatial context of vigilantism is dictated by the effects of globalisation on the urban space. Vigilante groups perform security practices that are linked with the urban space and the ways in which it is managed between different groups. Vigilantism taps into the discourse of criminalising poverty in urban spaces.

In the current debates in critical security studies, the meaning of context is narrowed down to its historical or locally-cultural dimensions (Bubandt, 2005: 291; Stritzel, 2007: 369; Ciuta, 2009: 314; 317). I would like to argue for the importance of the spatial dimension of context. Space has mostly been present in the security literature in the discussions on territory and borders (Ruggie, 1993; Rajaram and Grundy-Warr, 2007; Vaughan-Williams, 2009). However, this is but one facet of the spatial context, and it has been referred to by some the 'representational' sense of space (Brenner et.al., 2003: 10-11). The power of spatial contexts to shape, influence and privilege certain actors and strategies over others is the 'productive' facet of space (Lefebvre, 2003). This power has largely been ignored in security studies. Space is not only marked as borders or national territory, but it also generates discourses, practices, power inequalities, windows of opportunity and so on (Elden, 2004: 189 – 192).

Space is also connected to state practices, in what Brenner calls 'state strategies' and 'state projects' (Brenner, 2004). In the current stage of globalization, the state is being re-scaled. Space has

economic and political value, being intimately linked to the processes of late modernity, globalization and capital flows (Jessop, 2008). In this re-scaling of the state, the national scale ceases to be the most important one. Instead, below the national scale, more importance is being attributed to regions, cities and districts, while above the nation-state there are the supra national and global scales. This re-scaling is crucial for the circulation of the different flows of capitalism (Robinson, 2001).

Urban governance emerges as a catalyst of the new processes of state re-scaling in the last three decades, as economic regulation is decentralized to subnational levels and socioeconomic assets and infrastructural investments are being concentrated in 'globally competitive city-regions' (Brenner, 2006: 176). Urban space is transformed from an area of redistribution to one of competition. As such, the city is dis-connected from its regional and/or national environment, and re-connected in the global networks of capital. The newly emerged global cities become 'strategic sites for the management of the global economy and the production of the most advanced services and financial operations that have become key inputs for the work of managing global economic operations' (Sassen, 2012: 34). These global cities form a global network that serves as a 'platform for the operations of firms and markets' (Sassen, 2012: 113). Because the global cities managed to develop capabilities and infrastructure long before the national states in which they function, the network of global cities consists of specialized centers that compete among each other, but also integrate different functions of the world economy (Sassen, 2012: 133).

Urban insecurity

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Among urban theorists, Mike Davis has gone to great extents in underlining the security practices that are inherent in urban renewal processes, without however engaging any theory or discourse about 'security' in general. In the 'City of Quartz,' he argues the following:

'Security becomes a positional good defined by income access to private "protective services" and membership in some hardened residential enclave or restricted suburb. As a prestige symbol […] "security" has less to do with personal safety than with the degree of personal insulation, in residential, work, consumption and travel environments, from "unsavoury" groups and individuals, even crowds in general.' (Davis, 1990: 224)

The 'winners' of the redevelopment of urban spaces during globalisation constitute a globalized transnational elite with a specific culture and set of values (Friedman, 2003: 14; 18). This elite is primarily concerned with the 'quality of life', urban areas have to be made 'attractive to both footloose capital and to the footloose middle and upper classes' (Mitchell, 2003: 167). Security becomes buyable, and it stops being a public good (Marcuse, 2006: 923). 'Quality of life', for those who afford it, is often translated in segregated communities and gated neighbourhoods that have security as their main value.[60] But the security that is being sought after is intimately connected to privacy, to a fear of crowds and public spaces. Mitchell points out that, especially after 9/11, the public space is perceived by many as a space of anarchy and threatening disorder. Security practices become the main modalities to resolve this situation, and maintain order and civility in public spaces (Mitchell, 2003: 13-15).

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[60] The literature on 'gated communities' is vast. See, for example Dawson (2006) and Luymes (1997).

Moreover, security becomes a way to ensure the privacy of privatized urban spaces. Through fences, surveillance cameras, private guards and intimidating architecture, urban spaces such as gated communities, malls, banks, parking lots and so on, become securitized in order to 'protect' those who use them legitimately. Hence, urban space creates security, but this security is not to be shared with everybody. As much as they are designed to protect those who are in, these security mechanisms are also intended to 'scare away' those who are out (Davis, 1990: 234). And usually, those who are out are kept there because they lack the means to get in – money, status, property. Thus, the poor, the homeless, the immigrants, the prostitutes, the drug abusers – and all those who cannot contribute to the flows of capital simply because they do not possess it, are being kept out and their freedoms are restricted through the exclusionary violence of security mechanisms, as the 'penal state' expands (Wacquant, 2009a and b). These mechanisms are employed to chase these people away from the renewed urban spaces (in constant expansion), to evict them from estate that is to be gentrified, to restrict the public spaces where they can live in the city, to incarcerate them, to constantly harass them, and generally to keep them away from the eyes of those in whose name security operates (Davis, 2006: 105; 112).

In this way, we can start to see security as being linked to a legitimizing discourse that discriminates between those who can use urban spaces and those who should not be allowed to. The exclusions of security mechanisms are not arbitrary, they are based on clear-cut ideas about merits and benefits: certain people work hard for, and deserve their wealth and safety, while others are lazy and fully responsible for their state. Moreover, this Darwinian logic is complemented by a strong discourse of fear: poverty breeds instability, and the poor people are more liable to become criminals. Therefore, the spaces inhabited by these people are regarded as spaces of insecurity and crime (Mitchell, 168).

Poverty and Security

As I have mentioned in the introduction, vigilantism expresses the complicity between the population and the state's hegemonic discourses. On way in which this complicity manifests itself is through a logic of exclusion based on economic reasons. The practices of vigilante groups tap in the generalized discourse that sees the poor people as being inherently criminal, as being a security issue that cannot be solved through social measures. I will focus here on the ways in which this discourse manifests itself in contemporary Europe. The arguments that I make are pertinent to both the Italian and the Hungarian illustrations. In Italy, vigilantism targets homeless immigrants and improvised shacks built by Roma people. In Hungary, the vigilante groups patrol slum areas that are inhabited by destitute Roma people. I argue that vigilantism is also a security practice that is meant to control and punish disenfranchised categories.

The logic of criminalising and excluding categories of people based on their inferior economic position has been developing over time into a sedimented discourse. This discourse presents the 'underclass' and the socially excluded as being victims of their own faulty behaviour. Pointing to the imbalances produced by the welfare system, this discourse focuses on 'idle' young men and single mothers, underlining their 'deviance' and anti-social behaviour (Levitas, 2005: 21). This discontent with the social democratic welfare policies has been picked up by neo-conservative and neo-liberal discourses, which although apparently divergent, agree on the treatment of poverty. On the neo-conservative side, the poor are seen as threats to the moral fabric of the society, as jeopardising the values of family, nation, work, abstinence and self-control that are prevalent among the 'hard working, respectable and largely white middle classes' (Garland, 2001: 97; Levitas, 2005: 14 – 15). This threat needs to be tackled through increased social control. While leaving the 'well-to-do' free to enjoy the benefits of a marketised society, this increased social control targets the poor and tries to discipline the behaviour of 'unemployed workers, welfare mothers, immigrants, offenders and drug

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users' (Garland, 2001: 100). On the neo-liberal side, the poor are seen as facilitating economic instability. Social exclusion is to be dealt through widespread privatisation and incentives, while the state retreats from welfare provisions (Levitas, 2005: 14). However, the neo-liberal discourse converges with the neo-conservative one in upholding a strong policing state that can contain the disruptive effects of social inequalities.

The criminalisation of poverty is a security mechanism. In 'traditional' security theory, poverty has been from the outset associated with disorder. For Liberalist approaches, prosperity and free trade were key guarantees of a democratic society; democracies do not wage war among themselves, hence prosperity brings peace and poverty breeds conflict and war (Owen, 1994; Collier et.al., 2003). For Realist security theory, power and resources were inextricably linked; states that are deprived of capabilities will seek to augment their power and security by means of armed conflict (Posen, 1993: 34 – 5). Generally, IR theory and policy has long espoused a tendency to see poor populations as being more prone to social unrest and even armed conflict (Justino, 2006: 3; Ikejiaku, 2009: 16).[61] Thus, eliminating poverty and increasing access to global or local economic, social and cultural structures has been seen as a main condition for increasing security and stability. And, as a corollary, since security and development were interconnected through a 'nexus', it was considered that under-development could be lowered in a more secured environment (Chandler, 2007; Duffield, 2010; Hettne, 2010: 45).[62]

This discourse has been picked up by those students of security who focused on emancipation. By moving away from the state as a referent object, they introduced the well-being of individuals as a

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[61] A critique of this framework is found in the 'critical state-building' literature. See, among others, Chandler, 2010; Hehir and Robinson, 2007

[62] An articulation of this argument in IR theory can be found in the 'human security' literature, for example in Kaldor, 2007. For a critical assessment of this argument, see the contributions to the edited volume 'Critical Perspectives on Human Security' (Chandler and Hynek, 2011).

function of security (Krause and Williams, 1997: 43 – 44). The reduction of poverty through an increase in security was seen as a fundamental trait of emancipation.[63] However, this move has been seen as an unjustified widening of the security agenda. Exporting the mechanisms of security into various spheres of social life began to be questioned, as the exclusionary and violent nature of security measures were acknowledged. As such, the state has to be maintained as the referent object of security, and issues such as poverty need to be delineated from security, and dealt through daily political mechanisms (Buzan et. al., 1998).

Yet, as Pauline Eadie insists, poverty cannot be separated from security (Eadie, 2007: 650). Her argument for seeing the political nature of poverty opens the discussion about the structural factors that conjoin the discourses of increased security with the articulated need to tackle poverty. These structural factors refer to those contemporary conditions that redefine the role of the state in the current stage of globalization (Robinson, 2001; Jessop, 2008). On the one hand, the state withdraws from the social sphere and cuts back on welfare (Brenner, 2004), and on the other hand it reinforces its repressive nature through more control, surveillance and coercion (Bigo and Tsoukala, 2008). The state assumes more and more a 'penal' character, imprisoning extensive segments of its population, and increasing the presence of police forces on the streets. (Wacquant, 1999/2009: 58).

The main stake and battleground of this transformation of the state is the urban space. Global or not, contemporary cities constitute the context in which most economic, social and political processes take place (Brenner, 2004). Moreover, the space of the city is being disputed by a myriad of actors, from corporations to sport events. It is in the city that poverty and security meet in an intricate relation.

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[63] This argument is found mostly in the work of students of 'economic security'. See for example Tooze, 2005.

Originating almost half of a century ago from what is now called the 'broken windows theory', this relation articulates an argument for increasing security in 'deteriorated' urban areas. The 'broken windows theory' is concerned with everyday insecurities: small acts of 'disorder' can generate into 'serious' crime and can lead to 'urban decay' (Kelling and Coles, 1996: 30). Although this approach admits that poverty *per se* is not related *a priori* to crime, its proponents insist on a 'zero tolerance policy' for disorder generated by 'marginal' elements of society. They argue that the poor and the homeless people cannot be 'permitted to threaten the viability of social and commercial life in our cities by repeatedly crossing the boundaries of civil and lawful behaviour' (Kelling and Coles, 1996: 68).

As Don Mitchell argues, the homeless people have a distinct and ambivalent position within the city, being at the same time central through their visibility and ubiquity, and marginal through their undesired status and their exclusion from the 'social and commercial life' that Kelling and Coles talk about (Mitchell, 2003: 135-6). As such, the minor and repeated disorders that need to be better controlled are mostly the actions of homeless people using the urban environment as a private space (Mitchell, 2003: 168). From here, there is only a small step to the argument that poverty in general and homelessness in particular breed disorder and crime (Levitas, 2005: 19; 214).

In most contemporary cities, the wide-spread response to this argument has been to crack down on disorder by criminalizing the poor. Cities are not just arenas of financial and trade flows, they are also 'central agents in the many forms of violence brought about by capitalist imperialism' (Graham, 2010: 11). The intersection between violence, war and urban spaces has been studied by many scholars (Coward, 2009; Coaffee and Wood, 2006). Because of their strategic role and their concentration of capital, critical infrastructure and large populations, cities have become extremely vulnerable to violent conflicts, war, and even utter destruction (Coward, 2009: 401). Martin Coward

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underlines the crucial role played by security practices in this respect. The urban space becomes securitized, as an effect of its vulnerability and need of special protection; on the other hand, security itself becomes urbanized, insofar as the agenda of possible threats and their solutions is being increasingly connected to urban spaces. Mike Davis paints a dystopian image of how this was performed in Los Angeles as early as the 1980's: from barrel-shaped bus benches that impede sleeping and the removal of public toilets, to the intensification of police presence and increase in CCTV surveillance, the city becomes a fortress that safeguards the population from the dangerous poor (Davis, 1990: 233 – 257).

Conclusion

This chapter laid out the theoretical, methodological and substantive premises of my thesis. It provided the theoretical background for my main argument – vigilantism is a set of security practices that are at the same time non-elitist and intentional. I have analysed the debates in the critical security literature, in order to position my argument against the theoretical imaginaries of two distinct epistemologies: one that sees security as emerging from actors endowed with high levels of securitizing capital – usually state elites – which have the necessary capacity to articulate decisions on security; and another one that sees security as a set of everyday practices enacted by actants that do know the final results of their actions, and thus their intentions and decisions get dissipated in a horizontal social ontology. In contrast to both these analyses, I built a theoretical framework for the study of vigilantism, in which the concept of intentionality is re-thought in a strict relationship with the concept of intersubjectivity.

Further on, I introduced my methodological and substantive conceptual framework. The concept of security-scape will help me isolate a particular situation of security, in which vigilante actors perform security side by side with other actors and actants. In the following chapters, I will use two such situations – the Hungarian village of Gyongyospata and the Central train station in Milan, Italy. I also introduce the concept of security demand, which accounts for the intentionality of vigilantes. In what follows, I will outline two mechanisms of this security demand – in the first security-scape I will analyse the far-right ideology of the Hungarian patrols, and in the second security-scape I will analyse the criminalisation of security in urban spaces that underpins the Italian group called City Angels.

III. THE HUNGARIAN PATROLS IN GYÖNGYÖSPATA

Introduction

This chapter analyses the vigilante practices of several groups that have mostly been active in Hungary in 2011, in the village of Gyongyospata. I will show that these groups practice everyday and intentional security. Their intentionality is given by their far-right program. The patrols instantiate a supply to the security demands of the population that they are addressing. This supply is focused on the discourse of the 'Gypsy crime', which they construct as a problem that needs to be addressed urgently through citizens' patrols. These patrols flaunt their ideological beliefs in a spectacular way, through uniforms, weapons and artefacts, and this spectacle serves to create a lasting impression in

their audiences. The 'everydayness' of their acts is given by their ambiguous relationship with the state. On the one hand, the patrols operate largely under the umbrella of the far-right parliamentary party *Jobbik*; moreover, the police and central authorities have tacitly allow them to perform their acts with little or no obstacles. On the other hand, the patrols have a relatively expanded autonomy from the government, and are able to operate without the state's support. Even if the state has appropriated their discourses criminalizing the Roma population, the Hungarian government has disassociated itself from the actions of the patrols, and has made it clear that it would not tolerate vigilante activities.

In the spring of 2011, the Hungarian and the international public opinion woke up with a ghoul on their doorstep, a skeleton which everybody thought to have been long since buried. In several villages not more than a hundred kilometres away from Budapest, people in military uniforms were patrolling the streets and attacking the Roma people. In 2009, when the uniforms first appeared, after the alarm had been sounded in every corner of the mass media, everyone thought that they were only an isolated occurrence, meant only to draw attention. The patrols re-emerged however after two years, more coherent, more articulated, and more prone to act.

What was obvious from the start to most observers was the anti-Roma discourse of these patrols. The 'Gypsies' were seen as the source of all evil in Hungary, and the uniformed patrols were set on defending everybody against this evil. The events accelerated and culminated in April 2011 with a crisis situation in the village of Gyöngyöspata, where several patrols had been active. Apart for the widespread consternation with the high level of racism in Hungary, and for some expressed fears about an imminent civil war between Hungarians and the Roma population, what was from the start difficult to explain was the very idea that groups of people would constitute themselves into 'self-defence' units, with a clear military character, but with no obvious or transparent connection to any

state structures. Moreover, these units had a clear purpose of tackling what they saw as a security threat, embodied by 'Gypsy crime'.

These groups enjoyed high levels of support. This is evident in the number of people attending their meetings, the help and encouragement that they received from the local populations and even in the thoroughly apathetic reaction of state authorities – as it will be shown below. The main logic that drives Hungarian far-right patrols is a mechanism of addressing perceived threats to the cultural and national identity of the population of the country. It is a logic of security, one that operates on the basis of employing different measures of exclusion and oppression in the name of protecting a threatened group. These exclusionary oppressive measures are mainly legitimated through the spectacle of the paramilitary patrols that revive a romanticized glorious and heroic past.

This chapter has three sections: the first deals with history, the second with the securityscape of Gyongyospata, and the third with analysis and theoretical considerations. The chapter will begin by exploring the history of far-right patrols in Hungary. This is necessary to flesh out the context in which the existence of groups has been not only possible but also highly legitimated after 2006. Subsequently, the chapter will devote its central part to the unfolding of the events of spring 2011 in the village of Gyongyospata, where several patrols attracted a good deal of attention by conducting intimidating and at times violent acts towards the local Roma population. I use these events and their location as a security-scape, to explore the variety of actors and their practices. In the final section of the chapter, I underline the ways in which the Hungarian patrols are at the same time intentional and non-state security practices. I do this by analysing the ideological connection between their supply of security and the popular demands, which are joined by the far-right trope of the 'Gypsy crime'. I devote two sub sections to the 'Gypsy crime' discourse, as well as to the logic of spectacle that

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underpins the practices of the far-right patrols in Hungary. I end the chapter by highlighting the ambiguous relationship between the patrols and the state.

1.1. Short history of far-right and paramilitary groups in Hungary

I briefly trace a number of historical moments that depict the genealogy of far-right vigilante groups in Hungary in order to chart the context in which they re-emerged in the late 2000's. Such an exercise of delineating a pedigree also serves to emphasize the intentionality of the patrols that I will study later. The patrols of 2011 draw many themes and practices from the patrols of 1919. Hungary has a tradition of hyper-nationalist sentiments that have often been translated in retributive, nostalgic

and even chauvinistic ideological articulations of martyrdom, victimization and struggle for reinstating a glorious past (Szocs, 1998). Paramilitary units with extreme-right ideologies have emerged immediately after the creation of the independent Hungarian state, after the First World War, and have been behind what is now termed 'the White Terror'. Their activities were directed mostly against communist groups and Jewish people, under the general ideological umbrella of the Trianon treaty revisionism; however, other categories were also targeted, such as unruly peasants (Bodo, 2010: 712 − 4). Mareš and Stojar (2012: 161) mention the Szeged Fascists that 'later developed into the *Magyar Országos Véderő Egylet* (Hungarian National Defense Association)'. Bela Bodo (2004; 2006; 2010; 2011) provides fascinating accounts of groups such as the Pronay Batallion from Budapest, the Hejjas militia from Kekcsemet, the Simony Hussars, the Jankovich militia, the Ostenburg Batallion from Sopron, the League for the Defense of Territorial Integrity (*Területvédő Liga*) in Budapest, two university student battalions, and many more. The social composition of these troops was most diverse: rural farmers, military officers, refugees from lost territories and even aristocrats.[64] They formed an intricate and ferocious network of terror that paved the way for the totalitarian Horthy regime and the far-right Arrow Cross Party of the interwar period.

The end of the Nazi domination over Europe and the instauration of Soviet Communism in Hungary did not, however, put an end to the paramilitary phenomenon. As early as the 1950's, the Communist Youth (KISZ) had a military wing called *Ifjú Gárda* (Youth Defense Guard) that was similar to the Single Party's *Munkásorség* (Workers' Guard). They were composed of trained men that were ready to defend the communist state (Kürti, 2003: 39). In the succeeding decades, however, the patrols

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[64] Bodó, 2010. Bodo offers extended explanations for the violence perpetrated by the militias. In brief, for him, this violence was a cross-product between a sort of sadism on behalf of the upper and middle classes directed against the poor (Bodó, 2004: 141; 144) and the Durkheim-inspired turn of the century 'anomie' or 'normlessness', which '[manifests] itself, among other things, in asocial behaviour and arbitrary violence against civilians.' (Bodó, 2006: 125).

vanished. Yet the extremist ideologies that had animated them in the past managed to survive in the underground. Molnar (2010) argues that the communist regime fostered a version of anti-Zionism that was consistent with its anti-capitalist world-view; as such, Israel was seen as the Jewish 'aggressor' of the 'oppressed' Arab Palestine, and therefore, the communists sided with the latter. This development in particular would largely explain the powerful re-emergence of anti-Semitism in Hungary after 1990. In parallel, another monster was rearing its ugly face even during communism – anti-Gypsy-ism. The Hungarian skinhead subculture in the 1980's featured an emerging antipathy against the Roma population (Kürti, 2003: 48). Overall, such forms of racism, complemented by Trianon revisionism (Ligeti and Nyeste, 2006: 97 – 9), ensured that the ideology of the patrols survived during communism in their absence:

'It has to be emphasized, though, that - as a clandestine subculture - right-wing extremism did exist before 1989. The far-right militants in Hungary during the Kadar regime were the fans of anti-Arab and anti-Roma rock bands of the 1980s and a minority of the fans of the suburban Budapest football club Ferencvaros. They were typically underclass ignoramuses from the youth of suburban Budapest and of some other inner cities, for whom, as was put by [...] Ferenc Kôszeg, "the Nazi salute was the only remaining form of political protest", which made them rather dissimilar to their counterparts today.' (Szocs, 1998: 1097)

Hence, the re-emergence of far-right discourses and extremist practices after 1990 is far from being a surprising event. As Kürti admits, 'The use of Hungarism and the Hungarist Movement is a testimony that, at present' organized neo-Nazis view themselves as heirs to the 1944 Nazi paramilitary organization that was responsible for the brutal attacks on the Jewish population of

Hungary at the end of World War II.' (Kürti, 2003: 43) The steadfast growth of the far-right in

Hungary during the 90's is well documented and will not be mentioned here (Bernath et al., 2005).

1.2. The Far-Right in Hungary since 2006

Perhaps the keystone event that catalysed the hyper-nationalist sentiments and at the same time

brought into the mainstream media attention the existence of well-organized far right groups in

Hungary was the series of riots of September 2006.[65] Triggered by a speech made by the prime

minister of the time, the riots and violent protests of 2006 had far right groups[66] and football

hooligans as main initiators[67]. Among these, the figure of László Toroczkai, the leader of an

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[65] For a subjective chronology of the events: http://riotsinhungary.blog.hu/page/2 ; photos: http://index.hu/politika/belfold/2006/elkurtuk/galeriak/ ; http://index.hu/gal/?dir=0609/belfold/TV_3galeri/ ; http://index.hu/gal/?dir=0609/belfold/TV4_galeri/ ; http://index.hu/gal/?dir=0609/belfold/mtv6/

[66] Such as the '*Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom*' http://www.hvim.hu/gondolatok

[67] http://index.hu/belfold/ost060919/ 'Meanwhile one smaller group-led by Laszlo Toroczkai, leader of the Junior Movement of Sixty-Four Counties/Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom/ went to the headquarteres of Hungarian Television/MTV-Magyar Televizio/ to Szbadsag Square.'

extremist group advocating the reinstating of Greater Hungary, stood out clearly as one of the main organizers.[68]

At the point of these riots, the messages of the far right groups were focused on vague ideas of national redemption, with rare outbursts of anti-Semitism and conspiracy-theory inspired accusations towards the current political elite. The symbolism displayed on flags, banners and clothes of the rioters was limited to ultra-nationalistic elements such as the Greater Hungarian map, or the Arpad flag.[69] The riots seemed to serve as a pretext for these groups to articulate their ideas publicly and on a large scale for the first time, but these ideas have never been seen as the dominant ideology of the violent acts of 2006.[70]

The following years, however, witnessed hyper-nationalist and anti-Semitist feelings being transgressed from rhetoric to 'direct actions', as seen in the paramilitary actions of the 'Hunnia Movement', founded in 2007 by Toroczkai and another 'hero' of the 2006 riots, György Budaházy.[71] These violent actions were aimed more generally at 'corrupt politicians', that were to be 'hunted down' for their lack of national honour and connections to 'Jewishness'; such was the case of the attack on politician Sándor Csintalan in 2008, who was assaulted and called 'Jewish henchman'.[72]

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[68] http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20060918kezd.html '*Csak romok maradtak az MTV előtt'* ('Just before the ruining of the Hungarian National Television')

[69] See the Index.hu media outlet images: http://index.hu/gal/?dir=0611/belfold/astoria1104/

[70] Although the media has in some cases shed light on the high numbers of skin-heads present in the demonstrations: http://index.hu/kultur/eletmod/lonsdale0920/ '*Miért divat a Lonsdale zavargáskor?'* ('Why is it fashionable to wear Lonsdale on a riot?')

[71] '*Hazafiak látogatása Sukoró polgármesterénél'* ('Patriots visit the mayor of Sukoró') http://kuruc.info/r/6/39215/

[72] The Athena Institute states that 'The assault on Sándor Csintalan, a known Hungarian public figure in 2008 can be considered as the bloodiest act carried out by the hate group so far. [...] Based on the public figure's account the attackers, while they were beating him up with a loaded cane, called him a "Jewish henchman" several times during the incident.' http://www.athenainstitute.eu/en/map/olvas/31#read

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Another target of far right violence was LGBT and generally sexual minorities' events, locations and personalities. The annual LGBT Pride Parade held in Budapest in 2009, for example, has witnessed a widespread and violent opposition from various groups that were articulating ultra-nationalist discourses. These groups harassed, attacked and threw stones and explosive objects at the parade participants, and also attacked a club in which the participants took shelter after the parade. Similar events occurred in 2011, when far right groups in uniforms attacked the participants in several locations.

The event of the LGBT parade in Budapest has become a traditional arena of organized display of increased far-right violence and harassment. I have participated in several occasions in this parade, and each time the police had to install two rows of fences to protect the parading people from the rage of the far-right counter-demonstrators. Two personal experiences can illustrate what I mean by 'rage'. In 2009, I could not enter the pride march, which had been closed at 3pm for security reasons. Instead, I ended up on the other side of the fences, where I met scores of men and women shouting derogatory slurs towards the pride participants. They were also throwing bottles and stones towards the march. Later on, at the endpoint of the march, in the central square of Budapest, the counter-demonstrators attempted to break the police lines and assault the pride participants. I stayed with them as we were pushed back by the riot police – I was among men and women that were wearing all manners of nationalist and far-right symbols and constantly shouting 'dirty gays'. It was my first 'police confrontation' in Budapest. A second episode happened in 2011, when I was trying to leave the pride march with my affinity group. We were intercepted by a considerable group of people that started to verbally and physically assault us. Some of us tried to push back, but we were clearly caught in a dangerous place. It took again the intervention of the police, who created a cordon between us and the counter-demonstrators. However, the situation was not de-escalating, and the

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police seemed to give up the idea of protecting us. It took the arrival of a bus that was transporting back some pride participants from Berlin to rescue us. We drove outside of Budapest and then back in, just to avoid being followed by anybody with aggressive intentions. Needless to say, all of us were in a state of panic throughout this incident.[73]

These incidents portray a landscape of quite dispersed and ideologically un-coherent ultra-nationalist paramilitary actions, isolated events in which evanescent groups perform violent acts that are not inter-connected. What put an end to this dispersion and signalled the appearance of what can be called a coherent and organized extreme right group at a national level was the formation in August 2007 of the *Magyar Garda* – the Hungarian Guard. It is intimately connected to the main extreme right party in Hungary – *Jobbik* (its leader, Gabor Vona, is the founder of the Guard). The group defined itself, and was seen from the start as a sort of 'party militia'. The Hungarian Guard was formed through an 'oath of allegiance' took by men and women wearing black uniforms with the ultra-nationalist symbols already made famous in the 2006 riots. Among the guard's goals, the proclaiming document stated the strengthening of national self-defence and being the backbone of an eventual National Guard (or 'gendarmerie').[74]

With the formation of the Magyar Garda, far-right wing paramilitarism in Hungary developed a more structured dimension. The need for such a group was clearly articulated upon a perceived deficit of security, and so the 'Guard' was supposed to fill a gap in tackling threats to national security (LeBor,

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[73] The author's own participatory observations, August-September 2009, Budapest

[74] http://magyargarda.hu/alapito_nyilatkozat '*Alapító nyilatkozat és az Eskü szövege*' ('Founding Statement and the text of the oath'). '*Része vagy gerince kíván lenni a majdan felállítandó Nemzetőrségnek.*' ('It claims to be a part or spine of a future National Guard (*Nemzetőrség*) ')

2008: 34; Jordan, 2008; Woodard, 2008[75]). Yet, this gap was not only perceived as a capability gap, but also a moral and ideological one. The Hungarian Guard uttered a discourse of historical decadence, whereby internal and external enemies threaten the daily well-being of ethnic Hungarians everywhere. This was doubled by a clearly expressed readiness for action: indeed, the Guard quickly moved from public displays of their black uniforms, to organized marches and parades all across Hungary. Crucially, the Hungarian Guard saw its security functions as inseparable from a coherent ideological set.

This ideological set was constructed around the need to protect ethnic Hungarians from enemies that were to be found mostly inside the country. Thus, the group departed slightly from revisionist objectives related to the old territories of Greater Hungary, since these were anyway out of reach. It also slightly departed from anti-Semitism, probably also since it seemed too vague of a target in a country where most of the Jews disappeared during the Second World War, or left shortly afterwards (Jordan, 2008).[76] The new threat was to be found in what the Guard discursively constructed as the 'Gypsy crime', which will be discussed later in this chapter. The Athena Institute writes that 'in late 2007, early 2008 more than 200 members of the Hungarian Guard participated – and marched in formations – in rallies announced as "demonstrations against Gipsy crime". The rally in Tatárszentgyörgy was labeled by the Head of State as an extremist anti-Roma power demonstration.'[77]

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[75] '"Basically there is no army in Hungary at the moment," explains Mr. Fuzessy, who says force reductions have left it impotent. "If the worst happens and there was no one to defend Hungary, it is the aim of the Hungarian Guard to be the foundation of our national defense."' (quoted in Woodard, 2008)

[76] Although anti-Semitism is still an integral part of the discourse by which the group explains to its supporters the international pressure on Hungary to conduct its internal policies following a multicultural model of tolerance towards the Roma populations.

[77] http://www.athenainstitute.eu/en/map/olvas/30#read

When interviewed about the differences between the Guard and different private security companies, one Magyar Garda spokesperson talked about the training of their members: '*A Magyar Gárda előszeretettel hivatkozik a Krav maga nevű, Izraelben kidolgozott önvédelmi technikát oktató egyesületre, amelynek tagjai fekete ruhát is viselnek. Az önvédelmet tanító egyesületek azonban nem katonai szervezettségűek, és nem kötődnek pártokhoz, politikai ideológiákhoz. A biztonsági cégek alapvetően üzleti vállalkozások. Nem jó, ha túl erős politikai kapcsolataik vannak, és ők is megnézhetnék, kiket vesznek fel, mert nagyon zűrös arcok is előfordulnak náluk. A Magyar Gárdát viszont azzal az indokkal hívták létre, hogy megvédjék a magyarságot.*'[78] We see here a disposition for immediate physical action. As in the case of the City Angels from Milan, Hungarian vigilantes also use *Krav Maga* – a style of martial arts which brings together many traditional forms of fighting, and is above all based on improvisation. *Krav Maga* is a violent form of martial arts. Therefore it becomes clear that by using it, the *Magyar Garda* and its successors had clear intentions of direct and offensive physical contact. Thus, the lack of weapons is compensated by a propensity to fight 'dirty'. This is crucial, because it shows that in Europe, vigilantism can be as violent as in other parts of the world.

The Guard served as an umbrella for a variety of far right groups and ideas, and at the same time managed to construct a systematic discourse that targeted the Roma population as the main threat of a securitizing discourse that placed the Guard as the main protector of the Hungarian nation, not just in terms of its territorial integrity, but crucially, in terms of its moral, cultural and historical identity.

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[78]Quote from Joob Sandor, '*Magyar Gárda: báránybőrbe bújt farkasok?*', Index.hu, 27.08.2007, http://index.hu/belfold/garda2503/. Translation: 'The Hungarian Guard often refers to Krav Maga martial-arts clubs where the usual/traditional colour of training-clothes is also black. Nevertheless, the martial arts clubs are not organized according the structures of paramilitarist and combatant units and they are not connected to any political parties or ideologies. The security services [on the other hand] are basically business oriented. It used to be difficult, if they have too strong connections with politicians or politics and they should be more careful when they decide who to hire, because it happens that there may appear real troublemakers among their employees. However: the Hungarian Guard had been found with the purpose of protecting the Hungarians.'

One of their main slogans, which they popularized well beyond their own supporters' circle, is 'Hungary belongs to the Hungarians!' The Guard was banned in 2009[79], after developing branches even in Romania[80]; subsequently, it re-formed itself as a cultural group[81], and then as a newly born 'New Hungarian Guard', that under the current political configuration of Hungary's parliament, where *Jobbik* has no less than 18% of the seats, enjoys immunity and freedom.[82]

At this point it is worth mentioning the activity of what the Athena Institute calls the 'Lone wolves'. These are singular individuals that have the capacity to articulate mobilizing discourses, and at the same time to organize and perform acts by themselves, or with very few conspirators.[83] The case of László Toroczkai has been already mentioned. Currently, he is the leader of 'The Outlaw's Army' (*Betyársereg*), one of the most ferocious paramilitary extreme right groups in Hungary. He is also the editor of the far-right publication '*Magyar Jelen'*, in the pages of which he incites to racial hatred, and proclaims the Roma and African populations as threatening Hungary.[84]

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[79] '*Jogerős ítélet mondja ki a Magyar Gárda Egyesület feloszlatását'* (Final judgment states the dissolution of the Hungarian Guard Association) http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20090701-magyar-gardafeloszlatas-masodfoku-itelet.html

[80] '*În cuibul Gărzii Maghiare'* ('In the nest of the Hungarian Guard'), Adevarul, Bucharest, 11 January 2010 http://www.adevarul.ro/actualitate/eveniment/In_cuibul_Garzii_Maghiare_0_187781779.html

[81] Eva S. Balogh argued in December 2008 in the *Hungarian Spectrum* that 'The case was a little tricky because the organizers of the Magyar Gárda tried to insulate the troops from any litigation against the alleged cultural organization. They created a separate legal entity comprised of the uniformed fellows with their black boots and insignia suspiciously resembling that of the Hungarian Nazis of Ferenc Szálasi. It was legally distinct from the original organization with its self-described cultural mission. Thus we had a Magyar Gárda Mozgalom (Movement of the Hungarian Guard, the troops) and a Magyar Gárda Egyesület (Association of the Hungarian Guard, the so-called cultural association). It was with this legal separation that the lawyers working on behalf of Jobbik, the extreme right party responsible for the creation of the Hungarian Guard, tried to save at least the uniformed units that belong to the Movement. Thus, even if the Association meets its fate and is deemed illegal, the guys in uniform can continue their activities.' http://esbalogh.typepad.com/hungarianspectrum/2008/12/the-hungarian-guard-end-game.html

[82] 'Police investigate "new" Magyar Gárda; former minister mulls banning Jobbik', 14 July 2009 http://www.politics.hu/20090714/police-investigate-new-magyar-garda-former-minister-mulls-banning-jobbik/; see also 'New Hungarian Guard', on Athena Institute's database: http://www.athenainstitute.eu/en/map/olvas/42

[83] http://www.athenainstitute.eu/en/news/read/189

[84] 'A special holiday offer for everyone who bought our Jewish-Gypsy onslaught conspiracy', 27 April 2011 http://www.politics.hu/20110427/a-special-holiday-offer-for-everyone-who-bought-our-jewishgypsy-onslaught-conspiracy/

Another prominent singular figure of the paramilitary far right is György Budaházy, who was detained in 2009 and placed in house arrest in 2011. Acting together with a small group of extremists called the 'Hunnia Movement', Budaházy planned a coordinated series of bomb attacks on several estates of leading politicians.[85] His detention sparked a widespread campaign and a series of demonstrations that demanded his release and showed him as a true Hungarian hero. He himself emphasizes his illustrious Hungarian ancestry, dating back almost a millennium ago, legitimizing him to speak on behalf of the true Hungarian nation.[86] The third figure of the 'lone wolf' is Zsolt Tyirityán, also associated with the 'Outlaw's Army'. In his public appearances and speeches, he is bluntly advocating direct confrontation with the 'enemies' of the country. In 2010, he urged the creation of a national force that would include 'vigorous' and 'genuine' warriors, in order to restore the 'genetics of the Hungarian fighter'.[87] In August 2011, during a far right festival, he held a lecture on guerrilla warfare, in which he argued that sustained violence against the system has to be motivated by a coherent set of beliefs.[88] He also declared (in the translation of the Athena Institute) that 'we must reach a point when if one sees another skin colour, he is able to pull the trigger of an automatic weapon'.[89] The 'automatic weapon' is not meant to be a metaphor, but a direct reference to a need to move from a 'symbolic' to a 'real' struggle against the perceived internal enemies of the Hungarian nation.

The examples of the 'lone wolves' serve to illustrate the ways in which certain singular individuals with a certain type and level of social and securitizing capital, manage to articulate securitizing

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[85] 'Budaházy's group of radicals allegedly planned series of attacks', 26 October 2010
http://www.politics.hu/20101026/budahazys-group-of-radicals-allegedly-planned-series-of-attacks/
[86] '*Budaházy György nem adja fel*', Népszabadság, 28 March 2007 http://nol.hu/archivum/archiv-440509
[87] http://thecontrarianhungarian.wordpress.com/2011/08/10/hungarian-neo-nazis-claim-being-ready-to-take-up-arms/
[88] '*Vona szövetségese: Mi majd le merünk lőni egy rohadt, tetves zsidót?*', ATV, 9 August, 2011, http://atv.hu/cikk/20110809_vona_szovetsegese_mi_majd_le_merunk_loni_egy_rohadt_tetves_zsidot
[89] http://athenaintezet.hu/en/map/olvas/33#read

discourses. By mobilizing elements of idealized folklore, history, mythology and hyberbolicized nationalist sentiments with narratives of threats, fears and community, these individuals have a fundamental contribution to a discourse that instigates to self-defensive collective action against the Roma population.

The Hungarian Guard was made illegal in 2009, but it resurfaced a year later, along with a plethora of new organizations that have converging goals and discourses. Already towards the end of 2009, several violent incidents with racist character had been reported throughout Hungary. In October 2009 in Káloz, a few uniformed members of the Hungarian Guard got involved in a fight with local Roma people. In January 2010 in Hangács two Roma men were murdered by a group of twenty people that were shouting racist insults.[90] But it was in the beginning of 2011 that the frequency and intensity of paramilitary attacks on Roma communities intensified. The Athena Institute reports that in the first half of 2011 alone there were 14 cases of hate crimes motivated by 'racism', in contrast to 2010, when there were 11 cases of violence against Roma communities during the entire year.[91]

1.3. The newly intensified far-right in 2011

In April 2011 there were two serious incidents that signalled a new rise of militaristic far right forces. In Hejőszalonta, members of the *Jobbik* party and the New Hungarian Guard initiated a campaign against 'Gypsy terror', after an alleged murder of a local woman by a Roma man. The campaign

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[90] http://www.athenainstitute.eu/en/hatecrimerecord_full
[91] http://www.athenainstitute.eu/en/hatecrimerecord_full The Institute uses the specific terminology of 'racist' hate crimes to refer to crimes against the Roma population.

polarized the small village, literally turning neighbours against each other, as the previously tolerated Roma community found itself targeted and harassed on a daily basis by 'Hungarian' locals. This all culminated with a 'commemorative march' organized by the two above mentioned groups, in which several hundred people walked in a procession with torches and ultra-nationalist symbols, and shouting anti-Roma slogans. This march was countered by a protest organized in the same village by several Roma organizations, human rights and anti-fascist groups, and it was a first-time display of a nascent organized resistance to the far-right renewal in Hungary.

I have travelled in Hejőszalonta along with these groups to participate in the counter-protest. At the entrance to the village, the police was filtering the access to the two protest sites. They asked the driver of our car to which 'side' are we going to – the *Jobbik* side or 'the other one'. The counter protest was rather small, especially when compared to the large cortege of the far-right supporters. This cortege was parading around the village, while our small counter protest was confined to a street that was perpendicular to the route of *Jobbik's* march. Therefore, the only moment of contact – visual and sound-wise – was when the cortege passed in front of us. This point was heavily policed and fenced off with metal barricades, in order to prevent any physical contact. The *Jobbik* supporters were carrying torches Hungarian flags as well as a variety of far-right symbols, such as the outlawed Arpad flag.[92] They were constantly hurling racist insults at the counter protesters. We were prepared with banners that were saying 'Nazi-free Hungary', and a few of us were convinced that the verbal violence coming from 'the other side' needed a proper response. However, the mayor of the village urged everybody to 'keep civil' and refrain from any 'provocation'. During the entire time that it took the *Jobbik* cortege to pass in front of us, the counter protesters, asked by the encouraged by the

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[92] See also an 'Index.hu' news report here
http://index.hu/belfold/2011/04/02/civilek_es_romak_a_jobbik_ellen_hejoszalontan/

mayor, sang the Hungarian anthem. This was a gesture meant to show that 'we are all Hungarians', despite the racist injuries.

It was after this encounter that I started to feel uneasy about calling the *Jobbik* supporters 'Nazis'. During the Hungarian anthem, some of us did shout 'Nazis go home!' at them, and we got in response '*you* are the Nazis!' As easy as it may have been for them to reverse the insult and throw it back at us, it was in perfect tune with their political imaginary at that point. For *Jobbik* and its supporters, the counter protest was a way to legitimise the murder that was allegedly committed by the Roma man – especially since they saw their action as a 'commemorative march' rather than a protest. I understood this when talking to a local woman that told us how unbearable to them life 'among the Gypsies' is. The sight of a big cortege, parading in the village in the night, with torches and flags and shouting obscenities at us was of course as unpleasant and frightening as it can get. However, I felt that in that particular situation calling these people 'Nazis' was not the best possible counter-attack. An anti-fascist political strategy needed a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. It also needed a richer political imagination and vocabulary, one that would articulate a coherent discourse to effectively shake the general perception that *Jobbik* is doing anybody a favour. This discourse never got off the ground, and the opposition to *Jobbik's* violence continued to be driven by nationalism and outdated slogans, such as 'Nazis go home'.

Two weeks later, in Hajdúhadház, another group of vigilantes, called '*Szebb Jövőért'* ('For a Better Future') started organizing patrols[93] against the Roma community. On the 13th of April, member of the patrols captured and handcuffed a presumed burglar of Roma ethnicity, which was handed over

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[93] Watch for example http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RbRDiF9oBY ('The Hungarians want better, and the Roma want calmer future')

to the local police. During the entire action, the patrols were wearing uniforms with the Arpad flag, and they were armed with batons.[94]

2.1. The events of Gyöngyöspata

'…a milestone in Hungary's post-1989 history'[95]

It was in the small village of Gyöngyöspata, 50 kilometres east of Budapest that the height of paramilitary activity directed against Roma population has been reached in 2011. In February 2011 the far-right news channel Barikad TV aired an investigative video report that was set on raising an alarm signal about the everyday 'Gypsy terror' among the residents of Gyöngyöspata.[96] The video was announcing a 'civil war' – an issue which will be analysed later in this chapter. It was mostly focused on a group of elderly women complaining about the insolence of Roma teenagers. From these complaints, an entire atmosphere of panic and terror in the village was evoked. Moreover, an old local man had committed suicide at the beginning of the year, claiming that he could not beat the

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[94] Nemzeti TV ('National TV') news from 13 April 2011:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gm0RZDiFZVI&feature=player_embedded#!
[95] Feischmidt and Szombati, 2012: 12
[96] Barikad TV: *'"Cigányterror" - Heves megye a polgárháború szélén áll'* ('Gypsy Terror – The Heves county on the brink of civil war') http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zc-YJww4huM

terror of the Gypsies anymore. The video portrays a community torn apart by a fear against which there seems to be no remedy.

In the beginning of the following month, the *Szebb Jövőért* organization announced that it will send patrols in the village in order to help the locals defend themselves.[97] The leader of the organization, Attila László, claimed that 'We knew that we need to help the Hungarian people, who live in these circumstances'.[98] He also declared that the patrols were to be a temporary solution, as the final goal was to help the villagers organize themselves against the Roma terror. The local Hungarian population welcomed these initiatives, and some people even joined the ranks of the patrols. Soon, other far right organizations joined in the village vigilante patrols, including the *Betyarsereg* (the 'Outlaw's Army') and the *Véderő* ('Defence') groups. At the same time, the locals formed their own patrols, acting against the same terror. These efforts converged into a concerted and sustained set of actions against the local Roma population. People were being harassed with whips and dogs, as the paramilitaries dressed in black and with nationalist symbols were patrolling the Roma neighbourhood of the village. All this was happening in the absence of any police force.

Under the cautionary message that the 'Gypsy terror'[99] will create a 'civil war' between Hungarians and Roma in Hungary, in the middle of March 2011, the parliamentary far right party *Jobbik* and its supporters held a demonstration in the village, that was meant to raise the alarm of 'Gypsy terror', and at the same time to be a display of force. Imbued with nationalist and racist declarations from participants, the demonstration gathered over 2500 people. One report estimates that approximately half of these were local residents (Feischmidt and Szombati, 2012: 16). In the words of one *Jobbik*

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[97] '*Önvédelmi közösségek szerveződnek Gyöngyöspatán*' ('Communities organize in self-defence in Gyongyospata'), on the website of the Szebb Jövőért group
http://www.szebbjovoert.com/index.php?q=hireink/bejegyzes/onvedelmi_kozossegek_szervezodnek_Gyongyospatan-1
[98] idem
[99] The discourse around 'Gypsy crime' and 'Gypsy terror' will be analysed further on in this chapter.

official, this number made the village have once again the ideal Hungarian 'ethnic ratio', which had been off-balanced ever since the Roma population started living there.[100]

This event succeeded in placing the problem of Gyöngyöspata onto the press and the government's attention, although no serious action had been taken at that time against the far right organizations involved. However, two days later, it seemed that the *Szebb Jövőért* and the other groups had renounced patrolling in the village, on the account of a presumed success of their campaign, and left the self-organized local groups in their place.[101]

Yet the situation did not stabilize in Gyöngyöspata. The leader of *Véderő*, Tamas Eszes acquired private property in the village, and with the support of the local population, started organizing a 'training camp'. This was announced in early April as a three days event in which participants would learn different strategies of self-defence that could be used against 'internal and external enemies'. The camp was also declared to compensate for the lack of military and physical training among Hungarian youth, and was organized by strict military hierarchical principles. The camp was to take place in the village, on Eszes' property[102], on April the 22nd (the Catholic Easter weekend). The news quickly broke out, and the human rights watchdogs alarmed the authorities about this perceived new assault on the Roma community.

Despite Eszes's denial that the 'Gypsy terror' was part of the camp's rationale, one journalist reported him deploring the attacks that himself and his companions have suffered from the side of the 'Gypsies'. First, a score of thirty Gypsies allegedly attacked the camp members, who called the police for protection – a story which the police refuted. Consequently, Eszes, a former member of

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[100] Quoted by Orsolya Feher, 'Roma neighborhood under control of neo-nazis in Hungary', Indymedia, 17 March 2011 http://indymediacall.blogspot.com/2011/03/roma-neighborhood-under-control-of-neo.html
[101] http://www.athenaintezet.eu/en/news/read/135
[102] http://athenaintezet.eu/en/infocus/read/8

Magyar garda, was paraphrased laying out his version of the conflict: 'Tamás Eszes says that they haven't attacked any Roma houses but the Gypsies are screaming at them all the time, threatening them, spitting on their cars when they cross the Gypsy row to get from the cellar to the village. After this no one should imagine that they are going to bring them cookies, says Eszes, and will introduce themselves politely to the neighbors.'[103]

The events that followed seem to be taken from a thriller movie. Panic soon burst out in the Roma community, which was already being under constant harassment by the remaining patrols in the village. On the night of the 21st, the Roma women and children were embarked on a bus and driven to an unknown location, allegedly for their own protection (on some accounts, on a 'planned holiday'[104]). There is still uncertainty as to who organized this. Initially it had been thought that it was the Red Cross, but the NGO soon dismissed this claim (I will return to this episode later). On the morning of the 22nd the village was flooded by national police forces, which were there for the first time since the incidents began few weeks earlier. The police arrested the organizers, and the camp was cancelled.[105] The leader of the camp himself, Tamas Eszes, dressed in camouflage military uniform and boots and wearing a red beret, was detained by the police. Sandor Pinter, the Hungarian minister of Interior arrived on the spot in order to calm the situation. In the afternoon of that same day, groups of human rights activists and social workers arrived in the village, to express solidarity with the Roma community. They found only adult and old Roma men in the village; they also discovered that the participants in the camp had not fled the village, but were being hidden by the

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[103] Quoted in Szabo Zoltan, 'Gárdaklónok támadása', translated by Orsi Virag and available here
http://gyongyospatasolidarity.wordpress.com/2011/04/23/attack-of-the-guardist-clones/
[104] Roma in Hungary leave town to escape vigilantes, Fox News, 22 April 2011
http://www.foxnews.com/world/2011/04/22/roma-hungary-leave-town-escape-vigilantes/
[105] 'Véderő Gyöngyöspatán Húsvéthétfőn', Nepszabadsag Online, 26 April 2011 http://www.noltv.hu/video/3371.html

Hungarian locals in their homes. After the Easter weekend, the police and activists fled, and the patrols returned.

I have travelled with my political affinity group to Gyöngyöspata in the evening of the 22nd of April. When we arrived, the village was in a profound state of tension. There were police cars everywhere, checking the documents of everyone who was entering the village. We were directed to the neighbourhood where the Roma people were living, and where the group of human rights activists were already settled. After a short walk through the village in the night, I realised that many of the people who came for the *Véderő* camp are still in the village. I saw many people wearing clothes with nationalist symbols. They were mostly standing around a few houses in the 'Hungarian neighbourhood', and I took this as a sign that the local people were hosting (and hiding) them. There was little or no interaction between these people and the human rights activists, and I suspect that many of the latter did not realize that 'the Nazis' are still around. The village was flooded by people coming from elsewhere – both campers and activists were out on the streets. This made the atmosphere of that Easter night to be extremely tensed.

I slept in the house of one of the Roma people. This was a very deep experience for me. The man was alone in the house, since his wife and two daughters have fled the day before with the rest of the women and children, on the so-called Red-Cross bus. He lived in a very poor home, and I remember having to pass through a hole in a wall to get in his backyard. There was not much more than a bed and a carpet in the room where me and my friends slept. He told us that the situation in the village has become unbearable. His children were constantly being harassed for being Roma. His house got attacked several times with bottles and stones during the night. To my consternation, he insisted that we sleep with the TV on, as he usually did, for fear that he will be attacked in the night.

These events constitute the climax of the Gyöngyöspata incidents. The Hungarian government soon issued an order that banned the usage of un-authorized military uniforms in public. However, on April the 25th the Court 'relieved all accused and closed the case'.[106] After his release, Eszes announced his candidature for the mayor of Gyöngyöspata. On the 26th of April, the remaining patrols continued their harassment of the local Roma population[107], and this resulted in a violent clash between the patrols and the Roma people, with four people being hospitalized.[108] One of these was a 14-year old boy who was constantly in our presence when we went to Gyongyospata, playing ball with us and asking us for cigarettes. Seeing him with a bruised face just a few days after we saw him last time safe and sound in the village was heart-breaking. The clash was captured by a surveillance camera, and made public by the national police.[109]

In June, Eszes ran for mayor against the *Jobbik* incumbent, but gained only 10 percent. Over the summer, the government organized 'working camps' in the village, intended to integrate unemployed people in the labour force. Welfare benefits were made dependent upon participating in these working camps, and the Roma population was explicitly targeted.[110] In November, Tamas Eszes committed suicide in his house in Gyöngyöspata. In the meantime, even if the conflict has de-escalated, some groups still patrol sporadically through the Roma neighbourhood of the village.

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[106] http://www.athenaintezet.eu/en/news/read/164

[107] http://gyongyospatasolidarity.wordpress.com/2011/04/26/via-hirszerzo-tension-burst-out-in-gyongyospata-mass-fight-and-full-blockade-of-the-town/

[108] 'Hungary Roma battle far-right vigilantes', BBC News Europe, 27 April 2011 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13206261

[109] The video can be watched here http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SEBngkiC4M

[110] 'Travail obligatoire pour les Roms de Gyöngyöspata', AFP, 7 December 2011 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUnaw-z64t0

2.2. Territory and security

In this section, I will explore the securityscape of Gyongyospata. As I have argued in my methodological considerations, I take the concept of securityscape from Hugh Gusterson. I add a territorial dimension to the way in which he is using it. As such, securityscape refers to the ways in which the security actors are situated in a particular context. It represents a security situation that is clearly delineated in space and time, and in terms of actors, events and practices. Moreover, the securityscape allows me to shed more light on the interplay between global and local discourses and practices, thus combining ethnographic research with discourse analysis.

Geographically, Gyöngyöspata is divided between a hillside area and a small valley on the banks of a creek. This division is also ethnic: while the hillside is inhabited by 'Hungarians', the valley is populated entirely by the Roma community. This territorialisation translates into different dimensions of separation. The houses on the hillside are big, clean and *coquette*, with the typical rural-meets-modern air to them. The houses in the valley are old, ruined by a previous flood, looking extremely poor and unkempt. The streets of the hillside are repaired, while those down in the valley are filled with holes and mud. This black-and-white picture is complemented by a transitory space, an in-between area with no buildings; this is the abrupt terrain of the slope between the hill and the river; it is also the area in which the garbage from the hillside is deposited, acting as a buffer zone between the Roma neighbourhood and the rest of the village. There is also a fourth space, situated outside the village itself, another hill overlooking the valley. This is the area where *Vedero* intended to have its training camp. Several patrols could have been spotted there keeping an eye on the situation, when the activists came to the village after the camp got cancelled.

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The 'Roma area' is a space of segregation and exclusion, squeezed between the slope and the river. This separation was rendered once again visible and reinforced during the spring incidents. The patrols were moving around mostly in the Roma area, sometimes closing off the access ways by preventing people to circulate. Moreover, when the national police arrived, most of the display of force occurred in the Roma neighbourhood. While in the hillside the villagers were going about their daily activities, it was only in the valley that the commotion and the interruption of all normal practices occurred. This clear-cut separation on different levels constitutes one of the aspects of the security context of the Gyöngyöspata securityscape.

There is a supplementary dimension to the segregation of the Roma community of Gyongyospata. In 2007, the local administration issued a law that bans any modification of the built environment in the area where this community lives. Thus, people could no longer build new homes or restore the old ones. Moreover, there was a sustained effort from members of the local administration to prevent the buying and selling of Roma estate property. These practices were explicitly aimed against the Roma minority, and were part of the local population's efforts to curb the Roma presence in the village. As the *Ecopolis* report framed the matter, 'The measure was defended by local representatives on the grounds that it was the only way to defuse the threat posed by the clearance of Gyöngyös's 'Gypsy settlement'. Since Gyöngyöspata's Magyar population feared a wave of Roma immigration from the nearby city, the measure – proposed by one faction of the local elite – received the backing of a majority of inhabitants.' (Feischmidt and Szombati, 2012: 25) The primary school of the village has separate spaces for Roma and Hungarian children, with the latter having better learning facilities than the Roma children.[111]

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[111] Helen Pidd, 'Poor, abused and second-class: the Roma living in fear in Hungarian village', The Guardian, 27.01.2012, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/27/hungary-roma-living-in-fear

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2.3. Security actors

In this section I will analyse the discourses and practices of the different actors that were present in the Gyongyospata security-scape. I will start with the Hungarian state, which had an ambiguous set of reactions, ranging from apathy to blaming different other actors for intervening in the situation. I also analyse the presence of the far-right patrols on the one hand, and the Roma population and the civil society on the other. I reconstruct the discourse of the international media, which was marked by a general alarmist tone that announced the imminent disaster that the neo-Nazis are causing in Hungary,

The Hungarian authorities

The national police arrived only when the events escalated, that is when the training camp of the Véderő group was about to start. Despite the fact that there were several patrolling groups prior to these events, the police was almost nowhere to be seen in the village (although one activist reported a conversation with a police agent, with the agent complaining about the vicissitudes of having to live among Roma people). One report notes that 'the police force dispatched to Gyöngyöspata remained largely passive.' (Feischmidt and Szombati, 2012: 17) At the same time, after the camp was stopped, there were almost ten police cars to be seen in the small area between the slope and the creek, despite the fact that at this point the patrols were no longer there. It is hard to decide what security concerns did the national police had in the village. On the one hand, one would expect these forces to be oriented towards de-escalating the conflict and protecting the victims of violence. On the other hand, the actual behaviour of the police seems to indicate certain complacency with the patrols. One video

featured in *The Guardian* shows one man from the Roma community in Gyongyospata (who was also my host when I stayed there) saying about the tensions in April 2011 that 'we called the police. They couldn't do anything. They said until there are crimes committed or assaults, they cannot intervene'.[112]

The Hungarian government condemned the patrols and explicitly warned that there will be no tolerance of anybody breeching its monopoly on violence. The minister of interior, Sandor Pinter, explicitly referred to the actions of the patrols in Gyongyospata and Hajdúhadház as 'vigilantism' ('*önbíráskodás*' – the Hungarian term literally means 'one's own juridical decision-making').[113] The government quickly banned any usage of military uniforms by unauthorized groups. The criminal code was amended to make marching with uniforms a criminal offence. However, to the date of writing this, not one person has ever been convicted in Hungary for this.

The Hungarian Civil Rights Union (TASZ) issued a report in September 2011, in which it points out to the peculiar reluctance of the Hungarian authorities to react and intervene in the Gyongyospata case. The police are accused of 'faulty' actions, and their slowness to act is considered in the report to show the patrols that they are acting lawfully when they are breaching the state's monopoly of violence.[114] Moreover, the report denounces the Hungarian government's obsessive concern for the episode of the evacuation of the Roma women and children.[115] Rather than focusing on the vigilante violence, the government's commission sought to elucidate the conditions under which Richard Field framed a 'holiday trip' as an eviction. Sandor Pinter named it a 'previously planned action' ('*ez előre*

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[112] Helen Pidd, 'Poor, abused and second-class: the Roma living in fear in Hungarian village'.
[113] Fekete Atilla, 'Orbán Viktor: Meg kell védeni az embereket', nol.hu, 29.04.2011, http://nol.hu/belfold/20110429-orban_viktor__meg_kell_vedeni_az_embereket-1053891
[114] Hungarian Civil Rights Union, 'Summary of HCLU's shadow report about the events at Gyongyospata', 28.09.2011, p. 3
[115] Some photos from this episode can be seen here: http://hvg.hu/itthon/20110422_gyongyospata_katonai_tabor

megszervezett akció volt').[116] The authorities appeared overly more concerned with the alleged distorted public image that this episode produced. The head of the commission, Mate Kocsis (who is also the controversial mayor of Budapest's 8th district, where he was the first to ban homeless people) declared that he will waste no effort to discover all the circumstances of the trip episode. He declared that the commission will find out who made up the story of the evacuation and spread panic among the villagers: '*jól összehangolt közreműködését az ország feldúlásában'* ('it seemed a well-coordinated action to generate chaos in the country').[117]

The state secretary for social inclusion, Zoltán Balog, declared Field's actions to be 'reprehensible', and expressed his suspicions regarding Field's intentions: 'When the investigation is closed we will see in whose interests it was to parade this small Good Friday event before the international public.'[118] The state secretary for justice, Zoltan Kovacs, was quoted by BBC saying that 'the so-called evacuation was "a clear-cut political provocation" and completely unwarranted.'[119] Finally, the governmental commission issued a report that, aside from a tough stance against uniformed patrols, also mentioned that 'Richard Field's "humanitarian" effort in Gyöngyöspata was a deception. His goal was to discredit Hungary and its government both domestically and internationally.'[120] The main concern of the Budapest government seemed thus to be a defensive stance against the accusations of complicity and inaction in the face of far-right violence, supplemented by a constant care to ensure the public opinion that the state has everything under control. The Roma children and women were simply taken on a 'planned holiday'.

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[116] Fekete Atilla, '*Orbán Viktor: Meg kell védeni az embereket'*, nol.hu, 29.04.2011, http://nol.hu/belfold/20110429-orban_viktor__meg_kell_vedeni_az_embereket-1053891

[117] Idem

[118] N.a., 'Field leaves Hungary citing fears of "hate groups"', Budapest Times, 16.05.2011, http://budapesttimes.hu/2011/05/16/field-leaves-hungary-citing-fears-of-hate-groups/

[119] Nick Thorpe, 'Hungary denies Roma families evacuated over attack fear', BBC, 22.04.2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/mobile/world-europe-13170583?SThisFB

[120] N.a., 'Gyöngyöspata probe spreads blame, thick', Budapest Times, 3.04.2012, http://budapesttimes.hu/2012/04/03/gyongyospata-probe-spreads-blame-thick/

Richard Field

Richard Field is one actor in the Gyongyospata events that is worthy of more attention here. He was at the time leading a charity called American House Foundation. This organisation had been previously distributing food to Roma families in the village. He was often presented in the media as a 'business man'. The governmental report mentioned earlier established a link between Field and LMP, one of the liberal opposition parties.[121] As an LMP supporter, Field allegedly aimed at discrediting the Orban government, and organised the buses that took the women and children out of Gyongyospata.[122] The degree to which this argument is valid is still unclear, and as much as I tried to uncover more about Richard Field, his involvement in the April 2011 events remains elusive.

In 2010 he donated a large sum of money for LMP's electoral campaign. In May 2011, he left the country, declaring that he fears for the safety of himself and his family. Despite having been asked to appear before the government's investigating committee, he refused, calling it a 'kangaroo court'.[123] One year later, he declared for the Hungarian press: 'While representatives of LMP, HCLU and the US embassy were present in Gyöngyöspata the week of the evacuation, the decision to bus the women and children to holiday camps for the duration of the planned *Vedero* paramilitary exercises was made entirely by former Red Cross director Eric Selymes at the behest of Hungarian elder István Mezei, myself and […] others concerned for the safety of Gyöngyöspata's Roma community'[124]

The paramilitary groups

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[121] This is a view shared also by a Romani voice: Györgyi Rétfalvi, 'Gyöngyöspata, the symbol of an unscrupulous political game', 3.05.2011, http://www.romatransitions.org/gyongyospata-the-symbol-of-an-unscrupulous-political-game/

[122] N.a., 'Parliament publishes report on 2011 Gyöngyöspata ethnic tensions', Politics.hu, 15.05.2012, http://www.politics.hu/20120515/parliament-publishes-report-on-2011-gyongyospata-ethnic-tensions/

[123] 'Field leaves Hungary citing fears of "hate groups"'

[124] 'Gyöngyöspata probe spreads blame, thick'

The paramilitary groups constitute a distinct array of actors themselves. At the point of the escalation of the events, there were four groups of patrols in Gyöngyöspata.[125] All four of these groups were converging on the goals of their actions, namely to help the local population defend itself against the Roma terror, which was articulated as a security threat. The patrols were supported by several far-right organizations, and also had the participation and direct support of the locals themselves. Members of these organizations arrived in the village and collaborated on a daily basis with the Hungarian community. Their presence was much applauded by some locals. As one woman is recorded saying in a video, 'the village really needed this help. They do everything to make us feel safe, and we would like it to stay this way. Security and peace.'[126] The patrols had martial training, uniforms, whips, batons and dogs.[127]

The leader of the political party that was sheltering these patrols, Gabor Vona from *Jobbik*, declined any responsibility for 'the panic' of Gyongyospata. His party officially blamed the Roma population for igniting the violence in the village. *Jobbik* claimed that it stands beside 'old and alone-living Hungarians, who are in any way unable to protect themselves or their belongings against their aggressive Gipsy neighbours.'[128] Also, Vona insisted that there is little doubt that somebody actually 'intentionally provoked and teased' ('*szinte tudatos felheccelése, provokálása*') the local Roma community. By 'somebody', Vona meant TASZ, one of the most active human-rights watchdogs in the area at the time. He accused the NGO of provocating and re-opening the conflict between Roma and Hungarian people in Gyongyospata, a conflict which many other people have worked hard to

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[125] http://www.athenainstitute.eu/en/infocus/read/8

[126] Társaság a Szabadságjogokért, 'Gyongyospata 2011', 19.10.2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=H4WNJ18KJ-w

[127] http://www.presseurop.eu/en/content/article/586961-roma-hunting-season-set-continue '*There were also a number of particularly aggressive looking individuals sporting combat fatigues and skinhead haircuts, who were armed with axes, whips and accompanied by pitbulls.*'

[128] The Truth about Gyöngyöspata and ethnic violence in Hungary, Jobbik.com, 28.05.2011, http://www.jobbik.com/truth_about_gy%C3%B6ngy%C3%B6spata_and_ethnic_violence_hungary

ameliorate. According to him, the work of TASZ brings about tension, rather than peace and calming: '*és a munkájuk kapcsán nem mondható el, hogy a település nyugalma erősödne, hanem éppen az ellenkezője tapasztalható*'.[129]

The Roma population

The Roma people from Gyongyospata refused to remain passive victims of the violence perpetrated by the far-right patrols. One inhabitant of the village was recorded saying bitterly that 'They [the patrols] have been provoking people for months. We didn't say a word because we listened to our leaders. […] We endured for long.'[130] As I will show below, the media managed to portray an image of the Roma people as being the terrorised victims of far-right violence. However, the Roma people quickly organised themselves and publicly exposed the actions of the patrols.[131] When I arrived in the village, the people were vividly discussing how to oppose the vigilantes in a non-violent way. Exposing the broken windows and bones to the national and international media seemed the best solution at the time. As I have shown, the police could hardly be relied upon. The people organised several protests in Budapest, urging the government to assume responsibility for the slowness of its reaction. Also, in 2012, in Miskolc, I have participated in the biggest demonstration of the Hungarian Roma community since the fall of Communism. It was a protest against the continuous growth of far-right vigilante groups in the area. Thousands of people from the entire region gathered and marched through the town, demanding the end of ethnic segregation and violence in Hungary.

The Civil Society

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[129] Szalay Tamas, 'Vona szerint tudatosan heccelik a cigányokat Gyöngyöspatán', nol.hu, 6.03.2013, http://nol.hu/belfold/vona_szerint_tudatosan_heccelik_a_ciganyokat_gyongyospatan-1371579
[130] Társaság a Szabadságjogokért, 'Gyongyospata 2011'
[131]   There are accounts of Roma populations declaring that they would defend themselves: 'the head of the national Romani self-government council, Orban Kolompar, [was quoted] as warning that it would be difficult for him to "hold back" fellow Roma when the Guard marches.' (Jordan, 2008)

Another group of actors that ought to be mentioned in the Gyöngyöspata securityscape is the NGO sector. Throughout the development of the events, several human rights and Roma organizations operated in the village, along with independent groups of activists. For these groups, the threat was the activity of the patrols.[132] Despite it being a tardy response to the situation, human rights NGO's such as Amnesty International and TASZ[133] articulated a discourse around the need to defend the local Roma community. Already in March 2011, few human rights organisations warned that the patrols are deliberately trying to 'escalate ethnic tensions.' (Feischmidt and Szombati, 2012: 17) During the events of the following month, some groups even tried to ensure a constant presence in the village, which would express solidarity against the patrols. For example, activists from TASZ claim to have had a 'regular presence' in Gyongyospata during April 2011.[134]

The international media

One particularly interesting and distinct voice was articulated by some parts of the international press, especially from Western Europe. This voice reacted immediately to the events in Gyongyospata and the other instances of far-right vigilante activity in Hungary. This reaction was marked by an overall tone of alarm and caution. The international press condemned the patrols, as well as the Hungarian government. It helped generate and sustain a climate of public outrage and disapproval that spilled over outside the country, and at times degenerated into hysteria. This reaction prompted the Budapest government to adopt a defensive stance in the matter, and to desperately try to show 'the world' that the situation is under control. This alarmist tone also ended up by showing a passive Roma population, lacking any agency when confronted with far-right violent acts.

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[132] 'Amnesty International: Kudarc a Gyöngyöspata-bizottság', Nepszabadsag Online, 30 March 2012

[133] TASZ stands for 'Társaság a Szabadságjogokért' – the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, an NGO specialized in legal support for marginalized groups

[134] Hungarian Civil Rights Union, 'Summary of HCLU's shadow report about the events at Gyongyospata', 28.09.2011, p. 1

The alarmist discourse of the international media was articulated along several themes that appeared recurrently when reporting on the situation in Hungary. These themes are: the exoticisation of Hungary (and Eastern Europe) as a realm where poverty and economic crisis breed far-right extremism; the illustration of Hungary as a country where ethnic segregation has alarmist dimensions; as a consequence, ethnic tensions in Hungary were portrayed rather sharply as having the potential to degenerate at any point into violence; this violence was to be expected especially from *Jobbik*, as the main voice if the Hungarian far-right, and as such the party had to be demonised; finally, Orban's authoritarian rule was articulated as providing the nurturing climate for the development of violent extreme right acts.

Consider the following quote from an article in *the Scotsman*, in 2010: 'The scenario is classic. Hungary's economy is in crisis, its large Roma minority is an easy scapegoat, and a far-right party blaming "Gypsy crooks" and "welfare spongers" is set to be the big winner.'[135] Here the trope of the Eastern European country where economic crisis breeds ethnic tensions is overly visible. Not only is the correlation between an economy in crisis and the rise of far-right taken for granted, but the article also considers this to be a 'classic scenario'. Thus, it is almost like following a recipe for disaster – a country in crisis will develop discontent, and the population will look for scapegoats in ethnic minorities rather than anywhere else. Not a single word about the systemic political and economic causes of this crisis. Nothing is being mentioned of the fact that other countries in the region were also in crisis, also had considerable Roma populations, but did not develop far-right vigilante patrols. It seems as if the economic downturn and its effects on the population are being pushed under the carpet, to make room for a facile correlation between poverty and far-right – a simplistic analysis that sets the tone for the coming hysteria.

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[135] 'Anti-Roma rhetoric pays off for far right in Hungary', http://www.scotsman.com/news/world/anti-roma-rhetoric-pays-off-for-far-right-in-hungary-1-1365832

When the situation in Gyongyospata erupted, parts of the international press were quick to inflate the events out of proportion, and to highlight the pattern of far-right violence in Hungary. For example, *Der Spiegel* wrote that 'on Tuesday evening, right-wing Hungarian radicals struck again' and 'dozens of right-wing extremists flooded the village'.[136] In the same day, *BBC* reported that 'Far-right vigilantes have clashed with Roma (Gypsies) in a village in north-east Hungary where ethnic tensions escalated last week.'[137] By using terms like 'struck again' and 'clashed', the two articles evoke an atmosphere of perpetual violence. The alarmist tone is sharpened by the metaphors of the flood and the escalation of ethnic conflict, which evoke images of Eastern European never-settling radical nationalisms, so familiar to the Western public opinion. As an instance of this, several months after the incidents in the village, *l'Humanite* wrote: '*À Gyöngyöspata, la terreur règne*'.[138] Terror and extremism are portrayed as normal in a country situated at the periphery of democracy.

The disturbing tone of some of the voices in international media continues with the portrayal of Hungary as a society where the economic crisis becomes a catalyst for ethnic segregation, and subsequently ethnic violence. Reporting from Gyongyospata in 2012, *The Guardian* continues the exoticisation of Hungary, while rhetorically writing: 'It can be hard to understand how such a situation can unfold in the EU. But talk to locals, Roma and non-Roma, and it is clear that segregation is at the very heart of the community.'[139] The same newspaper shows no reticence in comparing the situation to an 'apartheid system', which shows itself prominently in rural schools. Moreover, the very title of the article – 'Poor, abused and second-class: the Roma living in fear in

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[136] 'Right-Wing Militants on Patrol: A New Wave of Anti-Roma Violence in Hungary', Der Spiegel, 27.04.2011 http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/right-wing-militants-on-patrol-a-new-wave-of-anti-roma-violence-in-hungary-a-759349.html
[137] 'Hungary Roma battle far-right vigilantes', BBC, 27.04.2011, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-13206261
[138] Gaël De Santis, 'La marche des milices hongroises sur Gyongyospata', 4.10.2011, http://www.humanite.fr/monde/la-marche-des-milices-hongroises-sur-gyongyospata-480804
[139] Helen Pidd, 'Poor, abused and second-class: the Roma living in fear in Hungarian village', The Guardian, 27.01.2012, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/27/hungary-roma-living-in-fear

Hungarian village', victimizes the Roma people, painting an image of passive casualties of the 'far-right terror' In a similar vein, *BBC* published a series of reports about the situation in Hungary in 2011 that express the hysteric and alarmist modes of communicating a complex social and political set of events. With phrases such as 'ethnic tensions escalated'[140] and 'flames of racism'[141], the news outlet helped to shape the scaremonger image of Hungary as a powder keg of ethnic violence and aggressions.

This violence was seen to be emerging especially from *Jobbik*, as the main agitator of the Hungarian far-right. The Western European media launched several attacks towards the party, which sustained its demonization, and blamed it for the violence against the Roma population. Consider the following piece published by *The Guardian* in 2014: running the title 'Fascist Hungarian Gábor Vona: not the sort of immigrant we want in the UK', the article declared the party to be 'the most powerful extreme-right organisation in Europe'.[142] It goes on to describe *Jobbik* and its leader as an imminent danger from the East that is soon to land in the UK and spread its 'Fascist' propaganda. The article concludes with an appeal to request the banning of Vona from the UK.

Other such facile interpretations have been making full use of scaremongers such as 'fascism' and 'antisemitism'. In the same year, *Reuters* also published an alarmist article, in which it denounced *Jobbik* as the most influent far-right party in Europe (second only to the Golden Dawn, with which it maintains no contact). The media outlet writes: 'From its strong base at home, *Jobbik* has stepped up efforts to export its ideology and methods to the wider region, encouraging far-right parties to run in next month's European parliamentary elections, and propagating a brand of nationalist ideology which is so hardline and so tinged with anti-Semitism, that some rightist groups in Western Europe

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[140] 'Hungary Roma battle far-right vigilantes', BBC, 27.04.2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13206261
[141] Nick Thorpe, 'Hungary's Roma encounter "gypsy crime" gendarmes', BBC, 8.06.2011, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-13544903
[142] http://www.theguardian.com/world/shortcuts/2014/jan/22/fascist-hungarian-gabor-vona-immigrant-uk

have distanced themselves from the Hungarians.' The piece also reports a number of voices that raise further alarm regarding the spread of *Jobbik*'s influence in Europe, claiming that 'it could fuel a rise in racially-motivated, anti-Semitic or homophobic street attacks', and that '*Jobbik'*s efforts to spread its tactics and ideology could lead to more violence against minorities.'[143]

From targeting the main far-right party, the international press went on to demonise the governing party in Budapest. *Fidesz*, and especially its leader, the prime-minister Viktor Orban, were criticised for fostering a social and political climate of authoritarianism, which in turn helped the far-right gain more power. Orban's regime is responsible for placing Hungary on 'a dangerous wrong path', as *Der Spiegel* notes in 2013. His party is tacitly supporting 'growing anti-Semitism': 'Parts of Fidesz are eagerly participating in the hero worship of former far-right leader Miklós Horthy, for example, even though he was among those responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust. Then there was the fact that László Kövér, speaker of the National Assembly, Hungary's parliament, took part in a memorial for blood-and-soil novelist and fascist Arrow Cross Party ideologist József Nyírö.'[144] Moreover, *Fidesz* has been accused of 'blurring boundaries' between its centrist policies and the extremist stances of the far-right. It has been accused of hijacking some of *Jobbik*'s far-right policies, and underscoring them with its overwhelming parliamentary majority. The same journal writes: 'Orbán and his ruling party are implementing a major part of Jobbik's right-wing extremist platform […] The rights of paramilitary militias have

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[143] Marcin Goettig and Christian Lowe, 'Special Report: From Hungary, far-right party spreads ideology, tactics', Reuters, 9.04.2014, http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/04/09/us-europe-farright-special-report-idUSBREA380IU20140409

[144] Keno Verseck, 'Growing Anti-Semitism: World Jewish Congress Takes on Hungary', Der Spiegel, 2.05.2013, http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/jewish-world-congress-in-budapest-protests-hungarian-anti-semitism-a-897718.html

been bolstered. And, in a concession to Roma-haters, a right to use arms for self-protection on one's own property has been introduced.'[145]

3.1. The Question of Intentionality in the practices and discourses of the Hungarian vigilante patrols

At this point, I would like to engage deeper with my argument that the security practices of vigilantism contain a strong intentional and programmatic component. In what follows, I will articulate this argument to the current theme of this chapter, the Hungarian far-right patrols that have been active in places like Gyongyospata and elsewhere.

To recapitulate the theoretical premises of this discussion, I shortly return to the ways in which the issue of intentionality has been dealt with in the literature. For the Copenhagen School, the question of intentionality was clear – the securitization move is performed in a decisionist moment, by a performative speech act uttered by an actor with a certain level of social capital. Despite the corollary that actors may sometimes attempt to securitize even in the absence of a high level of social capital (Waever, 2000: 286, footnote 7), there is a clear decisionist core within the theory. This decisionism can lead to the theoretical inference of a singular and privileged (sovereign) place of agency, from where the speech act is being uttered.

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[145] Keno Verseck, 'Blurring Boundaries: Hungarian Leader Adopts Policies of Far-Right', Der Spiegel, 30.01.2013, http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/ruling-hungarian-fidesz-party-adopts-policies-of-far-right-jobbik-party-a-880590.html

However, this position has been challenged by the proponents of a more processual view of security, such as Amoore and De Goede and Jef Huysmans. Shortly put, this second perspective moves away from decisive acts towards mundane and quotidian practices that often have un-intended effects (Huysmans, 2011). These practices are performed by actants that operate in a bureaucratic environment, and follow sets of unwritten norms that make up the habitus. These norms are largely inherited from past actions, and un-reflected upon. Thus, agency is dispersed, the king's head is 'cut off', and instead of a concentrated locus of decision, we have, at best, a multiplicity of 'petty-sovereigns', and at worse, a complete dissolution of sovereignty and agency.

Paramilitary vigilantism of the type described in this chapter fits with difficulty in this model. The Hungarian patrols are instances of actors that have a straightforward agenda, and that perform deliberate actions. How can non-intentionality fit in this concrete case? The patrols are not security professionals; nor members of a security apparatus that perform their daily routines in an un-reflexive and un-intentional manner.

These patrols follow the 'guidelines' of a clearly delimited set of discourses and practices, with clear parameters and targets. In what follows, I will show that this set of discourses and practices fits under the umbrella of far-right ideology. The patrols articulate a narrative whereby Roma people are constructed as scapegoats and blamed for social imbalances. This narrative uses the trope of 'Gypsy crime' in order to legitimate their violent acts. These acts are performed as a response to a perceived security demand that emerges from the society. At the same time, the patrols perform spectacles of security that are meant to elicit emotions and actions, in order to achieve clearly articulated goals.

Discourses such as the 'Gypsy crime' are not un-intended by-products of bureaucratic or other types of habitus, but the manufactured results of an ideology of nationalism and racial hatred. If the places

of security-decisions are so dispersed within society, as Doty claims, and if we move away from acts and towards repetitive everyday practices, then how can the securityscape in which the Hungarian patrols operate be explained? And if this securityscape is flatten and devoid of intentionality, as Huysmans would have it, then how can the far-right paramilitary patrols, in their turn, be explained?

On the other hand, however, the patrols of Hungary cannot fit in a decisionist model either. The members of these patrols do not have the social position and capabilities to enunciate a sovereign decision, a moment whereby the line between friend and enemy is drawn and a new political order is created. In the decisionist model, the sovereign owns a privileged place from where the performative agency of the security speech act emerges.

3.2. The Far Right dimension of the Hungarian Patrols

The intentionality of the Hungarian vigilante groups is highlighted first and foremost by their far-right ideological set. As I have argued in the theoretical chapter, far-right vigilantism constitutes a specific type of 'taking the law in one's hands', because it is more concerned with controlling and punishing what it is perceived to be social deviance. In Hungary, historically speaking, far-right ideologies have proven to be conservative, retributive, overly nationalistic and concerned with regaining lost territories. As I have shown in the first part of this chapter, racist themes also figure pre-eminently in the far-right discourse in Hungary. In recent years, anti-Semitism has been complemented by the trope of 'Gypsy crime'. By adopting a strong and extreme stance against the Roma population, the Hungarian paramilitary patrols openly include themselves under the far-right

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umbrella. They employ a discourse of security to justify acts of violence based on racial hatred. This violence is articulated as a response to a demand for security from the population. As such, the discourse of 'Gypsy crime' serves to generate a climate of fear and suspicion. Moreover, it serves to point out the impotence of the state, which is seen as being incapable to curb down the wave of illegality that is being perpetuated by the Roma population.

In this respect, it is worth noticing that in the question of the 'Roma problem', the discourses and practices of the patrols are, in fact, almost perfectly aligned with those of the state. Confirming Rosenbaum and Sederberg's take on vigilantism as 'establishment violence', the Hungarian patrols merely reinforce a number of state discriminatory policies against the Roma population. In this way, their relationship with the Hungarian state can be described as being one of ambiguity. Since they are largely under the institutionalised protection of *Jobbik*, which has been in government for an extended period of time already, I can argue that the patrols are to a certain extent embedded in the state apparatus. On the other hand, they are in a constant struggle with a state that is trying to keep on a democratic face, and to curb down any threat to its monopoly on violence. I will explore this ambiguity towards the end of this section. I will then show that the patrols articulate practices of security that are not only intentional, but also non-elitist and 'everyday'. For now, I turn to the problem of the demand for security.

3.3. Demanding security and the problem of social capital

The Hungarian patrols that were present in Gyongyospata and in other villages claimed to confront the increasing Roma criminality. As such, they claimed to respond to a demand for security articulated by the local population. This demand came because the police, the civil guards and other local state authorities were seen to be overloaded with this phenomenon, and unable to act properly. Thus, the patrols claimed, the local people were living in a constant state of terror. Groups such as *Szebb Jovoert* and *Magyar Garda* started to act in the backdrop of a (constructed) deficit of security.

The Securitization theory would see this as a case of societal security, whereby civil society actors articulate existential threats to the identity of a defined community. Yet, as Roxanne Lynn Doty and others have pointed out, in the case of societal security, it becomes very difficult to discern how actors can securitize successfully in the absence of high levels of social capabilities (Doty, 2007; Aradau, 2004: 395). Moreover, it can also be argued that for the Securitization theory, the logic of societal security follows the same pattern as the state-centred securitization (Doty, 2007: 130, footnote 65). The same authors join others in claiming that, actually, previously acquired social capital is not a prerequisite for a successful societal securitization. This argument is also marginally present and ambiguously articulated in the Securitization theory. Buzan et. al. argue in a footnote that social capital is not actually crucial for the success of a securitizing speech act, since speech 'holds the insurrectionary potential to break the ordinary' (Buzan et al., 1998: 46-7, footnote 5).

In the case of the Hungarian paramilitary groups, we are faced with a situation of a complete dispersal of securitizing actors throughout society. It would appear that in this case, this dispersal takes the form of a widely spread and accepted discourse and *ideology* that combines hyper-nationalist feelings with anti-Roma threat articulations. A similar phenomenon has been spotted by Doty as well, in the case of the US civil border patrols (Doty, 2007: 128). This discourse takes the form of myriads of minuscule securitizing acts.

In response to Doty and Huysmans (2011: 378), however, who prefer to see this dispersion of acts as a sign of the dissolution of decision, the multiplicity of the securitizing moves could be interpreted as a general societal *demand for security*. This general social condition, an atmosphere where security is 'in the air', so to speak, is able to account for the legitimacy of the paramilitary groups in Hungary. The success of their securitizing moves, therefore, is heavily influenced by the fact that they are articulating themes and tropes that are already out there, issues that are already discussed, debated and seen as immediate problems by certain groups within a society. The patrols, in other words, come to perform a function, a duty for which they were *called for* by their communities.

The Securitization theory would most likely refer to these moves as the background facilitating conditions. Aside of the fact that this is too much of a general and ambiguous framing, the concept of facilitating conditions can hardly be applied in the case of the Hungarian patrols. The paramilitaries do not follow the exact 'security grammar' laid out by the theory, since they do not have the social capital or the security capabilities to credibly ensure 'a way out' – that is, to completely eliminate the threat (the Gypsies). Indeed, patrolling in uniforms does constitute an exceptional measure, but it is not one that, in the long run, will eliminate the Gypsy crime. Nor does it have to.

To sum up, the concept of a demand for security sheds light on the way in which the paramilitaries obtain legitimacy for their actions, by positing a set of discursive security articulations within groups of society, which aggregate in the landscape of threats, narratives of glory and decay, frustrations and outbursts of anger, on which the patrols are requested to operate. The idea of demand for security also speaks at the same time to both the Securitization theory and to the theory of security as practice; it shows that there is much more to audience and context than the facilitating conditions of social capital and internal grammar of security; and it also shows that despite the dispersion of securitizing acts, there is still political agency in the processes of security. This agency is not a

sovereign decision, as the Securitization theory would argue, but neither is it a 'little nothing', a mundane repetitive action, as Huysmans, Doty or Bigo would put it. In order to highlight the ways in which this agency gets manifested for the Hungarian patrols, I will now analyse the narrative of 'Gypsy crime'. This is a central discourse, around which the relationship of security supply and demand between the population and the patrols is being constituted.

3.4. 'Gypsy crime' and the criminalization of Roma people

'The Gypsy is genetically-coded for criminality'[146]

The 'Gypsy crime' discourse became hegemonic in Hungary with the emergence and rise of the Hungarian Guard. It consists of a series of discursive elements that rotate around the figure of the Roma as a population that is prone to (petty) crime. Starting from a series of reported incidents of crimes committed by people of Roma ethnicity, the discourse is constructed around a mythology of a homogenous group of people that share similar characteristics.

The Roma are seen to be the eternal nomads, unable to adapt to modernity, and unable to integrate in the post-socialist Hungarian society. If during the Communist regime, the Roma were tolerated, and several attempts were made to integrate them, all progress made has failed after 1990. Moreover, the treatment that the population received during the five decades of planned economy is actually seen to be worsening the situation. The Roma people were brought in close and equal contact with the rest of the population, they were given access to the labour market and infrastructure. Thus, the mythology goes, the Roma population was placed on the same par with the Hungarian majority, and therefore 'made to think' that this position is a prerogative. *The Independent* quotes Kalman Kali-Horvath, an 'official' working in the Hungarian Ministry of Justice: 'Most Romanies worked in the cities, in

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[146] Zsolt Tyirityan, leader of *Betyarsereg*, quoted by Phil Cain, in 'Hungary nationalists whip up anti-Roma feelings', BBC, 1 September 2012, available here: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-19439679

factories or on building sites. In the country they worked on small farms or in villages picking fruit or digging the fields. The regime didn't want them to get more education because they needed cheap unskilled labour.'[147] The newspaper concludes: 'The gypsies vanished into the socialist system.'[148]

However, after Communism collapsed in Hungary, the Roma resorted to their age-old occupations: begging, theft, bribery and even murder. Here, the narrative underlines ideological elements as well: the Gypsy problem is a heritage of the disastrous reign of the Hungarian Left parties.[149]

Intimately corroborated with a racial theme, the discourse of Gypsy crime constructs the Roma population as a distinct ethnicity with traits that diverge fundamentally from those of the Hungarians. Whereas the Hungarians are honest and hardworking, the Roma are prone to deceit and lazy; whereas the Hungarians rise on the social and economic hierarchies of capitalist society, the Roma population seems doomed to an eternal state of poverty and misery; and whereas the Hungarians share a glorious and heroic past, the origins of the Roma people are largely unknown, or are wrapped in legends of treachery.[150]

Crucial here is the popular image of the Roma people as refusing to work, and free-riding on state benefits. One Hungarian journalist mentions an example of how this image is being propagated by mainstream media: 'The myth of the Roma unwilling to work also features in the article – at least as told by the local non-Gypsies – saying that they are not willing to work for 3000HUF in the vineyards, so unskilled workers must be brought to the town. […]The bottom line is that the Gypsies (= the non-Hungarians) are not willing to work. Relating to work, an obscure experiment is also

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[147] http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/hungary-in-crisis-tensions-with-its-gypsy-population-threaten-to-rip-the-eastern-european-country-apart-2307903.html
[148] idem
[149] http://esbalogh.typepad.com/hungarianspectrum/2009/02/antigypsy-prejudice-in-hungary.html
[150] Current Attitudes Toward the Roma in Central Europe: A Report of Research with non-Roma and Roma Respondents, September 2005, p. 11

mentioned, where some seeds and potatoes were given to the Gypsies, who devoured the whole crop.'[151] Gabor Vona, *Jobbik*'s leader, was quoted in 2011 saying that 'the hand-out of social welfare benefits should be restricted to those willing to work.', explicitly referring to Roma people. (Feischmidt and Szombati, 2012: 13) Andras Kemacs, a local of the town of Ozd was quoted by *the Scotsman* saying: 'Many of us are sick of the way Gypsies think of welfare as a way of life.'[152]

From this perceived attitude of laziness to the belief that the Roma are more prone to crime is one small step, which many local Hungarians do not hesitate to take. A *TARKI* report from 2012 revealed that an increased number of Hungarians (60% of respondents) agree with the statement 'the inclination to criminality is in the blood of Gypsies'.[153] For example in 2011, one BBC correspondent reported the attitudes of locals from Tiszavasvari. One woman was paraphrased saying that 'almost every crop she plants is stolen by Roma. Once they even took the metal poles which hold up [the] vines. Another time they cut her phone line, before smashing the window and climbing into the house. "I was pleased when I heard that there would be gendarmes. Whoever it is, they're responsible for public order."'[154]

The stereotypes related to the alleged high criminality of Hungarians belonging to Roma ethnicity are enforced by both the media and mainstream politicians. As one report from 2013 observes, 'The Hungarian practice of attributing news value to ethnicity only in case when the perpetrator is Roma, but not when he or she belongs to some other minority living in Hungary (or to the majority, for that matter), has naturally contributed to the strenuous assumption of a direct connection between Roma

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[151] Daniel Vince, 'On White-collar Journalism', http://gyongyospatasolidarity.wordpress.com/2011/05/29/on-white-collar-journalism/
[152] http://www.scotsman.com/news/world/anti-roma-rhetoric-pays-off-for-far-right-in-hungary-1-1365832
[153] Anikó Bernát, Attila Juhász, Péter Krekó and Csaba Molnár, 'The roots of Radicalism and Anti-Roma attitudes on the Far Right', TARKI Budapest, p.1-2 http://www.tarki.hu/en/news/2013/items/20130305_bernat_juhasz_kreko_molnar.pdf
[154] Nick Thorpe, 'Hungary's Roma encounter 'gypsy crime' gendarmes', BBC, 8 june 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13544903

identity and criminality. […] In April [2009], the parliamentary commissioner of citizenship rights said in an interview that Roma criminality should be called what it actually is, and talked about a "collectivistic social, almost tribal, group" with respect to Roma.'[155]

Jobbik's appropriation of the 'Gypsy crime' discourse

Hungarian local politicians and officials often complain about the crime rates being high among the Roma population. *BBC* quotes the *Jobbik* mayor of Tiszavasvari, Erik Fulop, who equates gypsy crime with 'types of criminality which are unfortunately especially prevalent among the Roma - extortion by loan sharks, and robberies from homes and gardens.'[156] The same journalist quotes a policeman saying 'In my experience, 70 or 80% of crimes are committed by Roma.'[157] Yet it is indeed mostly *Jobbik* representatives who voice alarmist concerns regarding gypsy crime. In Ozd, the party's candidate in the 2010 elections, Andras Kisgergely said in a rally: 'For 500 years, Gypsies have not been able to adopt the cultural norms to live in peace with the majority. Nine out of ten criminals are Gypsies… We need to end that. We need to improve public safety, and create jobs. Make them work. We need to tie welfare to community work.'[158] In the *Jobbik* march of 2011 in Hajdúhadház, the party's vice-president Tamas Schneider declared that 'for the majority of Gypsies, crime, children as means of subsistence and unemployment benefits are the meaning of life and if it

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[155] cps.ceu.hu/sites/default/files/publications/cps-working-paper-pushed-to-the-edge-2013_0.pdf, pp. 8 – 9
[156] Nick Thorpe, 'Hungary's Roma encounter 'gypsy crime' gendarmes', BBC, 8 june 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13544903
[157] Nick Thorpe, 'Hungary's rawest nerve: Learning to love the Roma', BBC, 27 April 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22295064
[158] Quoted in The Scotsman, http://www.scotsman.com/news/world/anti-roma-rhetoric-pays-off-for-far-right-in-hungary-1-1365832

goes on like this then Hajdúhadház falls (in the battle) within 20 years and will even be barbarized.'[159]

A report from 2012 argues that the trope of 'Gypsy crime' served as an electoral launching pad and unique selling proposition for *Jobbik* (Feischmidt and Szombati, 2012). As the 'ideological cement' of the party, the discourse of blaming one part of the population for social and economic problems was articulated well on the backdrop of the need for increased security. This was firstly made possible by the creation of the *Magyar Garda*, which as I have shown, was intended from the outset to 'strengthen national defence'.[160] This was part of adopting a more radical attitude, which was intended to broaden and strengthen the party's position. It was meant to be a 'return to the kind of "street politics"'[161] that had previously catalysed its political success. This was beneficial for the party, which has seen a steady rise since 2009. It became an integral part of the party's official ideological offer to the electorate. And more importantly, it served to ideologically delineate *Jobbik* from other right-wing parties, by exploiting and enhancing a discursive trope that others were reluctant to address. As the same report argues, *Jobbik's* success was greatly due to its ability 'to portray itself as a force calling attention to a problem ignored by the political establishment, rather than one playing on xenophobia to boost its support.'[162]

The *Jobbik* English website develops the party's position on the issue of the Gypsy crime. In relation to the Gyongyospata incidents, the website contains an entry that is illustrative for *Jobbik*'s discourse in relation to the Roma population. In an attempt to blame the Roma for the violent acts of 2011, the entry reads: 'Our fellow Gipsy countrymen, who just recently attacked and beat four persons to near

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[159] Quoted in Szabo Zoltan, 'Gárdaklónok támadása', translated by Orsi Virag and available here http://gyongyospatasolidarity.wordpress.com/2011/04/23/attack-of-the-guardist-clones/
[160] Idem, p. 10
[161] Idem, p. 12
[162] Idem, p. 10

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death, partially with samurai swords. Members of the Gipsy minority are becoming more and more frequently responsible for killing innocent, lonely elderly people in the countryside, brutally murdered for a minimal amount of money or – as it was the case recently – for a bottle of wine.' For the party this means that its presence in the marches in the villages was an act of solidarity and self-defence: 'All recent demonstrations were triggered by such brutal events. […] the demonstrating crowds […] consist of […] several thousands of Hungarian citizens demanding order and peace in their neighbourhoods'.[163]

Moreover, the website states that the party is the only political force that can address the issue of the Gypsy crime: 'Jobbik – Movement for a Better Hungary, took in charge as the only party to face one of the underlying problems of Hungarian society, the unsolved situation of the ever growing gypsy population. It stated –what everyone knows but is silenced by "political correctness"– that [the] phenomenon of "gypsy crime" is real. It is a unique form of delinquency, different from the crimes of the majority in nature and force. […] The way to solve this problem is paved by the raising of children to respect social norms, education, vocational training and establishment of jobs. At the same time, however, it is also necessary to stiffen punitive sentences, to speed up criminal procedures and to end positive discrimination. These are fundamental to close the door on the easier life through crime.'[164]

One year after the Gyongyospata incidents, the newly elected *Jobbik* mayor of the village – Oszkar Juhasz – sparked another round of media outrage. The press got a recording of a phone conversation with him talking about a 'civil war' between Hungarians and Roma people, as the only way to solve the ethnic tensions in the country. In this 'war', his party has to prepare itself and increase its

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[163] 'The Truth about Gyöngyöspata and ethnic violence in Hungary' Jobbik website, http://www.jobbik.com/truth_about_gy%C3%B6ngy%C3%B6spata_and_ethnic_violence_hungary
[164] http://www.jobbik.com/short_summary_about_jobbik

'numbers and technical equipment'.[165] This is necessary, according to Juhasz, not so much against the Roma people, but in order to counteract the national police forces, controlled by Fidesz (or '*Zsidesz*', as he calls it, a pun on the word *zsido*, meaning 'Jew'). Despite the fact that Juhasz was expressing views that were quite common on the Hungarian far-right websites[166], *Jobbik* declined any responsibility for his declarations.

Jobbik and the paramilitary organisations that run under its umbrella are using the trope of 'Gypsy crime' to articulate a discourse that serves as a supply for demands for security coming from the population. These groups are focusing on those instances where people feel fed up with the perceived rise in Roma criminality, and at the same time consider the state to be impotent or unwilling to do anything about it. In this way, the centrality of the security aspect in the discourses of these groups is given by the desire to address the feelings of insecurity that emerge from their voters and sympathisers.

This security supply is supplemented by the far-right ideology. The trope of the 'Gypsy crime' is used as an umbrella term for a series of racist and ultra-nationalist considerations. The Roma people are considered parasites, inferior and un-worthy to be called 'Hungarians'. Moreover, the demands for security are met with a readiness for extreme violence, which goes hand in hand with far-right hatred and obtuseness. In the case of the Hungarian vigilante patrols, the ideological dimension is of crucial importance. It can explain why people choose to support paramilitary groups that arm themselves and go around challenging the authority of the state. In this ideological dimension, as I have pointed out, the discourse that blames the Roma population for petty and serious crimes in the

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[165] 'Jobbik politician envisions Roma-Hungarian civil war', April 30th, 2012, available at http://budapost.eu/2012/04/jobbik-politician-envisions-roma-hungarian-civil-war/
A left-wing commentator thinks the government majority is the only beneficiary of the latest far-righ
[166] See also here http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-19439679

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rural environment plays the most important part. It is the keystone to the entire ideological edifice that brings together the security demands of the locals with the far-right groups' desire to supply and act.

The Civil Society

As I have shown, *Jobbik*, at times together with the Hungarian government, were blaming organizations such as TASZ and Amnesty International of un-critically defending and supporting the Roma population, of pouring enormous amounts of funds for its integration, while the Hungarian majority strives in low-paid labour. This is also correlated with another racist theme, that of the presumed Semitic origins and support of these NGO's.[167] The Central European University itself, funded by a wealthy Jewish man, is seen as a harbour of liberal 'multi-kulti' ideas, which run against the historical interests of the Hungarian majority. As such, the discourse lumps together the theme of the Roma wickedness with elements of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories.

Therefore, the Gypsy crime discourse crystallizes itself as a narrative of victimization and threat.[168] The Hungarians are persecuted in their own country by 'internal enemies'. Backed by the integrationist policies of the political Left, and possessing fundamentally different racial traits, the

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[167] http://szentkoronaradio.com/belfold/2011_11_04_a-ciganykerdes-megoldasa-helyett-csak-szovegel-az-amnesty-international '*Ezen ajánlások között van egy nemzeti cselekvési terv készítése a rasszista erőszak megelőzésére, valamint képzés és fejlesztés bevezetése a rendfenntartó erők számára a rasszista indítékú bűncselekmények hatékonyabb felismerése és felderítése érdekében - mutattak rá az ostoba zsidók, akik híven teljesítik a küldetésüket : védik és tenyésztik a jelenleg még többségi magyar társadalom ellen a biológiai fegyverükként létező cigányságot.*'

[168] '*76% of Hungarians think that "it is the Roma's own fault that they are poor" and 70% of Hungarians say that the increasing Roma population is "a threat to the security of society"*', Extremism Across Europe, Southern Poverty Law Center, Fall 2001 [http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-report/browse-all-issues/2001/fall/reawakening-the-beast/extremism-across-]

Roma population is allowed to plunder the country at will. Not only is the state closing an eye, but the international media and NGO scene are also supporting and encouraging this situation; this is done in the name of a multicultural tolerance in which everyone with the exception of the Hungarian majority benefits. At the same time, published accounts portray the Roma population as deliberately acting against this Hungarian majority, through repeated acts of petty injustices that end up constituting a perpetual terror.[169]

The trope of Gypsy crime articulates the Roma population as a threat for the ethnical Hungarian majority. The criminal acts performed by Roma are interpreted as a daily state of insecurity for the honest and hard-working population.[170] Against this, the terrorized Hungarians have no possibility of relief: the state is either directly supporting the Roma, or is unable to curb their criminal activities; the European and international fora are keeping a strict eye and condemn every attempt to stop the Roma crimes as yet another instance of Hungarian intolerance and xenophobia. Therefore, the discourse of Gypsy crime creates a narrative in which the only solution is for the population to defend itself. Following historical examples of popular resistance, the proponents of the Gypsy crime discourse encourage the setting up of organized groups of defence. Therefore, the emergence of paramilitary patrols is crucially connected to this discourse.

In contrast, the Roma advocacy groups and NGO's articulate a discourse whereby the Roma population of Hungary is constantly subjected to discrimination. Due to the high levels of poverty and social exclusion, the Roma population is marginalized on a daily basis. Racial stereotypes

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[169] As an example of such an account, the story of 'Gypsy Terror on Train', published by the Kuruc Info news portal, narrates a banal incident from the perspective of the author – 'a mother', who is harassed by a band of Gypsies on a train. The story is marked by numerous stereotypes about the Roma – noisy, dirty and smelly people, who are below animals, and who victimize themselves if anybody rebukes their behaviour. http://kuruc.info/r/20/88006/ '*Cigányterror a vonaton*'

[170] '*Albert Pasztor, police chief in Miskolc, attracted opprobrium and praise in equal measure when he told a press conference that "all the muggings" on a Miskolc council estate over the past two months had been committed by gypsies.*', Roma bear brunt of Hungary downturn, Irish Times, February, 2009

contribute as well to this situation, as the Roma are seen as pariahs and scapegoats for all the problems of the society. The human rights organisations spent a good amount of effort to show instances of state-sponsored practices of physical and symbolic separation. As in Gyongyospata, most of the Roma populations across Hungary are living in distinctly delimited areas, true ghettos where poverty, pollution and pestilence converge in a habitat of horror.

Such habitats are prone to crime, but the high levels of crime are caused by segregation and discrimination.[171] Since the Roma population is considered to be racially inferior and unable to be integrated, the access to the labour market is limited, and thus any chance of prosperity is severed, in a vicious circle of racism and poverty.[172] Moreover, members of the population are automatically incriminated by the police even for crimes they have not committed.[173] On the other hand, the media is more likely to report those crimes in which a Roma is the perpetrator than those in which an ethnical Hungarian is the offender. The narrative of Gypsy terror is intimately embedded in structural and systemic factors, such as poverty and exclusion.

The discourses of the civil society groups acknowledge the threat posed by the rise of far-right patrols, but ultimately they rely on state or international support for solving the problem.[174] At no point in the discourse is there any prominence given to the idea of the Roma population organizing itself against the paramilitaries. On the contrary, the preferred solutions have more to do with

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[171] http://www.barikad.hu/romakamp%C3%A1nyol_az_amnesty_international-20110506
[172] '*Roma activist Agnes Daroczi, a sociologist at the Hungarian Institute for Culture and Art [declares] "To be frank, there are many of us who are stealing. But when you deeply analyze the situation you see that there aren't any jobs, any possibilities for these people."*' (quoted in Woodard, 2008)
[173] http://index.hu/belfold/2011/05/13/amnesty_ciganyok_a_felelem_legkoreben/ '*Amnesty: Cigányok a félelem légkörében*' ('Amnesty: Gypsies live in an atmosphere of fear')
[174] http://www.amnesty.hu/amnesty-international/a-romak-diszkriminacioja-ellen/sajtokozlemeny-%E2%80%93-itt-az-id%C5%91-a-rasszista-er%C5%91szak-es-felelemkeltes-megallitasara '*Sajtóközlemény – Itt az idő a rasszista erőszak és félelemkeltés megállítására*' ('Press Release - It's time to stop racist violence and fear') 'Amnesty International calls on the Hungarian government, the Interior Ministry and the police to immediately take all necessary measures against all forms of racist violence and fear, to prevent, investigate and punish, in Gyöngyöspata and other parts of the country.'

strengthening efforts to integrate the Roma within the Hungarian population.[175] Here, the narrative is one of eradicating differences: the Roma are also Hungarian.[176] As I have shown, in the Hejőszalonta counter-demonstration, the NGO activists urged the Roma people to chant the national Hungarian anthem, as a response to the racist slogans of the marching far-right groups. Thus, the discourse attempts to articulate a logic of equivalence, whereby the Roma are *de jure*, and should also be *de facto*, citizens of the same nation-state as the rest of the population. The discrimination can only stop once the Roma will be seen and will behave themselves as any other citizens, with all the rights and obligations implied.

The trope of 'Gypsy crime' functions at a discursive level to legitimise the vigilante actions of the far-right patrols. I will now turn to the logic of spectacle, which is the counterpoint to this trope. The spectacle constitutes the *praxis* of the racist discourse, the modality in which the patrols play out their ideologically based violence and get legitimacy for it.

3.5. Security, violence and the spectacle

I will start by mentioning that the far-right patrols that were active in Gyöngyöspata, as well as extreme right groups in general, employ a mechanism of security in their actions (Mireanu, 2012). They claim that certain groups within a society are being vulnerable and threatened by other groups, and volunteer to take actions against these threats. Security practices have an intrinsic logic of drawing distinctions between 'us' and 'them', where 'us' is the community to be defended, and

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[175] '*The answer, say analysts, is to focus on developing education and employment opportunities to ensure that Roma have a stake in society*.', Task force to tackle violence against Roma, The Times, December 2008
[176] Slogans revolving around this theme were being expressed at the counter-protest in Hejoszalonta (author's own observations, April 2011, Hejoszalonta)

'they' are the enemy that has to be eliminated (Williams, 2003). In the name of ensuring the security of a group, social actors attempt to delimit a distinct group of 'others' that represents the threat. In this way, not just the 'enemy' becomes defined, but also the identity of the threatened group, on behalf of which security is provided, becomes clearly articulated.

This logic of distinguishing between friends and enemies is a violent logic. It is the logic of exclusion and conflict. It legitimizes discriminations against certain people because they are considered to be a 'threat'. More than that, it legitimizes illegal and violent actions against other people, in the name of societal self-defence. As such, we can argue now that violence is an integral part of security.

Violence and security are closely interrelated; from exceptional measures outside the realm of normal politics (Buzan and Waever, 1998), to practices of surveillance, control and the ban (c.a.s.e collective, 2006), and finally to war itself, violence is the main modality of security (Neumann, 1998). Whether it is outright display of force, or a more subtle practice of domination through consent, security actions are predominantly violent.

In the case of the far-right paramilitaries of Hungary, and especially the patrols of Gyöngyöspata, violence was present throughout the discourses and practices undertaken. It was from the outset the main modality of the security practices employed by the patrols against the Roma population. Starting from the symbolic, yet not in the least harmless, displays of racism and hatred directed against the Roma people, the far right groups quickly moved on to explicit violent acts: breaking windows, burning houses, harassing people on the street with dogs and whips, starting altercations and so on. Yet the reaction of the 'Hungarians' of the village, and of general segments of the Hungarian population elsewhere, ranged from apathy to approval of this violence.

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How is this possible? My argument here is that this violence was legitimated through the logic of spectacle. Crucially, the spectacle instantiates a rupture between illusion and reality. It relies on powerful and suggestive impressions to convey messages that are imbued with tremor and emotions. The spectacle is mainly visual, and it uses images and the affects that they elicit. But the spectacle is also material – it is an assemblage of techniques and practices brought together by the need to stagger, to impress, to move – in a very physical way – the audience. Not in the least, the spectacle blurs the boundary between describing the world and creating the images of a new reality. As Boyle and Haggerty argue, the 'spectacle involves ongoing processes whereby social life is processed and packaged for mass visual consumption in a society increasingly oriented to appearances in the service of capitalism' (Boyle and Haggerty, 2009: 259). Indeed, the realm of 'appearances' and of the illusory seems to be the fertile ground of the spectacular. Through the spectacle that they put up, the Hungarian far-right groups managed to create an illusion for the consumption of the general population, an illusion based to a large extent on existing perceptions, ideas and stereotypes, of course, but an illusion of safety, community and prosperity. This idealistic promise was based, fundamentally and paradoxically, on violent acts committed against the Roma population.

David Apter reminds us that violence creates not only a discourse, but also 'a form of capital, a monopolistic capital of truths and virtues, of logocentric closure. It produces a conveyance, people giving over a piece of their minds to the collective, enabling them to draw more power than they give up.' (Apter, 1997: 13) Thus we can argue that by employing violence for their security actions, the patrols gained a good deal of symbolic capital. People that were watching beforehand helplessly how 'the Gypsies' spread fear, could now witness and even participate in a retributive collective action. Moreover, this action was firmly grounded on all the values that they cherished, and that the Gypsies were threatening: reverence for the glorious past, hyper-masculinity and force, honour and vigilance.

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The use of violence was ensuring that the actions of the patrols had a degree of firmness and decisiveness that was lacking in the state's interventions. Faced with the impotence of the state apparatus against the growing terror acts, the population accepted and reinforced what it saw as a community-based, powerful, trained, effective and well organized grouping of forces that could stand up and deliver security and defence. It is small wonder that the website of the Betyarsereg organization (led by Tyirityán) lists the following qualities that are required from their members: vigour, some experience in martial arts, athletic and 'good looking' allure, and preferably male gender.[177] Indeed, the readiness to engage in man-to-man combat given by intensive martial arts training is seen as a powerful asset and an effective tool of vigilantism in Hungary.

To quote David Apter again, 'it is when events are incorporated into interpretive discourses embodied in discourse communities that political violence not only builds on itself, but becomes both self-validating and self-sustaining.' (Apter, 1997: 12). In the case of Hungarian paramilitarianism, the guiding discourse is intrinsically connected to the tropes of the glorious romanticized past. It is from history that the Hungarian patrols draw their inspiration and their motivation. It is from an idealized narrative of national supremacy and heroism on the one hand[178], and eternal victimization and un-recognition on the other hand, that the patrols obtain their main legitimacy. The past is re-visited and fabricated in a fabulous way. This would be nothing new in the plethora of world-wide nationalisms that are spread across the Globe since the beginning of the nineteenth century. What makes the Hungarian far-right in general, and the anti-Roma patrols in particular stand out, is the

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[177] http://betyarsereg.hu/koezlemeny

[178] 'Not only the past is made heroic, but the very existence of the contemporary 'warrior' has to resemble that of the ancient heroes. Thus, an entire lifestyle is being set up, and the external readiness for violence has to be congruent with an internal state of mind that emphasizes honour, abstinence, community and even love' - 'Thoughts', on the website of the Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement http://www.hvim.hu/gondolatok

spectacularity of this nationalism, which is not sponsored by the state, but germinates from the grass root level.

A careful walk around Budapest's historical centre will reveal a surprising occurrence: shops with windows displaying large numbers of historical artefacts, ranging from key-chains and books to t-shirts and 'traditional' pieces of attire, and even to bows, arrows, drinking horns and amulets. All these items feature some nationalist symbol, whether it is the (outlawed) Arpad flag or the Greater Hungarian Map.[179] And all these items are being acquired by 'patriots' who are eager to show their allegiance to Hungary. It is no rare sight to see people in Budapest wearing anachronistic clothes that allude to a tribal and nomadic past, and the spread of images featuring the Greater Hungarian map is unimaginable. This shows a commodification of the past, a transformation of nationalist symbols into merchandise that once bought, can bestow certain symbolic capital on the owner; yet it also points to the instantiations of the mythology that legitimates and reinforces the discourses used by the far-right groups. It is, in a manner of speaking, a 'Lord of the Rings' effect: people instantiate in their daily lives the myths that allow them to make up for this or that frustration.

The patrols, however, take this instantiation to a different level. Their attire is not merely a uniform – it is an entire coherent set of artefacts that is meant to convey a discourse, the myth of Hungarian resilience and heroic stoutness. From the queer hats and pelerines of the Betyarsereg, to the black vests with Arpad flags of the Magyar Garda, from whips that are meant to remind of ancient Hungarian outlaws, to embroidery that points to the 'huszár' tradition, the uniforms of the different patrols are a fundamental part of their legitimacy discourse. These groups do not merely patrol and ensure security, but they do it in a spectacular way.

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[179] See for example this report on a Nazi festival in 2011: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0NGWm-gpdRQ&feature=related The breadth of artefacts shown here is far more complex, and it includes outright displays of Nazi symbols and Holocaust denial slogans.

On the Hungarian national day, the 23rd of October, in 2012, I was present at three demonstrations of far-right groups in Budapest. I started with the traditional *Jobbik* gathering in the city centre, where the party leaders were giving speeches, and musicians were playing patriotic music. There were *Arpad* flags everywhere, and people were wearing traditional national costumes. Towards the main stage, I spotted a score of members of *Szebb Jovoert*, wearing their uniforms: black trousers and vests, with their logo printed on the back; each member had a black cap, and some of them – probably those 'higher in ranks' had a feather attached to their cap. They were standing in formation, as if waiting for the orders of some commander that was not (yet) present. As I was trying to photograph them from the side of the gathering, I was verbally assaulted and pushed back: I did not seem like a member of the trusted press, and besides, my Hungarian was not confident enough to make up a story of why am I taking photos.

Towards the end of this first demonstration, as the sun was setting, I witnessed a few members of the *Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom* ('The Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement') standing in a circle and lighting torches. All of them were head-shaven men dressed in their organisation's black uniforms. As I was heading home, I stumbled across another demonstration, also with a stage and speeches. Here, the *Magyar Garda* was providing the security for the event. They were also dressed in uniforms, yet these seem more precarious. The trousers were all black, but the jackets were not all made after the same pattern, like the ones of *Szebb Jovoert*. It seemed as if each member had brought his or her own black jacket, on which they sewed the *Magyar Garda* logo. However, these uniformed people seemed to be more numerous and more active than the ones in the previous protest. They were constantly busy walking around the crowd to make sure everything was in order: a seemingly futile effort, since there were hardly fifty people in front of the stage.

As I was watching and taking photos, from behind I could hear a great ramble. A noisy crowd was coming towards us, and almost everybody had a lit torch. They were singing and shouting, and as they intersected the *Magyar Garda* demonstration, they cheered. They were walking past by, so I joined them. I soon discovered that they were all part of the *Jobbik Ifjusag – Jobbik'*s youth wing. They did not have uniforms, but the crowd was guided by loud boosts of patriotic heavy metal music – the sound of bands such as *Karpatia* – coming from two large speakers that were riding in front of us. This music, along with the torches and the general effervescence of everybody present in this night cortege made this experience the most impressive and fearful one for me.

The spectacle becomes an integral component of security; it becomes a mechanism that legitimates the inherent violence in security practices. The spectacle of security accomplishes what Apter refers to as the 'self-validating and self-sustaining' mechanisms of violence. The far-right patrols are meant to make a first staggering impression on the visual level, before moving to actual actions. Their very presence, in sombre, black, pre-modern attire, is meant to startle the enemies, and comfort the friends. The myth comes to life, legend becomes reality, and the present time becomes the theatre of an eternal re-enactment of a glorified past.

The spectacular dimension of security sheds a good deal of light to the question of how do audiences legitimize vigilantism, in the case of Hungary. The spectacle brings together disparate themes into a coherent narrative – a people that was once glorious, but that is now being oppressed by a cohort of enemies, against which only those who regain the former glory can prevail. The spectacle emphasizes the fabulous, the extravagant, and the visual in its purest form. The focus of the spectacle is on the display, the show-off and the entertainment.

The spectacle allows the patrols to articulate their discourse and perform a successful securitizing move even in the absence of any concrete action. In relationship to violence, the spectacle has a precedent: it may announce violence, but it can function as well in its absence, because it can impress an audience through grandeur and awe. Before they started to patrol in the actual sense, all paramilitary groups had been present at different manifestations and protests, performing no other action than just being there. Thus, crucially, the spectacle is at times self-legitimizing: its presence is already a proof of its acceptance. The spectacle does not invent anything new, it just brings together elements of already accepted discourses, and adds them a twist.

Such a force is necessary in the case of the far-right patrols, because their actions are ultimately subverting an established order of things – the traditional role of the state as keeper of the rule of law is difficult to crack. Thus, it is important to stress that the spectacle can fail at times. The legitimacy of the patrols is lost if they cannot manage to convince that they are useful and credible. For example, one instance of locals denying the importance of the patrols has been captured in a TASZ documentary.[180] One man is asking: 'There are civil guards, the police is six kilometres from here, there are sixteen surveillance cameras, so why is there anybody else needed here?'. Other people are assuring the interviewee that there is no problem in their village, and the Roma people are not causing anybody any harm. In fact, the voices expressed in the video agree that it was the presence of the patrols in their village that generated tensions.

The spectacular dimension is complemented by the dramaturgical one. Indeed, any spectacle is a performance in front of an audience. And as Mark Salter notices, security itself has a dramaturgical component: the speech act involves a theatrical move in front of a group of spectators (Salter, 2008).

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[180] Társaság a Szabadságjogokért, 'Szebb jövőért: "mi nem járőrözünk, mi megfigyelünk"', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59vUZpgT0qw

The joint dimensions of spectacle and dramaturgy imply directly that behind these theatrical moves there are clearly stated intentions, and that the actors do not just automatically play a given role, but they consciously create and reinforce the myths and narratives in order to convince their audiences. Here, the emotional aspect of the spectacle of security is crucial. The patrols elicit a certain range of affects, from nostalgia for a glorious past, to anger for a decayed present, and to the excitement and hope of being able to bring back that glorious past in order to make a change. These constitute a powerful force of legitimacy, which, as the rest of the spectacle, functions at a non-verbal level.

3.6. Everyday security – the ambiguous relation of the patrols with the state

In this way, I return to and reinforce my argument that the vigilante groups in Hungary perform security with clear stated intentions and programs. To consider them un-intentional would be to miss out on the intricate ways in which their far-right ideology provides them with the political and practical imaginary to respond to the security demands of the population through the need to address the 'Gypsy crime'. It would also obscure the intentionality behind the logic of spectacle that they employ in their actions. The artefacts that they use – uniforms, weapons etc. – point to a clear direction of action – to elicit fear for some, and trust for others. In this way, their security practices get legitimated, and they benefit from popular support.

On the other hand, these vigilante groups also perform everyday security. This argument needs some unfolding, since the logic of spectacle does not easily sit well with quotidian practices of security. The spectacle breaks with the ordinary and it marks a moment of rupture in the same way in which

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an emergency situation does. Indeed, it may not appear customary for groups of people in uniforms to parade the streets of this or that village and to challenge the state's monopoly of violence. However, it is precisely in their ambiguous relationship with the state that these groups can be said to perform everyday security. It is the exceptionalism of performing non-state spectacle that bring the patrols in the realm of the everyday.

To be sure, the spectacle of the far-right patrols is partially condoned by the Hungarian state. This is done in two ways – by closing an eye to certain security practices and not properly intervening or condemning the breech of the monopoly; and by embedding the patrols and their discourse in the official state apparatus. As I have shown, the authorities have been slow to act, and in some cases even reluctant. With the exception of ensuring a façade of order and civility, the Hungarian government actually did precious little towards any consistent opposition to these patrols. This is why more than one year after the events in Gyongyospata, they returned to cause fear again in Devecser, when they harassed and injured many Roma residents. As for adopting the far-right discourse, it is worth noting again that the Hungarian state openly admits that the 'Gypsy crime' is a serious problem. From criminalising poverty in Budapest to constructing work camps for Roma people in Gyongyospata, the Hungarian government is gradually moving in the same direction as the patrols. This is complemented by the fact that *Jobbik* has been a governing party for a long period of time, and is fully embedded in the state apparatus.

At the same time, these patrols do function with a large degree of autonomy from the state. The spectacle that they perform does need the approval of the authorities. It is mostly a communication between the patrols themselves and the population, the target audience. Therefore, the patrols might be partially embedded in the state, but they are addressing the population.

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The Hungarian government also did everything in its powers to disassociate itself institutionally from the actions of the far-right patrols. As a right-wing conservatory party, *Fidesz* cannot afford any explicit slip towards extremism. Therefore, it was from the very beginning very concerned to stake a stance against the patrols and to ensure everybody that it has upper hand on the situation. The first cracks in this position appeared when the government took a defensive position in relation to the evacuation of the Roma people. By doing so, Orban's team exposed its priorities – not the welfare of the Roma people, but its own public image in the international media. What followed was a silent but steady embrace of the 'Gypsy crime' discourse, without the extremist overtones and practices. In this way, *Fidesz* could also score electoral points against *Jobbik*, by appealing to those segments of the electorate who share the racist views of the far-right, but are alienated by its violent methods. The patrols were thus criminalised and encouraged at the same time. This reflects the ambiguous position that they are in when negotiating their practices with the state.

Conclusion

This chapter analysed the practices of vigilantism performed by far-right paramilitary groups in Hungary. It focused on the events in the village of Gyongyospata in 2011. It considered these events as a security-scape, and analysed the discourses and practices of the actors involved. The chapter was concerned with the mechanisms through which the vigilantes in Hungary respond to security demands coming from the population. The groups of vigilantes have a clearly articulated far-right ideology, which signals the programmatic character of their security practices. They supply security by fuelling the discursive trope of 'Gypsy crime', and channelling it through spectacular security practices.

One important question that is left unanswered is that of the far-right nature of this security supply – how is it possible that the most established answer to the security demands of the Hungarian population takes the form of violent, exclusionary and extremist paramilitary patrols? What can be said of the political imaginary of the communities in which all the economic, social, and even personal problems are subsumed under the scapegoating of the Roma people – a scapegoating that takes the form of securitisation? Can we speak of a diffused generalised racism of the Hungarian population? Or can we discern more complex political-economic mechanisms that operate in an intricate relationship with the state, the media and the vigilantes themselves? In the next chapter, I will show one such mechanism, through which particular groups are seen as being intrinsically criminal in virtue of their economic status. In Italy, vigilantes supply security to a population that considers precarious social categories to be dangerous and criminal. The far-right component has been diluted, and there can be no suspicion of a generalised racism. Italian vigilantes are less violent and less concerned with spectacle. Their main concern is to perform a social function, and provide services to the poor.

Perhaps in the future, the Hungarian far-right patrols will also shift towards this dimension. Whatever trajectory they choose, Hungarian vigilantism and the demand for security of the Hungarian population are phenomena that need to be treated seriously. Sustaining a general alarmist tone by the media and the human rights organisations cannot be an answer. The danger posed by the far-right patrols and the diffusion of antipathy towards the Roma population can only be tackled through rigorous analyses. We must be able to discern the economic and political factors that drive the society towards the exclusionary violence of the far-right. We must understand why people choose hatred over solidarity and securitisation over cooperation. The next chapter will offer a few leads towards such an analysis.

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IV. THE MILAN CENTRAL TRAIN STATION

Introduction

This chapter analyses the security practices of Italian vigilantes. It does so by situating these practices in a particular securityscape – the Milano Centrale train station. I focus on one particular group, the City Angels. I claim that by following the logic of connecting (in)security with poverty, the City Angels function as a group of vigilantes whose practices are intentional and programmatic. The group follows a pattern of action that is modelled by their perceived need to rescue the Centrale from the grip of delinquency and disorder, and return it to the city of Milan. This perceived need functions as a security demand, to which the City Angels seek to respond. The security demand is articulated in a wider context, in which other security actors play important roles. The municipality of Milan is constructing the train station as a '*terra di nessuno*', a territory of insecurity that needs to be renewed and rescued from the deliquency that invades it. This deliquency is articulated as '*insicurezza urbana*', and the discourse around it produces practices of security that are aimed against the poor, homeless, immigrants and so on. In this way poverty becomes criminalised. The City Angels are an integral part of this security-scape, and their practices can be best understood when this context is thoroughly analysed. The political economy of the securityscape implies that poverty and poor people cannot be part of the gentrified areas, mainly because of the security threat that they are said to pose. Thus, in the Centrale, homeless people and illegal immigrants are the main targets of the security mechanisms that operate there, among which the City Angels are a main actor.

I will proceed in a different manner than in the previous chapter. If in the Hungarian case I used a specific security event and analysed its ramifications and context, here I will focus on security practices in a particular space – the train station. First, I will outline the wider global and national context in which the urban space becomes securitised. I analyse the Security Package of 2008, the so-called Maroni Law, which made 'insicurezza urbana' a priority for the Italian state, and it also legalised vigilantism. I show how urban (in)security and vigilantism are intertwined in the state's discourses, being motivated by the same urgency of the 'dangerous cities'. The City Angels function within these parameters, yet they carefully negotiate their position. By combining security with 'solidarity', they try to balance vigilantism with social work.

I embed the actions of the City Angels in the securityscape of the Milano Centrale train station. This securityscape has three components: discourses of space and movement that articulate the train station as 'nobody's land'; practices of security and surveillance articulated by the state in order to reclaim the space; and the activities of the City Angels, which oscillate between security and social work. This securityscape operates on the logic of the poverty/security nexus. The City Angels are not a spectacular element of the securityscape, yet they are an important one. Their activities and discourses create and reinforce the logic of gentrification in the Centrale, which articulates poverty as an urban security issue. The ensuing sections are organised according to these components. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the nexus between poverty and security. I show how the City Angels group fits in this nexus, through its combination of security and social work.

Globalization in Milan

The contemporary wave of globalization impacts the urban scale in an unprecedented way. Cities become hubs of the global economy, and they grow to be more important than nation-states. From managing investment and production, to ensuring the life standards of different classes and social groups, the urban space is the productive territory of the current social, cultural, political and economic conditions of capitalism. Milan is the financial capital of Italy, and as such, it is firmly integrated in the global network of urban centres. In the 2008 World Wide Centers of Commerce Index, Milan occupied the 20th position (Sassen, 2012: 116). It ranked 12th in terms of 'Financial Network Connectivity' and 5th in terms of 'Accountancy Network Connectivity' (Sassen, 2012: 105-6). In the same year, Milan ranked 9th, just a bit below Shanghai, in terms of business connectivity (idem, 81). The financial capital of Italy also boasts the 12th position in the world when it comes to hosting the 'Top Fifty Publicly Listed Financial TNCs' in 2008 (Sassen, 2012: 134). When it comes to living standards, Milan also seems to be among the world's top cities: it ranks 8th on the 'quality of life' index, 14th on 'personal freedom' – but only 30th on 'livability' (Sassen, 2012: 123-4). This is all the more striking since in the same WWCC Index from 2006, Milan was not even in the top 20 (idem, 125). Milan is quickly emerging as a top global city, concentrating financial and trading services and thus having a strategic role in the global economy.

Among the side-effects of such relegation of competencies from the national to the urban scale, the crucial one is the spatial institutionalization of several logics of difference. The city becomes segmented and partitioned between different social groups, with uneven access to resources and unequal capabilities (Marcuse and van Kempen, 2000). The city reinforces on a narrower scale the

inequalities of contemporary capitalism, and it becomes a magnified prototype of the stratification brought about by the global expansion of the market. From racial and ethnic segregation to class polarization, the global city is producing and reinforcing an entire array of inequalities (Wacquant, 2008a). The space of the city is fragmented and divided between antagonistic groups, which are kept in a fragile state of peace either by the discourse of common democratic interest, or by mechanisms of surveillance and control.

The urban space is systematically favouring the expansion of globalization, with all its political, economic, social and cultural elements. The most illustrative practice is gentrification. Poor and derelict urban areas, often inhabited by low-income residents, are infused with capital in order to be 'uplifted' in accordance to the needs of a class with more consumption power. In this process, buildings and infrastructures get 'modernized', with the result that the real estate values grow at a high rate, pushing those who cannot afford the new 'standards of living' away (Smith, 1996; 2002). Crucially, a fundamental element of the gentrification discourse and practice is the transformation of insecure spaces into safe areas that are thus 're-appropriated' by the 'citizens' of the city.

Gentrification in Milan

Gentrification and security go hand in hand: the drive for uplifting and modernizing the city leads not only to the marginalization and exclusion of low-income groups, but also to their relegation to the category of 'threats'. This securitization is performed through increased surveillance, policing and even through forms of architecture that are meant to deter certain categories of people from entering the premises of the built environment (Davis, 1990).

Milan is also undergoing a strong wave of gentrification. It started in the 1980's, with the 'discovery' of Ticinese district by groups of artists and left-wing activists (Smagacz, 2008: 119). Abandoned

buildings were being re-occupied and renovated, and cultural activities began to flourish around them. Soon, pubs, restaurants, art galleries and libraries appeared, attracting crowds of young people that had little in common with the original local residents of these districts. Thus, real estate companies snatched the opportunity, and started acquiring cheap property that could be re-sold for higher prices. The gentrification of Milan progressed with the expansion of middle-class and business-people into former working class districts (Smagacz, 2008: 104). The rents exploded, and the local residents were slowly forced out or replaced by those with higher social status.

By the end of the last decade, the target areas for gentrification – now dubbed 'urban development' were Milan's large defunct industrial sites. Under the pretext of creating more 'green areas' and bicycle-friendly spaces, companies like Hines Italia planned over '150 urban redevelopment projects either at the design stage or in construction', with estimated budgets of '€15 billion to €20 billion, or $20.2 billion to $27 billion'. These projects have 'turned Milan into the largest construction site in Europe', but have also provided 'above all, an opportunity for investors'.[181] Of course, these industrial areas were not empty, and were usually hosting homeless people and squats, which were quickly chased off.

Currently, the main driver of gentrification in Milan is the World Exhibition of 2015. Gravitating again around a 'green' theme, and with a truly ironic name for its projects, the 'Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life' exhibition will occupy 110 hectares of Milan's urban space (out of which, 20000 square meters for 'service and security areas') and will aim at the 'recreation in Milan of a hitherto

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[181] All the quotes from this paragraph are from Robert Galbraith 'An urban renaissance is transforming Milan', *The New York Times*, July 10, 2007, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/10/travel/10iht-remilan.1.6584771.html?_r=0

unseen landscape of monumental lightness and natural beauty.'[182] In this context, the central train station becomes a valuable space, since it is one of the gateways of traffic to and from the city.

The aesthetic logic of cleanliness and order is one aspect of gentrification practices. The derelict buildings of the bad neighbourhoods and slums are hotbeds of dirt, diseases and decadence. Crime and foulness go hand in hand, in an apocalyptic imaginary of underground madness (Macek, 2006). This converges in the images of the homeless, the drug-addict and the 'immigrant'. The homeless evoke a mixture of fear, loathing and pity. They are associated with laziness, alcoholism, petty theft and dumpster scavenging. In Milan, my respondents from the City Angels group referred time and again to the homeless as being both dangerous, and in need of their help. One of the practices of this group, performed in the vicinity of Milano Centrale, is a soup-kitchen for the many homeless who still manage to live around the station.

However, drug-addicts and dealers are not treated so leniently, and they are often depicted as rapists and carriers of different diseases. The top of the hierarchy of threats is represented by the 'illegal immigrant' – the 'clandestine' who comes from totally different cultural and racial background as the 'locals'.[183] Whether it is the 'Arabs', the 'Asians' of the 'Gypsies', they stand at the intersection of class and race exclusions and discourses of threat. As such, they are usually associated with everything bad and dangerous. This discourse has been picked up and exploited to its full extent by extremist parties such as the *Lega Nord*, and by an entire array of far-right organizations that have

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[182] Expo Milano 2015 'Theme Guide', p. 21, available at http://en.expo2015.org/theme/theme-guide

[183] Milan has received more than 630.000 immigrants between 2000 and 2008, mostly from Romania, Albania and Morocco. For more data on immigration in Milan, see Wendell Cox 'The Evolving Urban Form: Milan', *New Geography*, September 14, 2011, available at http://www.newgeography.com/content/002441-the-evolving-urban-form-milan

mushroomed across Northern Italy. As I will develop in the following sections, one of the main stated reasons for legalizing the *ronde* patrols in Italy was to increase urban security.[184]

Cities are not just arenas of financial and trade flows, but they are also 'central agents in the many forms of violence brought about by capitalist imperialism' (Graham, 2010: 11). The urban space becomes securitized, as an effect of its vulnerability and need of special protection; on the other hand, security itself becomes urbanized, insofar as the agenda of possible threats and their solutions is being increasingly connected to urban spaces (Coward, 2009).

1. Urban security in Italy and Milan

This section highlights the wider Italian context in which the train station as a securityscape functions. I will present the security measures taken by the Italian government since 2008, which have a direct impact on how the city becomes a theatre of insecurity that needs to be addressed. These measures went hand in hand and reinforced a number of racist discourses articulated by the state and picked up by the population in the form of vigilante practices. Italian vigilantism is directly associated with urban security concerns. I show how the City Angels fit in the landscape of urban security and vigilantism. Their security practices are guided by a need to deal with derelict urban spaces through vigilante-type of patrolling.

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[184] http://www.adnkronos.com/AKI/English/Security/?id=3.0.2983854807

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1.1. Urban security in Italy and Milan

In 2008, the new right-wing Italian government of Silvio Berlusconi made security one of its top national priorities. The key immediate measure that it took in this direction was to adopt a so-called 'security package' that outlined the main threats and measures to be taken against them. This security package was focused primarily on illegal immigration, petty crimes and civil society protests. Its main concern was to deal with urban insecurity. Thus, the first section of the package is called '*sicurezza urbana*', and it consists of three points: new powers to mayors, more cooperation between local police and '*le forze dell'ordine*', meaning the *carabinieri* and the army, and a number of 'instruments for territorial protection'.[185] The aims of the section or urban security are to guarantee more security for the citizens, and to ensure the '*decoro urbano*', the urban property.

These are measures which were dubbed 'urgent' and which concerned public security. The augmentation of local powers took the form of giving mayors new powers in the domain of security. According to the 2008 security package, the mayors are able to promote 'urgent regulations' in the field of public and urban security: '*Il sindaco, quale Ufficiale di Governo, può adottare provvedimenti anche contingibili e urgenti nei casi in cui si renda necessario prevenire ed eliminare gravi pericoli non solo per l'incolumità pubblica ma anche per la sicurezza urbana.*'[186] Thus, the Italian cities became the main theatres of insecurity – 'clandestine' immigration, nomad camps, homeless people and petty criminals – all of these are now immediate concerns of the local authorities, which were also supposed to facilitate the cooperation between the municipal and the national police (Merlino, 2009: 6).

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[185] Norme del Pachetto Sicurezza e Collegati, 17.03.2010, available at:
http://www.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/19/0928_100319_-_Norme_pacchetto_sicurezza.pdf

[186] 'The mayor, in his capacity of Government Official, may adopt measures even exceptional and urgent in cases where it is necessary to prevent and eliminate grave dangers for public safety but also for urban safety.' Idem, p. 3

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Moreover, in the same period, the Italian government issued a decree[187] that initiated the state of emergency in three regions, including Lombardia, which has Milan as its capital. The reasoning of the decree is quite revealing of the state's discourse on security and urgency. It motivates the exceptional situation of increased security through the presence of illegal immigrants and 'abusive' nomad camps (with Roma people), which through their 'extreme precarity' have caused 'great social alarm'[188] with episodes which can endanger public order and safety.[189]

In terms of increased territorial protection, in July 2008, the minister of interior and minister of defence deployed 3000 soldiers in Italian cities, for the benefit of public security (Merlino, 2009: 7). The text of the decree that stands behind this move speaks about the need to prevent crime in densely populated areas.[190]

The deployment of soldiers in cities has constantly been expanded since 2008. The city of Milan was swarming with them, and their presence was exceptionally visible in the *Centrale* train station. In 2011 there had been already 600 soldiers deployed in Milan, in order to protect the train stations and other dangerous areas: '*a Milano, negli ultimi tre anni, circa 600 militari hanno rafforzato la presenza delle forze dell'ordine sul territorio, posizionandosi all'ingresso di Consolati e Ambasciate,*

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[187] Decreto del presidente del consiglio dei ministri: Dichiarazione dello stato di emergenza in relazione agli insediamenti di comunità nomadi nel territorio delle regioni Campania, Lazio e Lombardia, 21.05.2008, available at http://www.governo.it/Governo/Provvedimenti/testo_int.asp?d=39105

[188] '*Considerato che detti insediamenti, a causa della loro estrema precarieta', hanno determinato una situazione di grave allarme sociale, con possibili gravi ripercussioni in termini di ordine pubblico e sicurezza per le popolazioni locali*'

[189] '*gravi episodi che mettono in serio pericolo l'ordine e la sicurezza pubblica*'

[190] 'For specific and exceptional needs of crime prevention, in which it proves to be appropriate an increased control of the territory, it can be authorized a plan for the deployment of a contingent of military personnel belonging to the Armed Forces, preferably carabinieri (military police) employed in military tasks or anyway volunteers of the same Armed Forces specifically trained for the tasks they shall perform.' 'Conversione in legge, con modificazioni, del decreto-legge 23 maggio 2008, n. 92, recante misure urgenti in materia di sicurezza pubblica', art 7 bis

nelle Stazioni ed in numerosi quartieri'.[191] The former defence minister, Ignazio La Russa, has been a fervent advocate of militarising Italian cities in order to increase public security. In his view, street crime is the 'weak spot' of Italian big cities: 'All forms of street crime. They cause the most alarm. Don't consider them petty crime, stop using that word. It is only by combating mugging, dealing, thefts and violence that it is possible to truly improve citizens' standard of living and their perception of security.'[192] The army is being extensively used in Milan, and not only for patrolling and surveying 'risky areas', but also for more peculiar tasks, such as the protection of garbage and waste pits. These have been declared zones of strategic military interest.[193] The measure is meant to keep urban areas clear of garbage[194], and also to counteract the 'garbage mafia'.[195]

1.2. 'Milan is not Beirut'

The presence of soldiers on the streets of Milan caused a good deal of frustration for the local administration, especially since 2011, when the Right-wing Letizia Moratti lost the municipal elections to former Communist MP, Giuliano Pisapia. Milan had been an outpost of the conservatory policies of the Right wing governments. Since 2008, Milan has been a theatre for a set of repressive policies that were meant to increase urban security. Letizia Moratti has been the leading local political facilitator of these policies, and her administration took consistent credit for making the *Centrale* train station and Milan in general a safer space. Following this 'success', in the electoral campaign of 2011 she made a series of statements regarding her achievements and future plans, such as this one, quoted by The Guardian: 'When I first came here, I saw an undignified way of life. Now

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[191] 'in Milan, in the last three years, about 600 soldiers have enhanced the presence of law and order forces in the area, placed at the entrance of Consulates and Embassies, in stations and in many neighborhoods', http://sostenibile.blogosfere.it/2011/07/milano-sicurezza-lite-la-russa-pisapia-sui-militari.html

[192] Quoted in Statewatch, vol. 22, no. 4, 2012, p. 11

[193] Statewatch, vol. 19, no. 1, 2009, p. 12,

[194] http://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2014/01/15/news/esercito-e-rifiuti-uno-spreco-da-evitare-1.148768

[195] http://www.internazionale.it/news/visti-dagli-altri/2014/01/15/lesercito-contro-la-mafia-dei-rifiuti/

there are zero Gypsies'.[196] Berlusconi himself warned that if Moratti loses the elections, Milan will revert to being an unsafe city, invaded by immigrants: 'If Pisapia wins, Milan will became a Muslim town, a Gypsyville of Roma camps, a city besieged by foreigners' – and he was followed by his colleague Massimo Corsaro: 'If Pisapia wins, there will be a boom in rapes and prostitutes on the streets'.[197]

Pisapia did win, and he immediately criticised the hyper-securitisation of Milan's streets. 'Milan is not Beirut, and it does not need [members of the] military in the streets', commented the head of the city council's security commission, Mirko Mazzali.[198] Pisapia expressed his hopes that the military will focus only on specific sites, and leave the security of Milan's neighbourhoods to the police. The *Centrale* train station was one of these 'specific' locations where the military would still be welcome, in even higher numbers: '*Ieri, Pisapia aveva replicato, auspicando che i militari concentrino il proprio impegno su siti specifici, rappresentanze diplomatiche e Stazione Centrale, cessando la propria attività di vigilanza nei quartieri a fronte di un rafforzamento della presenza della polizia locale. In particolare, il sindaco Pisapia aveva sottolineato che attualmente occorrerebbero 300 militari per pattugliare i siti sensibili, mentre quelli dislocati sono solo 230.*'[199]

The problem with the presence of the army on the streets of Milan was therefore articulated as an excess only to the extent that it expands in the 'neighbourhoods', and thus invades the turf of the police. The need to underline the fact that 'Milan is not Beirut' also points to a concern that the image of the city might be endangered through an excess of heavy security, that is better fit for the

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[196] http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/may/28/milan-mayor-moratti-pisapia-berlusconi
[197] Both quotes in Idem
[198] Quoted in Statewatch, 22, 4, 2012, p. 10
[199] 'Yesterday, Pisapia had replied, expressing the hope that the military would focus their efforts on specific sites, diplomatic delegations and the Central Railway Station, ceasing their surveillance activities in the neighborhoods in view of a reinforced presence of the local police. Specifically, the mayor Pisapia had stressed that at the moment 300 soldiers would be needed in order to patrol sensitive sites, while those deployed are only 230.'
http://sostenibile.blogosfere.it/2011/07/milano-sicurezza-lite-la-russa-pisapia-sui-militari.html

former colonies, than for the clean and civilised streets of the metropolis. Beirut is the antipode image of Milan, and it also points to an ever-threatening scenario: if we let the situation go out of control, Milan might as well become Beirut. For now, however, we can make sure that in Milan, business is as usual, and security is done with a soft hand: 'You obtain security in the city through prevention, by revitalising its neighbourhoods, not through repression'.[200] In the years following these statements, the Left-wing administration of Pisapia did not slow the pace of repression, and as I will show in the next section, the processes of criminalising poverty and illegal immigrants continued unabated, albeit in a more concealed manner. Pisapia focused more on 'social services' and direct assistance to the poor and the homeless, while at the same time continuing to see these as problem-generating categories, and attempting to remove them from the *Centrale*. In this way, he replaced the strong stance of the previous government with a softer approach, one that would definitely not preserve the image of Milan as 'Beirut'.

La Russa reacted swiftly, and in the period during which he was still the minister of the interior and Pisapia was Milan's mayor, he accused the city's administration of an 'ideological and antimilitarist' approach that was typical for the Left: '*Poi, il Ministro La Russa, aveva accusato di "mutismo" il sindaco di Milano Giuliano Pisapia, chiedendogli di chiarire la sua posizione, criticando sostanzialmente l'approccio ideologico ed antimilitarista della sinistra milanese ed evidenziando l'utilità per il cittadino della presenza dei militari.*'[201] This 'utility' for the citizens of Milan is substantiated by the fact that these citizens, in La Russa's opinion, directly support increase in security forces: 'In Milan, the police forces have been integrated with military [personnel] who patrol the dangerous areas, sometimes on foot; from the viewpoint of citizens, there is an effective cover.

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[200] Mirko Mazzali, quoted in Statewatch, 22, 4, 2012, p. 10

[201] 'Later, Minister La Russa, had accused the mayor of Milan Giuliano Pisapia of "mutism", asking him to clarify his position, basically criticizing the ideological and anti-militarist approach of Milan's left and highlighting the usefulness of the military's presence for the citizens. ' http://sostenibile.blogosfere.it/2011/07/milano-sicurezza-lite-la-russa-pisapia-sui-militari.html

The number of security workers is exactly the one that was requested: it doesn't matter if they are carabinieri, police officers or military [personnel].'[202] This reply came after the police trade union complained about the need to increase the number of police forces in Milan by around 700 officers, in the context of the government imposing personnel cuts. La Russa finally agreed to remove 350 militaries from Milan, but considered this move to be a loss for the city's security, because it left the 'most dangerous areas' unattended: 'I don't think the mayor has made the Milanese happy by acting in order for the 350 military [personnel] who were employed to date in patrolling the city's most dangerous areas alongside carabinieri and the police to be withdrawn. But, involuntarily, Pisapia has made someone happy: I am thinking of the citizens and tourists in holiday locations in 14 Italian provinces where, in agreement with minister Maroni, we have decided to redistribute the military [personnel] withdrawn from Milan.'[203]

1.3. Racism and Vigilantism

The most controversial element of the Security Package of 2008 – and also the element that sparked this doctoral project – was the addition, in 2009, of a clause that legalised civil patrols that could ensure public security in cities – the famous 'Maroni Law'. This was enshrined in the updated version of the Package of 2010 in the same chapter of 'urban security', alongside all the measures discussed previously in this section. The inclusion of the patrols in the 'urban security' section of the Package highlights the centrality of the city-scape for the security preoccupations that make up the discourses and practices of security in Italy. It also highlights the nexus between Italian vigilantism and urban security.

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[202] quoted in Statewatch, 22, 4, 2012, p. 11
[203] Idem, p. 10

The text of the 2009 law states that the mayors can cooperate with groups of 'non-armed citizens' in order to relieve situations of urban insecurity and social discomfort: '*I sindaci, previa intesa con il prefetto, possono avvalersi della collaborazione di associazioni tra cittadini non armati al fine di segnalare alle Forze di polizia dello Stato o locali eventi che possano arrecare danno alla sicurezza urbana ovvero situazioni di disagio sociale'.*[204] Nothing more is said about this issue, but it appears that the law was meant to legalise already existing groups – such as the patrols of the *Lega Nord* or of the *Guardia Nazionale*, and not only to facilitate the creation of new ones. As *La Repubblica* put it in 2010, the Maroni Law aimed at 'regulating' the phenomenon: '*Il decreto Maroni, firmato l'8 agosto 2009, mirava a regolamentare il fenomeno delle ronde fai da te, istituendo appositi albi presso le prefetture e prevedendo rigidi requisiti per gli aspiranti volontari'.*[205]

The measure elicited outraged reactions, from both national and international commentators. Many saw this as facilitating a return of Fascism, especially since some of the existing groups had uniforms and ideologies that were emulating Far-right models of Italy's Fascist and post-Fascist past. One of the first scandals occurred in Milan: 'Controversy was sparked when the Italian National Guard revealed its uniform in Milan at the weekend. Members will wear a khaki shirt, black cap featuring a rampant eagle insignia, 18 hole leather boots, Latin motto and armbands bearing a black sunwheel very similar to a Nazi swastika'.[206] *La Repubblica* concurred: '*Le divise delle ronde nere, infatti, richiamano simboli di età fascista'.*[207] BBC also reported that 'the measures could effectively

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[204] 'Mayors, upon agreement with the prefect, may benefit from the cooperation with unarmed citizens' associations so as to report to the State or local police forces events that may harm urban security, that is, situations of social unease'. http://www.telitel.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=91&limitstart=3 Law 94/2009, paragraph 40

[205] 'The Maroni decree, signed on August 8, 2009, aimed at regulating the phenomenon of the DIY patrols, by setting up registers in the prefectures and by including strict requirements for aspiring volunteers' http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2010/09/12/news/il_flop_delle_ronde_padane_dopo_un_anno_ce_n_una_sola-6989688/

[206] http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1193111/Italy-revives-Blackshirt-vigilantes-fears-Fascism-sparks-investigation.html

[207] 'Indeed, the uniforms of the black patrols are reminiscent of symbols of the fascist era.' http://www.repubblica.it/2009/06/sezioni/politica/ddl-sicurezza-6/indagine-ronde-nere/indagine-ronde-nere.html

legitimise vigilantism and xenophobia'.[208] The 'antifascist' hysteria took proportions, and the July edition of the Socialist newspaper *l'Unita* had a cover with a man in a green uniform, with the caption '*La legge della paura*' – the rule of fear.[209] The Christian-Democrats also expressed their concerns, and pointed out that the neo-fascist patrols will not manage to provide any form of security, as Gianpiero D'Alia declared: '*Il governo intervenga subito per vietare le ronde nere di militanti neofascisti pronti a farsi giustizia come fossimo nel 'ventennio'. Avevamo messo in guardia sui rischi di un provvedimento demagogico e pericoloso come le ronde: oggi abbiamo il primo esempio di una giustizia sommaria fai da te che porterà solo danni al Paese e nessuna sicurezza. Presenteremo un'interpellanza chiedendo al governo di vietarle per motivi di pubblica sicurezza: che siamo nere, rosse o verdi, le ronde sono la resa dello Stato e un vero rischio per i cittadini*'.[210]

The government denied the accusations of facilitating Right-wing extremism, and insisted that the Maroni Law was meant exactly to regulate the patrols and to prevent extremism. The patrols are meant to encourage citizens to contribute to urban security, rather than to form paramilitary groups: '*Ieri il sottosegretario all'Interno, Alfredo Mantovano, ha criticato "gli esponenti della sinistra che si stanno stracciando le vesti" e ha sottolineato che iniziative come le 'ronde nere' di Milano saranno impossibili una volta approvato il disegno di legge sulla sicurezza che regolamenterà il fenomeno. Il decreto attuativo, infatti, ha aggiunto il sottosegretario, "indicherà che le associazioni di volontari, non armati, non potranno essere espressione né di forze politiche, né di organizzazioni sindacali, né di tifoserie organizzate. Si prevede inoltre - ha detto - che eventuali divise e marchi dovranno essere*

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[208] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7893536.stm
[209] L'Unita, 3 July 2009
[210] 'The government should intervene immediately to ban the black patrols of neo-fascist militants that are ready to take the law into their own hands as if we were in the era of fascist government. We had given warning of the risks of a demagogic and dangerous measure like the patrols: today we have the first example of hasty DIY justice that will only damage the country and will bring no security. We will submit a formal question asking the government to ban them for reasons of public security: be them black, red or green, the patrols are the State's surrender and a true risk for the citizens.' In 'Ronde nere, indagine procura di Milano', La Repubblica, 14.06.2009, http://www.repubblica.it/2009/06/sezioni/politica/ddl-sicurezza-6/indagine-ronde-nere/indagine-ronde-nere.html

conformi allo spirito della disposizione, che intende promuovere il contributo volontario di cittadini alla sicurezza e non richiamare realtà paramilitari'.[211] The national police endorsed this point of view, and its representative Enzo Letizia commented on the inevitability that citizens will 'spontaneously' form groups to ensure their security: '*nessuno potrà impedire le ronde 'fai da te' ed assisteremo ad un proliferare dello spontaneismo nella vigilanza sul territorio'.*[212]

However, the government has not been completely alien to discourses that could indeed legitimate xenophobia. Italian politicians were tirelessly claiming that crime rates have soared out of control because of illegal immigration, and most of all because of the influx of 'tens of thousands' Roma people from Eastern Europe, who were 'easily travelling to Italy and committing crimes (Merlino, 2009: 22). There had been several instances of racist remarks coming from members of the government. In 2009, Roberto Calderoli, Minister for Legislative Simplification, sparked outrage as he commented on a row of recent rape cases, which were allegedly performed by 'Gypsies from Romania': 'In some cases, I don't believe that rehabilitation is possible. I think that chemical castration may be insufficient and that surgical castration is the only option left. Society has to protect itself'.[213]

Such discourses were articulated on the backdrop of an increase in the visibility of racist attacks. In 2007, Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU, and Italy's borders opened to legions of Easterners, including Roma people. Enticed by a country with a similar culture and language, and with far more

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[211] 'Yesterday, the Deputy Minister, Alfredo Mantovano, criticized "leftists who are rending their garments" and stressed that initiatives like Milan's 'black patrols' will no longer be possible when the bill on security, that will regulate the phenomenon, shall be approved. In fact, the Deputy Minister added, the implementing decree "will specify that the unarmed volunteers' associations cannot be an expression of political forces, neither of trade unions, nor of organized fans.It is also expected – he said = that any possible uniforms will have to conform to the spirit of the regulation, which aims to promote the citizens' voluntary contribution to security and not to call to mind paramilitary organizations.', Idem
[212] 'no one will be able to stop the DIY patrols and we shall witness a proliferation of spontaneity in territory surveillance' Idem
[213] 'Rome to dismantle illegal camps', BBC, 16.02.2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7893536.stm

job opportunities than their native one, many Romanian Roma people settled in the Peninsula. At the same time, one year later, a new Right-wing government took power, which was formed by Berlusconi with two far-right groups: *Alleanza Nazionale* and *Lega Nord.* It was around this period that Italy became the theatre of a series of violent attacks against immigrants, foreigners and Roma people. In May 2008, in Naples, a Roma camp was set on fire. The perpetrators used Molotov cocktails, and were 'angered by reports that a teenage Roma girl tried to kidnap an Italian baby'.[214] In September the same year, a 19-year-old boy from Burkina Faso was assassinated in Milan by two men who were shouting 'dirty negro, we will kill you'.[215] The court ruled that this was not a racially motivated crime.

Many other people were beaten and injured over the course of 2008 and 2009. In Rome, a Chinese man was beaten by five boys, and ended up in the hospital. In the same city, in 2009, an Indian man was 'beaten, doused with gasoline and set on fire'.[216] In Siracusa, a group of people of African origin that were sheltered in the courtyard of a church, were attacked with stones and bottles. The priest that was sheltering them, father Carlo D'Antoni, talked about a 'growing climate of annoyance and a spreading racism' in the community.[217] Human Rights Watch also talks about 'a dangerous environment of intolerance in a country that has seen a dramatic increase in immigration over the past 10 years'.[218]

The crucial aspect of this 'dangerous environment' is that the racist attacks were mostly perpetrated not by individual persons, but by organised groups. Thus, in Milan in the end of 2006, a group of

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[214] 'Roma Raids: Italy Cracks Down on Illegal Immigrants', Der Spiegel, http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/roma-raids-italy-cracks-down-on-illegal-immigrants-a-553753.html
[215] 'Milano, giovane ucciso a sprangate', La Repubblica , http://www.repubblica.it/2008/04/sezioni/cronaca/milano-razzismo/sprangate-giorno-dopo/sprangate-giorno-dopo.html
[216] 'Italy: Act Swiftly to End Racist Violence', Human Rights Watch, 21.03.2011, http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/03/21/italy-act-swiftly-end-racist-violence
[217] Statewatch, 18, 3, 2008, p. 2
[218] 'Italy: Act Swiftly to End Racist Violence'

people protested against a Roma camp on the outskirts of the city. The protest turned violent, as the people set the Roma tents on fire.[219] In February 2009, BBC reported that 'a mob' of 20 masked men attacked a group of Romanians in Rome, 'in an apparent vigilante attack'.[220] Also in Rome, in September 2009, around 40 men wearing ski-masks attacked a Roma settlement with Molotov cocktails, iron bars and chains. The media referred to the attackers as '*cittadini-giustizieri*', and insisted on the programmatic character of their actions, as *La Repubblica* puts it: '*Un raid programmato, con uno schema d´azione preciso: provocare un incendio, far scappare tutti in strada e poi colpirli a bastonate, fronteggiandoli in un giardinetto accanto all´insediamento. «Dovevamo dar loro una lezione - ha detto ai carabinieri del Reparto Territoriale di Roma il capo della spedizione, L. F. un uomo di 40 anni arrestato, processato per direttissima e messo agli arresti domiciliari - ormai hanno invaso la nostra zona, sono prepotenti, ci aizzano i cani contro quando passiamo con i nostri figli, ci tirano l´acqua se li guardiamo troppo a lungo'.*[221] As the leader of another group of 'justice-seeking citizens' argued, this programmatic character is marked precisely by the 'unbearable' sense of urban insecurity: *'La situazione della sicurezza, a Roma come altrove, sta raggiungendo punte di criticità davvero insopportabili'.*[222]

The Maroni Law therefore merely set the legal infrastructure for a phenomenon that had already shown its presence on the streets of Italian cities. The climate of intolerance towards foreigners, Roma people, illegal immigrants and any other 'deviant groups', was doubled by societal racism and

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[219] Human Rights Watch, 'Everyday Intolerance. Racist and Xenophobic Violence in Italy', 2011, p. 50
[220] Rome to dismantle illegal camps
[221] A planned attack, with a precise action plan: start a fire, scare everyone away in the streets and then hit them with sticks, confronting them in a small garden next to the settlement. "We had to teach them a lesson" – told the carabinieri of Rome's Land Unit the head of the expedition, L. F. an arrested 40-year old man, put in house arrest after a fast track trial. "By now they have invaded our area, they are aggressive, they set dogs on us when we pass by with our children, they throw water at us if we look at them for too long." In 'Roma, cittadini-giustizieri assaltano il campo rom', La Repubblica, 21.09.2007, http://roma.repubblica.it/dettaglio/roma-cittadini-giustizieri-assaltano-il-campo-rom/1370805
[222] 'The security situation, in Rome as much as elsewhere, is reaching unbearable levels' Michela Vittoria Brambilla, quoted in 'Ronde anti-rom dopo le sevizie', Corriere della Sera, 1.11.2007, http://www.corriere.it/cronache/07_novembre_01/ronde_donna_seviziata.shtml

fuelled chiefly by urban security concerns. Vigilantism in Italy did not spur out of the blue. It was preceded by organised attacks with racial motivation, carried out by groups that considered the security situation in their cities to be unbearable. The Maroni Law did indeed have the effect of curbing and controlling the violence performed by these groups. They were most of the time small, anonymous and marginal gangs, which did nevertheless have explicit intentions behind their actions.

These intentions are marked by a need to provide for the security of their city. This need was articulated in the context of a perceived degradation of safety due to immigration, and also of the inability of the (Romano Prodi) government to deal with this situation. In Rome, the citizens who voluntarily started patrolling the streets were concerned with the presence or Romanian delinquency: '*delinquenza che viene dalla Romania, come già abbiamo documentato sul nostro sito da giorni*'.[223] One of these citizens explained that the government is unwilling to guarantee quotidian security: '*Il sindaco Veltroni, pensa ad altro, il governo non è in grado di garantire la sicurezza agli italiani, le forze dell'ordine non hanno mezzi a sufficienza, i vigili urbani girano spauriti. Questa è la cornice nella quale si consuma la violenta quotidianità nella capitale*'.[224] The citizens are deprived of their right to security: '*Di fatto i cittadini romani sono privati, loro malgrado, del diritto alla sicurezza*'. In any case, this person underlines, the citizen patrols are not replacing the police, but are merely concerned with the security of their city: '*Ripeto, non vogliamo menar le mani, vogliamo solo garantire la sicurezza alla nostra città*'.

There is a qualitative distance from these kind of groups to the larger and uniformed patrols and *ronde* that were making the headlines in the period. Whereas these smaller groups were mostly

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[223] http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/l-iniziativa-stata-annunciata-circolo-delle-libert-roma.html

[224] 'Mayor Veltroni has other things in mind, the government is not able to guarantee the Italians security, the forces of law and order do not habe sufficient means, traffic officers wander around frightened. This is the background against which is brewing the violent everyday life in the capital.' idem

spontaneous, the ones that appeared on the cover of alarmed newspapers were more organised and

coherent. Since some were actually associated to political parties, they were also aiming for political

capital, whereas the smaller groups were considering themselves to merely citizens caring for their

own security, as this citizen of Rome has been quoted in *il Giornale*: '*Spiega che non intende "farsi*

giustizia da solo" perché "noi cittadini non ne abbiamo l'autorità anche se la voglia di farlo è

fortissimo"'.[225] Also, whereas the smaller groups conducted acts of violence, the uniformed units

were engaged in more symbolic acts, like patrolling and flaunting their uniforms – something that I

encountered more in Hungary as well. The smaller and more spontaneous groups were carrying a

wide array of weapons and artefacts when they were attacking the Roma people's camps.[226] This

arsenal was rarely found in the case of uniformed groups such as the *Lega Nord ronde*.

1.4. The City Angels

A group of volunteers concerned with security that has always been quite vocal against the *ronde* is

City Angels. Started in 1994, they are currently among the biggest organisations of its kind in Italy,

with 500 volunteers in over 18 cities. Mario Furlan is the initiator and the leader of this group, a

charismatic figure who is a journalist, a life coach and also a holder of a black-belt in karate. The

slogan of the group is 'solidarity and security', and indeed their activities seem to be a blend of social

interventions and patrolling. Already in 1996, *Corriere della Sera* was writing about them: '*City*

Angels continueranno a vegliare sulla citta': distribuzione di cibo e vestiti ai poveri, controllo delle

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[225] 'He explains that he has no intention to "take the law in his hands" because "we, citizens, don't have the authority, even if the will to do so is really strong.' http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/l-iniziativa-stata-annunciata-circolo-delle-libert-roma.html

[226] http://roma.repubblica.it/dettaglio/roma-cittadini-giustizieri-assaltano-il-campo-rom/1370805

zone segnalate dai cittadini, servizio di assistenza a vecchi, malati e tossicodipendenti. Ma non basta, ammicca Furlan: "Venerdi' scorso siamo anche riusciti a sventare un furto...".[227]

The City Angels have been treated with suspicion from the very start, but Furlan has been careful to explicitly distance his project from any far-right or any other political affiliation. When *Don* Antonio Mazzi, a priest that was dealing with drug addicts in Milan, suspected the group of having a far-right character, Furlan replied: '*noi vogliamo fare prevenzione, non repressione, intendiamo intervenire per bloccare i violenti solo quando non è possiibile intervenire con altri mezzi. Anche Fratel Ettore*[228] *è un non violento ma quando un albanese si è messo a menare i suoi ospiti con una catena gli è saltato addosso.*'[229] Furlan distanced his organisation from the start from racism and xenophobia. In my interviews with its members, the point was also made that the City Angels does not have any religious affiliation: 'we don't have [any] religion, we don't ask the religion, the party, the race, we are all the same, we are independent.'[230] However, in 1997, the catholic newspaper *Famiglia Cristiana* published a long and friendly report on the group, and wrote towards the end that 'fifty percent of them practice Catholic faith'.[231] In my observations from Milan in 2010, when the City Angels were distributing food next to the *Centrale* train station, they were accompanied by a car that belonged to a catholic religious organisation.

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[227] 'City Angels will keep on watching over the city: food and clothing distributions to the poor, control of the zones pointed out by the citizens, assistance to the elderly, the ill and the drug addicts. But it's not enough, Furlan winks: "Last Friday we even managed to avert a robbery…"
http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/1996/agosto/06/City_Angels_guerra_basta_con_co_0_9608068560.shtml

[228] Ettore Boschini was another Milanese cleric that was involved in social issues. He initiated the first refuge for homeless people and drug addicts in a tunnel of the *Centrale* train station, in 2002.

[229] 'What we want to do is prevention, not repression, we intend to intervene to stop those who are violent only when it is not possible to intervene with other means. Even Fratel Ettore is non violent, but when an Albanian man started beating up his guests with a chain, he attacked him.'
http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1995/02/06/milano-notte-di-ronda-con-guardian-angels.html

[230] Interview with 'Koala', August, 2010, Milan

[231] http://www.stpauls.it/fc97/5297fc/5297fc35.htm

When the Maroni law legalised the patrols, Furlan became one of its fiercest critics.[232] He repeatedly underlined that the law is an aberration and that it serves no purpose. The people who intend to form groups and patrol the streets in search of drug dealers and immigrants are 'fools' (*balordi*) in his opinion.[233] In the interview I had with him, he was thoroughly dismissive of the Maroni law, and declared to me that the *ronde* were useless and they do not exist anymore.[234] In 2008 he claimed that the *ronde* are not only useless, but also dangerous: '*Se per ronde si intendono persone che segnalano situazioni sospette alle forze dell'ordine, si tratta di cittadini benemeriti che fanno ciò che chiunque dovrebbe fare, e non si può nemmeno parlare di ronde nel senso etimologico della parola. Se invece per ronde si intendono persone che intendono pattugliare zone delle città sostituendosi alle forze dell'ordine, sono non solo inutili, ma anche pericolose. Perché si tratta di persone impreparate che rischiano di trovarsi in situazioni pericolose e di dover essere soccorse, anziché soccorrere*'.[235]

In the same interview, Furlan added that Maroni is wrong to posit a security emergency, since the situation has not worsened: '*Non esiste un'emergenza sicurezza, bensì un problema di sicurezza, soprattutto in alcune zone a rischio*'.[236] Furlan's approach to 'the security problem' has been intransigent, emphasizing that 'politics' should not intervene in the matter: '*sono contrario a tutto ciò che è politicizzato, perché la sicurezza è un tema troppo importante per essere strumentalizzato politicamente da un partito*'.[237] And in 2010 he even declared that the City Angels have nothing to do with security, since they focus on social activities: '*Noi svolgiamo un'attività sociale, che nulla ha a*

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[232] http://www.02blog.it/post/5864/ronde-flop-a-milano-tanto-rumore-per-nulla

[233] http://www.poliziaedemocrazia.it/live/index.php?domain=archivio&action=articolo&idArticolo=2059

[234] Interview with Mario Furlan, December 2010

[235] 'If "patrols" refers to people that report dubious situations to the law and order forces, then these are worthy citizens that are doing what everyone should be doing, and it's impossible to even speak of patrols in the etimological sense of the word. However, if "patrols" refers to people who intend to patrol city areas substituting the forces of law and order, these are not only useless, but also dangerous. In this case, these would be people that are unprepared and in risk of facing dangerous situations and have to be rescued, instead of them rescuing.' http://www.02blog.it/post/2735/per-i-city-angels-le-ronde-sono-inutili

[236] 'There is no security emergency, but rather a security issue, especially in some areas at risk.', Idem

[237] 'I am against everything that is politicized, because security is too important an issue to be politically exploited by a party.' http://www.poliziaedemocrazia.it/live/index.php?domain=archivio&action=articolo&idArticolo=2059

che fare con la sicurezza'.[238] This apparent departure from security concerns was made in order to further distance the group from the politicised patrols of the far-right. The latter, according to Furlan, by centering on security, create 'enemies' that become threats. The City Angels, on the other hand, have a softer approach: '*Mentre una ronda va in cerca di un nemico noi andiamo in cerca di persone da aiutare'*.[239] And *Deutsche Welle* quoted 'the seasoned patroller' Furlan saying: 'I'm afraid new groups won't have our humanitarian spirit. The classic vigilante is a person who goes on the streets to look for an enemy. We go on the streets to look for people to help'.[240]

However, security continues to be an integral part of the practices of City Angels, and its members insist that solidarity and security are complementary in their work. Moreover, the group is constantly flaunting its achievements in crime prevention and deterrence of 'microcriminality'. For example, on their webpage, the group has a section on 'angels of the month', where a number of short notable stories of group members are featured. Between 2012 and 2013 there are at least two stories of members that became 'angels of the month' after intervening to stop this or that crime, occasionally with a considerable dose of courage and firmness.[241] Also, the group continuously publicizes cases in which it intervened to prevent or undo a criminal act. In 2013, in Rome, five of its volunteers returned a stolen handbag to a woman who had been robbed, after applying 'psichological techniques of communication' learned during the preparation course for volunteers.[242]

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[238] 'We are carrying out a social activity, that has nothing to do with security.'
http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2010/09/12/news/il_flop_delle_ronde_padane_dopo_un_anno_ce_n_una_sola-6989688/
[239] 'While a patrol is in search of an enemy, we are in search of people to help.'
http://www.poliziaedemocrazia.it/live/index.php?domain=archivio&action=articolo&idArticolo=2059
[240] http://www.dw.de/italy-divided-on-citizen-squads-patrolling-the-streets/a-4465595-1
[241] http://www.cityangels.it/index.php/angeli-del-mese
[242] http://www.romatoday.it/cronaca/scippo-city-angels-stazione-termini.html (This is also publicised on the City Angels webpage)

In the following section I will explore in more detail the security dimension of the City Angels. In order to do that, I will situate their practices within the security-scape of the *Milano Centrale* train station.

2. Milano Centrale as a securityscape

2.1 The structure of the securityscape

The securityscape of the *Centrale* has three components. First, the spatial discourses regarding the train station itself; these refer on the one hand to the imperative of movement within the space: the security apparatuses and discourses in which the station is embedded converge on the need to maintain a continuous flux of people on the move, and conversely, on the criminalisation of static elements, such as the people for whom the station is a shelter; and on the other hand, the spatial discourses refer to the trope of *terra di nessuno* – nobody's land, which articulate the space of the station as space-forlorn, a space without ownership, order and safety, a space in need of being rescued.

The second component is the array of security practices performed in the station and of apparatuses that adorn the building. The C*entrale* is being heavily securitised, and this process is part and parcel of securitisations occurring on wider levels – the city of Milan, the region of Lombardia, the state of Italy and the European Union. Yet more concretely, in the *Centrale*, this securitisation is driven by the need to rescue the space and reclaim it for the general population. In this way, the dangerous elements that make the space a 'nobody's land' are removed.

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The third component of the securityscape consists of the groups that perform civil security and vigilantism. Of these, I focus in this chapter on the City Angels. The group focuses almost its entire activity on the space of the train station. They see themselves and are seen by the state and the population as being an integral element of the station's revendication and reconquest. The ways in which they claim to combine social work with security patrols relates directly to the two previous components of the securityscape.

Finally, I argue that the logic that keeps the elements of the securityscape together is the nexus between security and poverty. The discourses around the position of the *Centrale* in the urban space converge on poverty as a problem that needs to be solved through increased security. The insecurity that is caused by poor, homeless and illegal immigrants who live in the station is considered to be a hotspot of delinquency that radiates in the entire city of Milan.

2.2. The Milano Centrale train station

I arrived in the Milano Centrale Train Station for the first time in July 2010. I was set out to conduct empirical research in Milan. My plan was to find a group of moderate Milanese vigilantes – the so-called 'City Angels', which constituted the object of my doctoral research. I had set up meetings and interviews with them, and I was even hoping for a chance to spend more time with them, as they were doing their patrols.

When I arrived to Milan Train station, I decided to adopt a secondary 'research tactic', which meant that even if the City Angels would allow me or not to 'hang out' with them, I would still spend my time walking around town and trying to get a sense of the general security landscape. After the first hour spent in the train station upon my arrival and after some discussions with local residents of Milan, *Milano Centrale* seemed the most obvious spot to start this part of my research.

2.2.1. Centrality and Movement

I will start with some personal assessments about the position of the train station within the architectural and urban landscape of Milan. The central train station of Milan is not a 'station' and it is not central. It is not a 'station', in the sense that it is a space of perpetual movement. And it is not central because, despite its location in the heart of the city, it is perceived as a marginal space that has to be rescued and re-positioned, through active policies and practices, within the city. I will start with some subjective assessments about the position of the train station within the architectural and urban landscape of Milan.

The first thing that impressed me while arriving in the giant train station of Milan was the agitation of perpetual movement. Vast crowds of people swarming everywhere, trains coming and going, vehicles, supplies and money; turbulence, speed, chaos. Standing in the space of the station just won't do. Everything and everyone is in a state of continuous mobility. The train 'station' is hence

not 'stationary' at all. Rather, it is a space where people get on and off trains, a space where people enter, buy tickets (and other things) and then move onward; a space where people get out of the trains and then move along, out of the station. It is a space which is intrinsically meant to intermediate. The train station is a buffer, a place in-between, a conductor of people and goods. This movement, moreover, is characterized by unnatural velocity. It is not just the trains which are fast – everything in the Milano *Centrale* moves at a great speed. As I will show later, this speed of things has profound implication for how the space of the station is thought and 'practiced'. For now, however, I will just suggest that this perpetual velocity transforms itself into a narrative of movement, in which any deviance immediately stands out.

The *Centrale* train station is located in the centre of Milan, as the name suggests. Going out of the station, one gets struck by the urban architecture around it. Right in front of the main exits there is a large space, a 'piazza', that continues in a boulevard leading directly into the 'old town'. All around the station there are either old historical buildings, or new glass-and-steel office sky-scrapers. The architecture of the train station itself is meant to fit into this landscape. Built during the Fascist era, it has an impressive monumentality that stands out in its environment. The feeling is that one gets out of the train and is already 'in' Milan. There is no need for any supplementary transitory movement, as in the case of an airport. Hence, the space around the station should have the same appealing characteristics as the other touristic and commercial 'hot-spots' of the city. Unlike other train stations that I have been to, the *Centrale* was impeccably clean and modernized, while still keeping its 'classical' architectural characteristics. Old and new in one place – just like the rest of Milan's centre.

Yet at the same time, the feeling is also that the station has to be central, and because of this imperative, there is a lot of effort being invested in this 'centrality'. These efforts become clearer if

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one zooms in and pays attention to the minor, mundane and quotidian aspects and practices of and around the *Centrale*. I argue that these efforts are mainly focused on excluding unwanted categories of people – the poor, homeless, immigrants, and encouraging the presence of other, wealthier categories. Those who are using the trains and the station's facilities (the mall included) are directed to the designated spaces, where they are able to 'mind their business' and then leave the station. Those that have no legitimate 'business' in the station's perimeter, but are just there to beg, deal or camp in, are obviously not part of the 'flow', and as such they are also those deemed threatening. The logic of perpetual movement is one mechanism of security whereby the poor are chased out of the securitized space of the train station.

Another aspect of the 're-centralization' of Milano Centrale is the commodification of its premises. The vast space of the station hosts a similarly vast shopping centre.[243] I was intrigued by its presence in a space of perpetual movement and vast crowds. What is the function of a mall in a train station where everybody rushes in and out of trains? One possible answer from my point of view is exactly related to the need to manage the mass of people transiting the station every day. A shopping area offers possibilities of entertainment and consumption for those who wait for their trains. As such, the train station mall constitutes a distinct area, where time and space are being commodified. The function that it serves is apparently non-tangential to the functions of a train station. Yet, at a closer look, the mall functions as a filter: it gives people a legitimate reason to take a recess from the perpetual movement – but it does so only in relation to the power to purchase. On the website of the 2015 Exhibition, it is stated that the commercial centre transforms the station into a lounge: '*la trasformazione di Milano Centrale in un grande salotto cittadino.*'[244] The responsible for commerce

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[243] http://faremilano.wordpress.com/2010/12/02/milano-centro-commerciale-alla-stazione-centrale/

[244] 'the transformation of Milano Central Railway Station into a prestigious city space.' http://infomilanoexpo-2015.com/la-stazione-di-milano-centrale-un-grande-centro-commerciale/

in the *Centrale*, Stefano Mereu, declared that the target public for the plethora of shops consists of the people who use the train and also 'visitors' of the station.[245] Those who cannot afford to step in the mall – usually the homeless and the clandestine immigrants – are also those who are not wanted around the train station anyway. As *La Repubblica* reports: '*Chiuderanno l'accesso della stazione dall'una alle quattro di notte per evitare che la galleria delle Carrozze diventi rifugio di clochard e di senza fissa dimora.*'[246] The shopping centre is thus constituted as a specific designated area in which the movement imperative is levied, and also as a zone of exclusion in which certain categories are unwelcomed.

One effort to bring back the Centrale to the centre revolves around the need for crowd management. This aspect is also related to the fast movement imperative. During my presence there, I had the impression that the perpetual mobility is a means to keep people under constant surveillance and control. As paradoxical as this sounds, it appeared to me that the logic behind it is that any behaviour that breaks off with this imperative is implicitly considered deviant. Standing or resting immediately attracts attention. Sleeping seemed to be a straight-out crime, and I witnessed few occasions when people who were taking a nap in the station were visited by the security forces. There are, of course, designated waiting areas around the station, but they have an entry fee. These measures seem to be directed against those who wish to use the space of the train station only as a shelter, and not for its specially designated functions of transit and movement. During the night, the train station is completely closed, in order to prevent the 'continuous presence of homeless and people without a fixed home': '*Ma di notte la stazione Centrale sarà off limits, dalla prossima primavera infatti saranno installate delle cancellate che chiuderanno tutti i varchi della galleria delle Carrozze, e*

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[245] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8g-F3mtY-I

[246] 'They will lock up access to the station from one o'clock to four in the night in order to prevent vagrants and homeless from finding refuge in the train station.'
http://milano.repubblica.it/cronaca/2010/11/30/news/di_giorno_si_fa_shopping_alla_centrale_di_notte_stazione_chiusa_fino_alle_quattro-9692689/

quindi lo scalo chiuderà fino alle 4 di mattina, la scelta è motivata dalla presenza continua, nelle ore notturne di clochard e persone senza fissa dimora.'[247]

Another outstanding feature, alongside with the continuous movement imperative, is that the train station is extremely crowded. The *Centrale* is an arrival place for a large number of tourists that are attracted by one of Europe's most famous cities. It is estimated that the number of visitors in Milan in recent years has been over 1.8 million per year.[248] Even if not all enter by the train station, the *Centrale* bears the weight of a large influx of tourists every day. To this it should be added the large mass of immigrants arriving to Milan from south or east. Since Milan and the regions around it are among the wealthiest areas of Europe, immigration is considerably high. Apart from this, there is a numerous population of semi-residents of the train station: the station's personnel, numerous homeless people, street vendors and so on. The train station thus stands out as a nodal point in the flux of people; placed at crossroads between main touristic and immigration routes, and also positioned in the heart of a vast urban agglomeration, Milano *Centrale* has a crucial importance in facilitating and intermediating movement of people and goods.

The result is a vast crowd of people that is present at any time in the Centrale train station. Despite its overly generous size, I experienced the space of the train station and its immediate surroundings as being overly crowded at all times. This feature comes with a set of negative effects on the 'centrality' of the station: dirt, disorder, theft and property damage. Unlike the touristic areas in the 'old town', the station is a more enclosed space, with a higher density of people. At the same time, if 'old town' areas are visited mostly by (wealthy) tourists, in the space of the Centrale, these tourists move side

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[247] 'But at night the Central station shall be off limits, in fact, starting next spring fences will be set that will close up all the passages to the train station, therefore the rail yard will be closed until four o'clock in the morning. The decision has been justified on the basis of the constant presence during the night of vagrant and homeless people.' http://faremilano.wordpress.com/2010/12/02/milano-centro-commerciale-alla-stazione-centrale/

[248] http://www.euromonitor.com/euromonitor-internationals-top-city-destinations-ranking/article

by side with poor immigrants and homeless. It would appear that the station is perceived by the municipality as not really belonging to the 'centre', as still being somehow at the periphery. This is because the municipality of Milan puts tremendous effort into 'cleaning up' and 'ordering' the spaces of the station and around it.

In my conversations with local residents of Milan, I frequently encountered the following story: when in 2008, Milan was nominated to host the World Exhibition of 2015, one of the first measures that the municipality has taken was to 'clean up' and re-modernize the Centrale train station and the area around it. This process is still ongoing, but so far there have been intensive efforts in this direction. These efforts are not solely aimed at renewing the architectural elements of the building, or reinforcing the infrastructure. One of the main measures taken was to evict what was seemingly a vast population of homeless and unemployed immigrants from the main '*piazza*' in front of the station. According to the locals I have discussed with, the authorities literally bulldozed dozens of improvised shelters and tents that were mushrooming around the station. The project has been justified as a re-appropriation of a central space by and for the city and its 'people'. This space was meant to be transformed from a '*terra di nessuno*' into a place that citizens can use in comfort and safety.[249] When I arrived there, the *piazza* was a large empty space, in which there were still some traces of this mushrooming, but which was still completely deserted.

2.2.2. Terra di nessuno

The trope of 'nobody's land' has a continuous presence in the local discourse, since the beginning of the 2000's and until the present day. In the summer of 2001, the newspaper Corriere della Sera ran an

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[249] http://milano.corriere.it/milano/notizie/cronaca/10_ottobre_11/sicurezza-stazione-centrale-maroni-video-sorveglianza-telecamere-1703927739630.shtml

article that lamented the deplorable state of the area around the *Centrale*.[250] This area was '*terra di nessuno*', where drug abusers, homeless people and illegal immigrants live an infernal life, especially by night, and especially in the winter: '*Terra di nessuno dove nel buio e nella sporcizia si nascondono clandestini, tossicomani e clochard.* [...] *Un labirinto buio e maleodorante dove fino a qualche anno fa trovava rifugio sopratutto notturno e sopratutto invernale una moltitudine di balordi, di sbandati, di barboni, di immigrati e di tossicomani.*'[251] This Dantesque description is followed by an imprecation: '*O più tristemente della povertà dei deboli. Di una vita da girone infernale.*'[252] The surroundings of the train station are described as a squalid and marginal space, where the police are afraid to intervene: '*Poliziotti e carabinieri che si avventuravano per quelle gallerie solo in forze, perché c' era davvero di che rischiare la pelle*'.[253] The result is a space of shame ('*vergogna*'), abandoned to a plethora of illicit practices, from illegal substance abuse to robberies and kidnappings.

More than a decade later, the same metaphors of abandoned space persist in the discourse of the same local newspaper – running the title '*nella terra di nessuno a Milano Il sangue, le risse e i disperati*'.[254] The station and the surrounding area is 'another world': '*il disordine e il degrado sono naturali, fisiologici*'.[255] This is a space of abandonment and a space of deviance. In 2009, *La Reppublica* calls it '*Il supermarket della droga*'[256], and *Loreto Today* refers to the *Centrale* as '*il*

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[250] http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2001/giugno/07/Stazione_Centrale_viaggio_nell_hotel_co_7_0106079706.shtml
[251] 'No man's land where undocumented immigrants, drug addicts and vagrants are hiding in darkness and dirt. […] A dark, foul-smelling labyrinth where, until some years ago, a multitude of misfits, deviants, tramps, migrants and drug addicts used to found refuge, mostly at night and in winter.'
[252] 'Or, more bitterly, of the weaks' poverty. Of a life that resembles a circle of Hell.'
[253] 'Policemen and carabinieri that ventured into these tunnels only in groups, because this was truly a situation in which their life was at risk.'
[254] 'The blood, the fights and the miserable.'
[255] 'the mess and the decay are innate, normal.'
http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2012/giugno/23/nella_terra_nessuno_Milano_sangue_co_9_120623030.shtml
[256] http://milano.repubblica.it/dettaglio/stazione-centrale-terra-di-nessuno-gli-spacciatori-assediano-la-piazza/1666599

simbolo del degrado di Milano'.[257] The local discourse present in the media abounds in images of deviance. The station is an area of exotic insecurity: '*Ma anche i sotterranei della cronaca nera. Delle risse tra gruppi rivali, delle violenze sessuali, dei riti voodoo e di un paio di morti trovati negli angoli più bui.*'[258] It is a world of crime and unappealing characters, which, combined with the Fascist architectural style of the building, create a gruesome image, a micro cosmos that is populated by drug addicts, homeless and Roma people, illegal immigrants, beggars, sex workers and so on.[259]

Violence is an integral part of this landscape. In March 2014, *Milano Today* published the story of a Romanian woman that was kidnapped, assaulted and raped by two Romanian homeless men, in the premises of the train station.[260] One month earlier, *Il Tempo* wrote about 'the fear of the *Centrale'*, when one Algerian immigrant attacked two people in a subway passage of the station, with an oversized knife.[261] The attacker and one victim were both illegal immigrants and homeless people that were living in the proximity of the station. But acts of violence are not presented only as isolated individual deviances. Most of the time, the media accentuates the organised character of the crime that is happening around the *Centrale*. Thus, in 2009 *La Reppublica* provided an account of the different geographies of drug dealing, based on the ethnicities of the perpetrating gangs: '*Uomini e donne che smerciano coca, hashish, marijuana. E, sempre più spesso, eroina da sniffare o iniettarsi. Spacciano gli italiani, spacciano i romeni, spacciano i magrebini e i senegalesi. Ognuno ha il suo pezzo di asfalto. Quelli dell'est Europa in piazza Duca d'Aosta e piazza IV Novembre. Gli africani*

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[257] http://loreto.milanotoday.it/stazione-centrale/sicurezza-in-stazione-centrale.html

[258] 'The undergrounds of black journalism - of the fights between rival groups, of sexual violence, of voodoo rituals and a couple of dead people found in the darkest corners.'
http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2001/giugno/07/Stazione_Centrale_viaggio_nell_hotel_co_7_0106079706.shtml

[259] http://loreto.milanotoday.it/stazione-centrale/sicurezza-in-stazione-centrale.html

[260] http://www.milanotoday.it/cronaca/violenza-sessuale-ragazza-romena.html

[261] http://www.iltempo.it/cronache/2014/02/06/milano-paura-alla-stazione-centrale-algerino-aggredisce-un-tunisino-con-mannaia-1.1216486

all'angolo con via Fabio Filzi.'[262] Three years later, the local edition of the *Corriere* provides a different geography: '*In Luigi di Savoia vivono da sempre gli europei dell' Est; in IV Novembre senegalesi, ivoriani, ghanesi, marocchini, egiziani, tunisini'.*[263]

The metaphor of *Terra di nessuno* is a spatial metaphor. It points to the position that the *Centrale* has within the city of Milan: one of marginality, deviance and danger. But it is also a metaphor that points to a sense of loss and abandonment. The station belongs to 'nobody', it has been abandoned by the authorities, and it has been lost for the city. This is a situation that borders anarchy and chaos. Since the station is 'nobody's land', it means that nobody is in charge of it, and that nobody intervenes when dangerous situations occur. As it was mentioned, the authorities are seen to be impotent: '*Probabilmente in molti si saranno anche chiesti con quali direttive operino militari, polizia e carabinieri, data la costante presenza davanti ai cancelli della Stazione di nutriti gruppi di persone [...] Si saranno soprattutto domandati perché nessuno intervenga, né da parte dei servizi sociali né da quella delle forze dell'ordine.*'[264] This opens a door for contingency and upheaval. It is not only the physical space that has been lost, but also the control – the city has lost control over its central train station, and things (as well as people) are running amok. Crime and deviance are key effects of this loss of control over the station.

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[262] 'Men and women that sell cocaine, hashish, marijuana. And, most often, heroine to sniff or to inject. Italians, Romanians, Maghrebi, Senegalese, they all deal drugs. Each of them controls a part of the road. Those from Eastern Europe control Duca d'Aosta sq. and IV Novembre sq. The Africans are at the corner of Fabio Filzi street.' http://milano.repubblica.it/dettaglio/stazione-centrale-terra-di-nessuno-gli-spacciatori-assediano-la-piazza/1666599

[263] 'In Luigi di Savoia sq. have always lived the Eastern Europeans; in IV Novembre sq., the Senegalese, the Ivorians, Ghanaians, Morrocans, Egyptians, Tunisians.' http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2012/giugno/23/nella_terra_nessuno_Milano_sangue_co_9_120623030.shtml

[264] ''Probably many will have wondered under what guidelines the military, the police and the carabinieri operate, given the constant presence of large groups of people in front of the Station's fences […] Above all, they may have wondered why no one intervenes, neither on behalf of the social services nor on behalf of the forces of law and order.' http://sostenibile.blogosfere.it/2011/07/milano-sicurezza-lite-la-russa-pisapia-sui-militari.html

This metaphor legitimates a discourse of re-appropriation. The local population 'laments' the loss of control and demands the restoration of security[265] In 2009, *Loreto Milano* published a statement from a Milanese local, who admitted that '*la Stazione Centrale e pericolosa*'.[266] In the same year, an increase in police personnel in the station's area was articulated as a response to demands for security coming from the local residents: '*Una risposta alle segnalazioni dei residenti delle vie Mecenate, Dalmazia e Pecorini, che ho incontrato la settimana scorsa in un'assemblea pubblica, e che lamentavano la presenza dilagante di fenomeni di criminalità e attività illecite nella zona.*'[267]

In 2012, *Cronaca Milano* published a letter from a resident who was complaining about the degraded situation of the Centrale: '*Non si può aspettare il bus – spiega ancora la cittadina, – che c'è sempre il rischio che immigrati o clandestini si avvicinano, e non si sa mai cosa può succedere. E' impossibile continuare a vivere e lavorare pensando che in quella zona, dopo una certa ora, non è possibile passare ed essere sicuri, soprattutto per le donne: lì gli extracomunitari hanno sempre birra e bottiglie di alcool in mano. […] a Stazione puzza di escrementi: un orrore per i bambini e le famiglie*'.[268] The newspaper also has its own commentaries regarding this letter of complaint: '*I milanesi sono più che mai esasperati per la mancanza di sicurezza attorno alla Stazione Centrale, e tra palpeggiamenti, furti, sporcizia e ubriachi, l'appello è sempre verso il Comune, nella speranza che si decida a fare qualcosa di concreto. […] 'la situazione verte ancora nel massimo degrado a*

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[265] http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2012/giugno/23/nella_terra_nessuno_Milano_sangue_co_9_120623030.shtml
[266] http://loreto.milanotoday.it/stazione-centrale/sicurezza-in-stazione-centrale.html
[267] 'An answer to the reports of residents of the streets Macenate, Dalmazia and Pecorini, that I met last week in a public assembly and they were complaining about the overwhelming crime rates and illegal activities in the area.' http://cittadimilano.it/portale/wps/portal/CDM?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/wps/wcm/connect/ContentLibrary/giornale/giornale/tutte+le+notizie/rapporti+consiglio+comunale+e+attuazione+del+programma+sicurezza/sicurezza_via+mecenate
[268] 'It is impossible to wait for the bus – explains the citizen- there's always the risk of migrants or illegals coming close and you never know what could happen. It's impossible to keeo living and working thinking that in that area, after a certain hour, it is not possible to pass by and be safe, mostly for women: there, the illegal immigrants always carry beer and alcohol bottles. […] the Station reeks of excrements: an atrocity for kids and families.'

causa della presenza incontrollata di rom (che stazionano in particolare vicino ai distributori di biglietti), e ubriachi (che hanno fatto dei giardini di Piazza 4 Novembre il loro punto di ritrovo)'.[269]

The 'degradation' of the station is thus blamed on the Roma people and on alcohol abusers. The area is a forlorn territory where nobody does anything. Even the touristic potential of Milan is at stake, as the same resident exclaims: '*l' immagine che diamo ai Turisti!! Pensiamo a chi viene in Italia 'perché è bella', e invece di primo impatto vede zingari, nomadi ubriachi che gli si avvicinano, zingare che alle macchinette dei ticket che ti chiedono i soldi e cercano subito di adocchiarti il portafoglio. I turisti si dimezzano in queste condizioni !*' [270] And most importantly, the situation generates a climate where women, children and families are unsafe. Reclaiming and re-appropriating the *Centrale* is thus a matter of increasing security. Gaining back control means first and foremost guaranteeing a safe environment for the locals, against the people belonging to the deviant and degraded categories with which the station is associated. Hence, security becomes the main stake of the problem, the most important way to transform the *Centrale* from a 'nobody's land' to an area fully integrated in the city of Milan. Security is what makes this station 'central' again.

2.2.3. Security apparatuses in the Milano Centrale

The concern for the security and safety of the station's premises is the central and underlining discourse that explains all the peculiarities I have outlined so far. Claudia Aradau shows the importance of securitizing 'critical infrastructure' as a move that guarantees the 'smooth functioning

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[269] 'The Milanese are more embittered than ever by the lack of security around the Central Railway Station, and between fondlings, thefts, dirt and drunkards, the plea is always directed to the Municipality, in hopes that it will be decided to do something concrete. […] the situation still revolves around the greatest decay because of the out of hand presence of the Roma (that stand mostly close to the ticket machines), and drunkards (that have turned into their hangout the gardens of IV Novembre sq.)' http://www.cronacamilano.it/cronaca/28858-rom-e-ubriachi-milano-stazione-centrale-e-ponte-rogoredo-ennesima-protesta-di-una-milanese-il-biglietto-da-visita-per-i-turisti-sarebbero-molestie-furti-puzza-e-ubriachi.html

[270] 'the impression that we give to the tourists! Let's think of whoever comes to Italy 'because it's beautiful', and instead the first thing they see is gipsies that ask for money by the ticket machines and immediately try to spot your wallet. With such conditions, tourist numbers are halved!', Idem

of society', and prevents disruptions in the normal way of life (2010: 506). Other authors, too, have pointed out the interaction between built environment and security, drawing attention on the ways in which architecture as a practice becomes infused with technologies of terrorist-deterrence and risk assessment (Coaffee et. al., 2009: 495). Security contaminates the urban space by transforming buildings and public spaces into areas of surveillance, control and strict protection from 'criminal activities' (Adey, 2010: 58; Coaffee et. al., 2009: 496; Sassen, 2010). Thus, The Milan train station can also be seen as a 'critical infrastructure' that needs to be securitized, because of its crucial importance.

Definitely the most striking thing about the Milano Centrale for me was the density of security measures, devices and personnel present in and around its premises. As a student of security, I always pay increased attention to such elements, yet in this case I was taken aback. There seemed to be an extremely heightened concern for surveillance, protection, deterrence and guardianship.

I have observed the following security forces: national police, local (municipal) police, the railway police ('*Polizia Ferroviara*'), the Gendarmerie, the military police, and vigilante groups – among which were the City Angels,. All these agencies had troops stationed inside and all around the premises of Milano Centrale.[271] Moreover, all of these agencies had their own uniforms and symbol of authority, and seemed to have well defined areas of authority and expertise. When I asked the members of the City Angels how they are interacting with the other security forces, they assured me that each agency knows its place, and nobody is stepping on anybody's toes.[272] These forces are

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[271] See for example 'Stazione Centrale, da agosto 2008 pattugliata 24 ore su 24 da militari e polizia' (27 November 2009), http://www.milanotoday.it/zona/2/stazione-centrale/sicurezza-in-stazione-centrale.html. See also http://cittadimilano.it/portale/wps/portal/CDM?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/wps/wcm/connect/ContentLibrary/giorna le/giornale/tutte+le+notizie/rapporti+consiglio+comunale+e+attuazione+del+programma+sicurezza/sicurezza_via+mece nate

[272] Author's interview with Mario Furlan, the head of the City Angels, December 2010.

indeed ubiquitous. The railway police patrol the spaces between the train lines and the platforms; the military police and the gendarmerie guard the entrances of the station; the national police patrol the main premises, and the local police alongside the vigilantes have the adjacent areas in the vicinity of the station.[273]

Apart from this, the entire area of Centrale is heavily equipped with surveillance cameras. There are at the moment over 180 devices, and the plan is to increase their number to almost 300. These publicly-funded cameras are said to be in 'synergy with the private ones [belonging to] banks and commercial facilities'.[274] In parallel to this, more recently, the municipality developed a lighting project, whereby the station and its surroundings were equipped with lighting devices. The rationale is that darkness and crime go hand in hand, and that 'light is a precious ally in our fight for security'.[275]

The impression is that of a hyper-securitized space, where the freedom to move is only an apparent fact that is intended to mask the dense network of control and surveillance mechanisms. To this impression is added the specific architectural design of the Milano Centrale. Its emblematic monumentalism, intended from the start to symbolise the height of the Fascist regime, leaves the impression of a heavy and oppressive space.[276] Adorned with myriads of security devices, the building resembles a fortress, a symbolic frontier between a 'safe' inside where only some are allowed, and a 'wild' outside which will soon be domesticated as well. Moreover, security seems to be the main axis around which the renewal of the Centrale revolves. As I have mentioned, the train

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[273] The City Angels have one of their headquarters in Milan in the vicinity of the Centrale: http://fc.retecivica.milano.it/rcmweb/stazionecentrale/inaugurazione%20SOS.html

[274] http://milano.corriere.it/milano/notizie/cronaca/10_ottobre_11/sicurezza-stazione-centrale-maroni-video-sorveglianza-telecamere-1703927739630.shtml

[275] Bruno Simini, member of Milan's local government, pointed out that 'light is a precios ally in our battle for security' ('La luce è un'alleata preziosa per la nostra battaglia alla sicurezza'). Quoted in '*Alla stazione centrale di milano più luce e sicurezza*', 15 October 2009, available at: http://www.inmilano.com/notizie/luci-stazione-centrale

[276] 'Stazione Centrale - Restauro e adeguamento' http://www.urbanfile.it/index.asp?ID=3&SID=58

station is seen as being too close to the periphery, and in desperate need of re-centring. This process of renovation explicitly articulates securitizing Milano Centrale as a piece of critical infrastructure. In moving it from the margins to the centre, the municipality aims to make it a safer place above anything else, a place re-appropriated for the citizens of Milan.[277]

2.2.4. 'Insicurezza urbana'

This requirement for securitizing the train station stems from it being nobody's land, a *terra di nessuno*, as I argued in the previous section. This lack of belonging also implies a loss of control, which in the discourse gets translated in a pervading sense of insecurity. The train station is a dangerous and risky area. For the locals, this situation is greatly caused by the presence of homeless people, immigrants and drug abusers. As *Corriere della Sera* was arguing already in 2001, drugs and alcohol are directly related to aggressiveness and fear, '*La cocaina che si va ad aggiungere all' eroina e l' aggressività che cresce. I furtarelli diventano scippi. Gli scippi si trasformano in rapine. Anche l' alcol che fa la sua parte. Con la gente che affretta il passo, che si guarda intorno, che ha paura.*'[278] In this context, one of the biggest concerns of the public and the authorities became the acts of violence that women might experience in the night in the area around the *Centrale*, as one member of the City Angels confirmed: 'At night it is dangerous, if you are a woman, better stay home.'[279]

There is a continuous insistence that the main problem of the loss of control over the train station is that it has become a dangerous spot. The security situation has gone out of control and nobody does anything about it: '*tra forze dell'ordine e pusher nessuno dà fastidio all'altro, come due mondi che si*

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[277] 'Tempo di restyling anche per la Stazione Centrale, all'insegna della sicurezza, della pulizia e della modernità' http://milano.blogosfere.it/2008/09/tempo-di-restyling-anche-per-la-stazione-centrale-allinsegna-della-sicurezza-della-pulizia-e-della-m.html

[278] http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2001/giugno/07/Stazione_Centrale_viaggio_nell_hotel_co_7_0106079706.shtml

[279] Interview with Koala, Milan, August 2010

affiancano e si guardano senza mai incrociarsi'.[280] Moreover, all the security measures that have

been employed thus far are of no avail in the face of organised crime, laments the same journalist in

2009: '*Non aiuta il restauro, non basta il decreto sicurezza, non servono le ronde: chiunque arrivi*

nelle tre piazze per comprare dosi sa dove trovare gli spacciatori.'[281] In the same year, the head of

the City Angels, Mario Furlan, was also expressing a rather sceptical viewpoint about the security

situation of the train station: '*Milano è in generale una città sicura, a parte qualche quartiere un*

po'più problematico. C'è ad esempio una zona in particolare della Stazione Centrale, tra Piazza IV

Novembre e Via Sammartini, dove spesso ci sono ubriachi che infastidiscono i passanti'.[282] His

organisation has activities that are focused mostly on the *Centrale*. In 2009, the City Angels

collaborated with the local authorities to create '*la casa degli angeli*', a mobile unit for social

assistance to the poor and homeless people of Milan; its route gravitated around the train station.[283]

The renewal of the train station started in 2008, and it had from the very beginning a strong security

dimension. One local blog ran the following title about this: '*Tempo di restyling anche per la*

Stazione Centrale, all'insegna della sicurezza, della pulizia e della modernità'.[284] In this way, the

'modernisation' of the *Centrale* was to go hand in hand with an increase in its security capabilities.

This increase came swiftly. In 2009, there were already 70 CCTV surveillance cameras (with

panoramic view of 360 degrees), 12 'SOS columns', where the police can be called in case of danger,

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[280] 'between the police and the pusher (drug dealer) nobody bothers one another, like two worlds that complement and look without ever crossing '' http://milano.repubblica.it/dettaglio/stazione-centrale-terra-di-nessuno-gli-spacciatori-assediano-la-piazza/1666599
[281] 'The restoration does not help, not even the security decree, the patrols do not serve: whoever comes to buy doses knows where to find the drug dealers.' Idem
[282] 'Milan is generally a safe city, apart from some slightly more problematic districts. There is for example a particular area of the Central Station, between Piazza IV Novembre and Via Sammartini, where there are often drunk people that annoy passers' http://milano.blogosfere.it/2009/03/ronde-e-sicurezza-la-nostra-intervista-a-mario-furlan-fondatore-dei-city-angels.html
[283] http://www.atm.it/it/AtmNews/Comunicati/Pagine/comuneatmecityangelsinsieme.aspx
[284] 'Time for restyling for the Central Station, in the name of safety, cleanliness and modernity' http://milano.blogosfere.it/2008/09/tempo-di-restyling-anche-per-la-stazione-centrale-allinsegna-della-sicurezza-della-pulizia-e-della-m.html

and 4 cameras in the pedestrian passages of the station. The presence of police forces in the station had also been intensified.[285]

At the same time, the presence of the 'security volunteers' also increased – headed by the City Angels. The vice mayor of the time, Riccardo de Corato, declared: '*Continua a rivelarsi positiva l'azione di sicurezza di prossimità che i volontari della sicurezza, Blue Berets, City Angels e Associazione Poliziotti Italiani, svolgono da fine giugno 2007 in alcune aree a rischio per prevenire e contrastare situazioni di degrado. Nei primi quattro mesi del 2009 sono già un migliaio gli interventi effettuati'.*[286] De Corato also flaunted the already visible results of this inflation in the security provision, claiming that there are no more cases of pickpocketing.[287]

In 2010, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Roberto Maroni, inaugurated an 'operative room' that would coordinate security in the area of the station, and which could possibly be expanded to the entire city.[288] Milan's mayor of the time, Letizia Moratti, enumerated the new security devices – a new system of integrated video-surveillance, with two operative rooms managed by the Train Police, 300 CCTV cameras, one 'videowall', everything with a total investment of 11,4 milion euros.[289]

The 'restructuring' of the *Centrale* includes this plethora of security artefacts. According to De Corato, this security endowment is what the station needed to break out of its stigmatised image as a territory out of control. Thus, the station has been given a belonging and a meaning. It has been re-

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[285] http://loreto.milanotoday.it/stazione-centrale/sicurezza-in-stazione-centrale.html
[286] 'the actions of security in the proximity continue to have positive effects – actions that volunteers of security such as the Blue Berets and the City Angels were performing since the end of 2007 in some areas at risk, in order to prevent and combat situations of degradation. In the first four months of 2009 there were already a thousand other action taken.' http://cittadimilano.it/portale/wps/portal/CDM?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/wps/wcm/connect/ContentLibrary/giornale/giornale/tutte+le+notizie/rapporti+consiglio+comunale+e+attuazione+del+programma+sicurezza/sicurezza_via+mecenate
[287] loreto.milanotoday.it/stazione-centrale/sicurezza-in-stazione-centrale.html
[288] http://milano.corriere.it/milano/notizie/cronaca/10_ottobre_11/sicurezza-stazione-centrale-maroni-video-sorveglianza-telecamere-1703927739630.shtml
[289] http://www.comune.milano.it/portale/wps/portal/CDM?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/wps/wcm/connect/ContentLibrary/giornale/giornale/tutte+le+notizie/sindaco/sindaco_stazione_centrale

appropriated and restored to the 'citizens', which can now use it calmly and safely, without fearing all the deviant elements that were populating the premises prior to this operation. The deployment of military personnel was also a success for the administration, and La Russa emphasized the increased security of the areas surrounding the station, especially for the safety of women.[290]

In order to further highlight the authorities' position regarding the success of the securitisation of the *Centrale* in 2011, it is worth quoting De Corato at length, because his words fit perfectly in this discourse of re-appropriation through security: '*Dal punto di vista della sicurezza abbiamo fatto degli enormi passi avanti […] Oggi la Stazione Centrale di Milano si presenta alla città con un volto rinnovato. L'area infatti non è più una zona franca e terra di nessuno, ma è uno spazio di cui i cittadini possono fruire con tranquillità e sicurezza, grazie anche ad un intenso lavoro dell'Amministrazione volto a trasformare questa zona, che rappresenta uno dei biglietti da visita più importanti della nostra città'.*[291]

These declarations underline what is mostly a renewal through security as surveillance. Another important dimension of the renewal of the *Centrale* has to do with lighting. In 2009, the station and its adjacent squares were equipped with new lighting posts. The technical details of this renewal is telling for the ways in which materiality and security are intertwined in this train station. Thus, the new light projectors were installed on 8-meters high posts that replaced the older 4-meter ones. The

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[290] http://sostenibile.blogosfere.it/2011/07/milano-sicurezza-lite-la-russa-pisapia-sui-militari.html

[291] 'From the point of view of security we made huge advancements [...] Today the Central Station of Milan presents itself to the city with a renewed face. The area in fact is no longer abandoned, a no man's land, but it is a space where people can enjoy peace and security, thanks to the intense work of the administration to transform this area, which is one of the most important business cards of our city.'
http://milano.corriere.it/milano/notizie/cronaca/10_ottobre_11/sicurezza-stazione-centrale-maroni-video-sorveglianza-telecamere-1703927739630.shtml

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yellow light of the previous projectors was replaced with white light, which is supposed to aid the surveillance cameras in the night.[292]

Light is a crucial aspect of the increase in security. It contributes to making the *Centrale* and the surrounding areas safer by facilitating surveillance and control. Symbolically, it also extends the reach of the authorities over this former *terra di nessuno*, because light eliminates the subterranean darkness in which deviance and crime flourish. To quote Simini again, '*La luce è, infatti, un'alleata preziosa per la nostra battaglia alla sicurezza*'.[293]

The result is a space reclaimed: locals and tourists can finally live safely in this area, away from those with 'bad intentions'. Crucially, this again implies that the space of the station has been rescued and is no longer marginal and abandoned, as De Corato insists: '*Con la riqualificazione della Stazione Centrale, la città ha un nuovo biglietto da visita. E grazie al potenziamento dell'illuminazione si aggiunge un tassello importante a questo grande progetto di riqualificazione e rivitalizzazione che l'Amministrazione sta realizzando passo dopo passo, con risultati che sono sotto gli occhi di tutti. Se milanesi e turisti possono finalmente vivere e frequentare in tutta sicurezza quest'area, non più zona franca, è anche grazie alle nuove luci, elemento fondamentale per la tutela dei cittadini contro i malintenzionati*'.[294] Words such as *tutela* and *rivitalizzazione* express this reclaiming of the train station. It does not belong anymore 'to nobody', but it is under the tutelage of

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[292]
http://www.comune.milano.it/portale/wps/portal/CDM?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/wps/wcm/connect/ContentLibrary/giornale/giornale/tutte+le+notizie/infrastrutture+lavori+pubblici/lavoripubblici_illuminazione_stazione_centrale

[293] 'The light is, actually, a precious ally in our struggle for security.' Idem

[294] 'With the redevelopment of the Central Station, the city has a new business card. And thanks to the enhanced lighting, it adds an important piece to this great project for redevelopment and revitalization that the administration is implementing step by step, with results that are visible to everyone. If citizens and tourists can finally live and attend secure this area, which is not abandoned anymore, it is also thanks to the new lighting, as fundamental to the protection of citizens against the bad-intended.'
http://www.comune.milano.it/portale/wps/portal/CDM?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/wps/wcm/connect/ContentLibrary/giornale/giornale/tutte+le+notizie/infrastrutture+lavori+pubblici/simini_luci_bianche_centrale

the city and the citizens.[295] A sharp, albeit implicit distinction is made here between, on the one hand, the citizens and the tourists, who have the new tutelage, and on the other hand the *malintenzionati*, which are the deviant elements that made the station be 'nobody's land'. In a way, these badly-intended people are the 'nobody', the previous owners of the space, which had to be pushed out.

And this is the third dimension of the renewal through security that the *Centrale* underwent: dealing with the former 'owners' of the station. It is clear that those with criminal offences were sent to prisons. The municipality also destroyed all the improvised shelters that were built by homeless people and immigrants in front of the station. When I revisited the site in late 2012, the main *piazza* in front of the *Centrale* was a giant construction ground, with no trace of its former inhabitants. Earlier that year, the *mezzanine* of the train station had been transformed into a 'shelter' for homeless people. This was the result of a collaboration between the police, the local transport company, and several civil society groups, including the City Angels. This was motivated by the need to offer protection during winter to the people that were living without a home in the area around the station.

But it was also mainly motivated by security concerns, since these people were seen to be facilitating petty crime. The local government's responsible for security and social cohesion was at the time Marco Granelli. In his words, the new shelter improves the security of the area, while contributing to solving the problem of homelessness around the station: '*L'apertura del mezzanino della metropolitana della Stazione Centrale avrà anche l'effetto di migliorare la sicurezza della zona,*

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[295] In 2009, La Russa, then minister of defence, congratulated De Corato as 'the best councilor in charge of security in Italy' (quoted in Statewatch, 22, 4, p.10). A similar situation of national recognition for local security measures happened few years later in Hungary, where the mayor of Budapest's Eighth District, Mate Kocsis, was made the national responsible for the 'homeless issue', after issuing a number of security measures that banned homeless people from the public space.

attivando un luogo, controllato e seguito, dove i senza dimora possono trovare un'accoglienza e un aiuto'.[296]

My respondent from the City Angels devoted a considerable time to discussing the issue of homeless people during the interview that we had. He confessed that 'they' can be sometimes dangerous: 'Sometimes even the police doesn't intervene because it's too dangerous, they can have a knife, or break a bottle of beer. Or they use the blade, in the mouth, it's incredible. Not all of them are friends. Sometimes you can't [anticipate] the reaction…why, because they belong to a different culture.' 'There are homeless people that don't want to live off the streets, they refuse any kind of rules, they refuse the shelters, because they prefer…they are happy…you can't do anything, you try to convince, but they don't want to. Almost every year somebody dies in the winter. You feel bad. Many of them they did a choice. Some are drug or alcohol addicts. The worse drug is alcohol.' 'Now in the *Centrale* you see a lot of police, they try to clear the environment from homeless people. […] In the past here in *Centrale* there were many here, now they moved. Is a bad image.'

2.2.5. The City Angels as part of the security-scape

In the security-scape of the *Milano Centrale* train station, the presence of security volunteers that patrol the area is a crucial element. The renewal of the station, which started around the same time as the Maroni Law, included the idea of increased presence of citizens' patrols that would increase the sense of safety and deter crime in the area. The City Angels are the biggest and most important group that is present in the *Centrale*. I have interviewed its members, observed them 'in action' and read the media about them. In this section, I want to integrate some of this data into the context of the

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[296] 'The opening of the mezzanine of the Central Station will also have the effect of improving the safety of the area, activating a place, which is monitored and surveilled, where the homeless can find help .'
http://faremilano.wordpress.com/2012/01/30/senza-tetto-alla-stazione-centrale-piano-anti-freddo-a-milano/

security practices of the Milan train station, and show how the City Angels are an integral part of the same mechanisms of linking urban security to poverty that the authorities are enacting.

Luigi Agarossi, also known as 'Koala', is responsible for the City Angels' Tuesday night patrols in the *Centrale*. I interviewed him in the summer of 2010. The interaction turned into more than a set of questions and answers, and it generated a long discussion that included several topics that were seemingly not connected to his activity in the group. Koala's world views were not what I expected at the time: commonsensical and compassionate, Koala was far from being a cold blooded man with a desire to restore justice in a lewd city. He seemed quite open minded in many regards, including when talking about the homeless people and illegal immigrants of the train station. Reading the transcript a few years later, however, I realise that there are many issues in his statements that relate to the way I approach vigilantism in this project.

To begin with, Agarossi insistedly highlighted the motto of the City Angels: 'solidarity and security'. This combination is essential for the identity of the group, and it also defines its practices. Unlike big organisations that do either security or solidarity, the group combines them, and in his words, 'this is what makes us unique'. As such, the message that I was supposed to get is that the two aspects are complementary, and that each one of them on itself excludes the other: 'Don't think security – plus, but security – with, mixed with solidarity, which is completely different [than private security companies]. We are no just against somebody acting in a bad way. If this person is in trouble, we help him as well.' This is a theme that had been publicly expressed by the leader Mario Furlan as well, especially when he was distancing his group from the *ronde*.

The complementarity between the two elements means that the City Angels is not merely a group of social workers or a charity group. By adopting the logic of security in their practices, the group

inevitably attaches itself to a set of public discourses and positions that are articulated by other actors. Thus, the City Angels and their security practices cannot be separated from the dominating paradigm of increasing urban security through dealing with the issue of poverty and deviance. The City Angels are a group that explicitly and intentionally practices security. It does not use weapons. Yet it is able to perform a specific nuance of security that is both subtle and effective.

There are three ways in which this is achieved. First, each prospective member has to undergo a period of three months training. This is what Furlan called 'a very rigorous selection'. Crucially, it includes a crash course in martial arts, so that the future Angels would be able to defend themselves. As Koala explained to me, the purpose of the training is to be ready to face violent situations: 'We are trained to become City Angels; there is course lasting three months with theoretical subjects; then you learn self-defence techniques. We are thus able to intervene if there are 2 people fighting, without calling the police – unless there are guns, then we stay away. Or if there is a woman we are able to protect her. We are able to give security, people they feel comfortable with us.' When I pressed him about the self-defence trainings, he admitted that 'it is *krav-maga* – without weapons, just brains and hearts'. Therefore, the martial arts training develops a readiness for action that goes beyond merely reporting incidents to the police. The *Krav-maga* style is a street-fighting technique used by the Israeli army and by bodyguards everywhere, and it can be quite rough.[297] The group seems to be concerned about actively preventing what they see as crime, by engaging in violent and risky situations – despite their commitment to non-violent methods.[298]

Second, the group wears uniforms. In Koala's words, 'We have the blue beret like the UN, it means peace, we are peaceful and we bring peace. Then the red colour of the shirt means emergency, we are

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[297] http://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/feb/09/israel.theeditorpressreview
[298] Me: 'But also if the people do some scandal…' Koala: 'then we intervene, yes.'

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able and ready to help if there are some aggressions.' The uniforms are the group's most contested feature, it appears. Its members attach great symbolic and practical significance to it, and it has become the brand of the group: 'when you wear a uniform then you are somebody, then you have to let people know what you wanna do. […]. Normally they are related to ideology, parties, you know. You are a group of extreme left or extreme, I mean, right party, doing something wrong'. From what I got from my interviewee, the uniforms caused quite a stir in the beginning of the group's existence – I will develop this idea in a short while.

Third, the effectiveness of the uniform is given by what the City Angels call 'visual deterrence' (*detterenza visiva*): '*Con la nostra divisa siamo un punto di riferimento sicuro per i cittadini e un deterrente visivo per i malintenzionati.*'[299] Visual deterrence works through the symbolic power that the uniform has, and it aids the City Angels in their security work. As Koala explained to me, 'We are able to give security, people they feel comfortable with us. Our main activity is what we call 'visual deterrence' – when they see us they refrain from doing something wrong, they trust us.' Or as a member was quoted in 1997, '*Diamo un senso di sicurezza. La divisa è certamente un deterrente*'.[300]

The idea that the uniform is able to facilitate intervention, and also offer some sort of legitimacy for those who might contest their authority, brings the City Angels closer to vigilantism than its members might admit. Despite the fact that they are unarmed, the symbolic effect of 'deterrence' that they count on through their uniforms means that they hope to elicit certain reactions from people, such as fear of authority and constraint. The importance that the group attaches to the uniform is thus

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[299] 'with our uniforms we are a secure point of reference for the citizens and a visual deterrent for the bad-intended' 'http://www.cityangels.it/index.php/chi-siamo3

[300] 'We provide a sense of security. The uniform is definetly a deterrence.'
http://www.stpauls.it/fc97/5297fc/5297fc35.htm

not only a matter of branding, but it points to their concern to be taken seriously as a group that can practice and implement security.

And the strategy has so far been successful. The City Angels are seen as the main group of citizens that contributed to the security of the *Centrale*. They have been a crucial element of the reappropriation of the station for the city and the 'locals'. Already in 1995, their activity in the train station was being noted for their presence in the station.[301] In 1997 they were featured in a Catholic magazine that emphasized their courage of working in the dire conditions of the *Centrale*.[302] In 2009 Riccardo De Corato praised the City Angels for their activities during the night, in the area surrounding the station.[303] The success story of the Milan train station prompted other actors to exemplify the benefits of citizens' patrols with the practices of the City Angels. Thus, in Bergamo, close to Milan, one politician suggested that in order for the municipality to counteract the 'micro-criminality' that is on the rise again in the city, it should work closely with the City Angels. The group is not to be mistaken with the *ronde*.[304] In Milan, the City Angels have won numerous distinctions from the municipality for their work in and around the train station.

The City Angels are intimately connected to the *Milano Centrale* train station. The group started its existence here, and for many years it had been their nucleus. Their interest in the *Centrale* is closely associated with the idea of the necessity brought by the same trope of 'nobody's land'. The City Angels were reproducing this discourse, and were reinforcing the idea that the station is a place that needs to be surveyed, made secure and saved for the citizens from the plethora of deviant individuals

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[301] http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1995/02/06/milano-notte-di-ronda-con-guardian-angels.html
[302] http://www.stpauls.it/fc97/5297fc/5297fc35.htm
[303]
http://cittadimilano.it/portale/wps/portal/CDM?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/wps/wcm/connect/ContentLibrary/giornale/giornale/tutte+le+notizie/rapporti+consiglio+comunale+e+attuazione+del+programma+sicurezza/sicurezza_via+mecenate
[304] http://www.giorgiogori.it/sicurezza-gori-propone-piu-agenti-e-aiuto-ai-city-angels/

that were residing in the area. Thus, in 1997, Furlan described a grim image of the station, similar to the one of decadence depicted by other journalists: '*Quello del contatto è uno dei momenti più difficili. Bisogna infilarsi i guanti di lattice e stare attenti alle siringhe. Sono il nostro incubo: qui l'Aids galoppa. Ma bisogna aspettarsi anche reazioni violente. Possono essere armati di coltello o di lametta. I nigeriani la nascondono in bocca, sotto la lingua o appoggiata all'interno di una guancia. La tirano fuori in un attimo e ti tagliano in due la faccia*'.[305] Twelve years later, he declared that the *Centrale* area remains a hotspot, despite the improvement in security: '*Sì indubbiamente. La situazione è migliorata rispetto a 2 o 3 anni fa. Ma la zona rimane comunque calda, ma si è fatto molto.*'[306] Koala also added his opinion on the insecurity of the area: 'At night is dangerous, if you are a woman, better stay [home], unfortunately; in the past it was better, safer.' I could not understand to which 'safer past' was my respondent alluding to, but it is clear that the City Angels are as convinced as the authorities that the area is problematic and that it still needs interventions.

And they do their fair share in intervening, being at the moment the main provider of voluntary social services in Milan. Social engagement has been the group's priority from the beginning, when they were operating in cooperation with *fratel* Ettore, the catholic monk who opened a shelter in the underground passages of the train station. In Koala's stories, the element of helping people in need emerged as a crucial aspect of how he saw the group's mission: 'Giving money is the easiest way. The very demanding is when you stay. Many people just need to be heard, to have somebody to trust.' I have witness the City Angels handing out food and clothes in the area around the *Centrale*, and they certainly have expanded this activity to other areas and cities. In 2012, alongside the Milan

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[305] 'That contact is one of the most difficult moments. We must put on latex gloves and be careful with the syringes. This is our nightmare: AIDS is galloping here. But you have to expect even violent reactions. They can be armed with a knife or razor blade. The Nigerians hide them in the mouth, under the tongue. They pull it off in an instant, and they cut your face in two' http://www.stpauls.it/fc97/5297fc/5297fc35.htm

[306] 'Yes undoubtedly. The situation has improved, compared to 2 or 3 years ago. The area is still warm, but much has been done.' http://loreto.milanotoday.it/stazione-centrale/sicurezza-in-stazione-centrale.html

municipality, they initiated the project '*la casa degli angeli*', which is an 18 meter bus that drives along four routes in order to reach homeless people in need. The bus offers food, sanitary assistance, first aid and resting areas.'[307] It would seem that the group prefers to brand itself as a provider of social services, rather than as security patrols, or as Furlan put it in 2010, '*noi svolgiamo un'attività sociale, che nulla ha a che fare con la sicurezza*'.[308] Yet there are some elements and practices that continue to betray the security intentions of the City Angels.

2.2.6. 'We are in a sandwich'

In this section I will present the relationships that the City Angels built with different other social actors, such as the authorities, the police, the general public and the homeless people and immigrants that they are aiding. The purpose of this exploration is to highlight the elements that make the City Angels a group very much akin to other vigilante groups. This means that they are performing a set of security practices that situates them in an ambiguous position between state and society, obliging them to address both levels, as their audience is formed by a multiplicity of social actors.

As I have already mentioned, the municipality of Milan has been quite happy with the group's activity and its role in reclaiming the *Centrale*. The enthusiasm of the red-blue volunteers gave the former mayor numerous reasons to boast Milan's dedicated concern for the less fortunate of its inhabitants – a care that is of course expressed at best in a passive way, since the overall trend is to wage a true street war against these people. In any case, Letizia Moratti talked about the 'Milan of solidarity', and boasted the 'altruism' of the authorities and the volunteers: '*Milano è una città dove nessuno deve essere lasciato solo e questo principio diventa ogni giorno una realtà concreta grazie*

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[307] http://www.labsus.org/2013/12/city-angels-la-sfida-per-senza-tetto-continua/
[308] 'we carry out a social activity, which has nothing to do with safety.'
http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2010/09/12/news/il_flop_delle_ronde_padane_dopo_un_anno_ce_n_una_sola-6989688/?rss

alla collaborazione del mondo del volontariato con imprese, pubbliche e private, che uniscono le proprie forze nel nome dell'altruismo.'[309] This 'altruism' is complemented by the fact that the practices of the City Angels also lower the costs of social services for the municipality: '*La casa degli Angeli è un progetto a costo zero per i cittadini ma con un impatto enorme per le persone più deboli e bisognose*'.[310] However, at a closer look, the relationship between Furlan's volunteers and the municipality of Milan is far from being altruistic. In 2009, *La Repubblica* revealed that the cooperation between the city and the Angels costed 197.000 euros.[311] The following year, the group signed an agreement with the city of Torino for 15.000 euros for a period of six months.[312]

On the other hand, the relationship with the authorities has not always been smooth. In 2009, De Corato declared that the City Angels would no longer be allowed to perform security services, or *vigilanza*. This is because the Maroni Law on the *ronde* forbade any public financing. According to De Corato, '*il regolamento sulle ronde prevede che le associazioni volontarie non possano pesare sulla finanza pubblica. [Il City Angels] visto che possono fare assistenza sociale, ma non sicurezza'*.[313] This may explain Furlan's insistence that the group does not 'do security', and that the Maroni law is a nonsense. Two years later, however, the Angels were back in the security landscape of Milan, with the same administration having renewed their contracts, in order to involve citizens in the security of risky areas.[314] As Koala admitted in our discussion, 'Many times we do security service, for instance when there are celebrations, we go there; or festivals or parties of some school,

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[309] 'Milan is a city where no one should be left alone, and this principle is becoming a reality thanks to the collaboration of the voluntary patrols with public and private actors, in order to join forces in the name of altruism'
[310] 'The house of Angels is a project with no cost for the citizens but with a huge impact for the weak and needy.' Both quotes from Moratti are here http://www.atm.it/it/AtmNews/Comunicati/Pagine/comuneatmecityangelsinsieme.aspx
[311] http://milano.repubblica.it/dettaglio/ronde-licenziati-i-city-angels-arrivano-i-carabinieri-in-pensione/1677031
[312] http://torino.repubblica.it/dettaglio/in-strada-arrivano-i-city-angels-ronde-pagate-dal-comune/1855015
[313] 'The regulation on patrols ensures that voluntary associations cannot be a burden for the public budget. The City Angels are only allowed to do social work, and not security work.' http://milano.repubblica.it/dettaglio/ronde-licenziati-i-city-angels-arrivano-i-carabinieri-in-pensione/1677031
[314]

http://milano.repubblica.it/cronaca/2011/06/21/news/il_comune_ferma_le_ronde_di_de_corato_moratti_le_aveva_rinnovate_per_un_anno-17984918/

we go for security. For the world cup, when there was a big screen in the *piazza duomo*, [we did] some security service there.'

My respondent also shed some light on the relationship between the City Angels and the police. It appears that in the beginning of the group's existence, the police had been extremely suspicious. This was caused by the uniforms, and the ambiguity that they produced in the eyes of alleged confused authorities, as Koala explained: 'Nobody knew what City Angels were, or what the purpose of the organization is, so it was suspect. There are many here that just want to do the policeman, which is not allowed. […] the problem was the uniform, because when you wear a uniform then you are somebody, then you have to let people know what you want to do. Because uniform means sometimes something bad. You are against something. Normally they are related to ideology, parties, you know. You are a group of extreme left or extreme right, doing something wrong'. This is something that Furlan has also confirmed to me, saying that the police were suspicious in the first year. However, both men assured me that the situation is better now, and they have 'no problems' with the police:

> Koala: 'We are […] very [good] friends…we don't compete at all… but many times they
> let us, in some situations, to manage the situations.'
> Me: 'So the police do not see you as a threat?'
> Koala: 'Absolutely [not], absolutely [not] – when we see each other, ciao, ciao! […] The
> mayor and the local politics, we are well accepted.'

When it comes to the 'general population', the situation is similarly ambiguous. With all the scandal that ensued with the legalisation of the *ronde*, it is perhaps to be expected that the City Angels and their uniforms are viewed with suspicion. In terms of the press, I have not come across any blatantly

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negative opinions on the group, with the exception of a certain worry that the municipality is paying uniformed troops to ensure urban security. Everybody seems happy with the group's soft approach that combines crime prevention and social work. However, as Koala admitted to me, not everybody is content.

> Koala: 'Even if people just see us they say "we are happy, good, congratulations, we support you!" We have 90% positive feedback. Somebody no, I mean, because we don't have religion'.
>
> Me: 'What would attract antipathies, why would people…?'
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> Koala: 'You know, some, there are, but this is a minority, some say well – you support foreigners, let them go. Yes, there are some, and to be honest, there is a waiter here, normally I come here sometimes, [saying] why [do] you do this, let them go home. So there is a kind of racism, that's why they are not happy. People don't understand. They say if u abandon them they will go away.'

Also, according to him, the uniforms still cause some confusion: 'People ask us what are you doing, because they are curious, also foreigners. And sometimes they think we are part of the police, because you know when you have a uniform they think we are police, we have to explain but soon they understand.' From what my respondent made me understand, the ambiguity between the group and the police is somewhat acute for some people. This creates a sort of triangular situation, where the City Angels have to operate at a level that is between the police triangular situation, where the City Angels have to operate at a level that is between the police and the people.

> Koala: 'The police stay away, so in front of the people there are the City Angels; they know we are friends; they respect us.'

Me: 'Probably the police is perceived as [negative]?'

Koala: 'Yes, exactly, sometimes it could be very very strong the presence [of the police] in front of them, and then it determines some bad situation, but with City Angels no. We are in a sandwich, we have also to keep the area clear for ambulance [and] security. So you have to pay attention…'

Another 'audience' of the City Angels consists of the people they are helping and/or policing: the illegal immigrants, the homeless people, drug abusers and sex workers that constitute the microuniverse which spoils the security of the *Centrale*. The group is proud of its soft but firm approach, which for them is an ideal combination of non-violent peace-making and psychological methods. Thus, Furlan declares that '*La nostra presenza è percepita molto bene perchè non siamo sbirri. Siamo più una presenza "amica" piuttosto che una presenza ostile. Siamo anche già fuori da alcuni locali per dare una mano nel caso qualcuno si senta male perchè ha bevuto troppo, soccorriamo se necessario. E in caso di rissa cerchiamo di intervenire per calmare gli animi. Sempre però con il dialogo, mai con la violenza.*'[315]

When I asked Koala how the immigrants and homeless people feel about their activity, he confessed that the interaction is not smooth: 'They like us, many many of them, even if sometimes you have to fight because they are very demanding.' He also mentioned that things may as well get violent, and the Angels should be ready to intervene: 'you have to pay attention, sometimes it happens that people, just because they are drunk, you have to always be on alert, [there is] maximum responsibility. And that's why we have this [martial arts] training, and we learn how to defend

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[315] 'Our presence is perceived quite well, since we are not cops. We are a friendly rather than a hostile presence. We are ready to help anyone who feels bad because they drank too much, we give aid if necessary. And in case of a fight, we intervene to calm the tempers. But always through dialogue, never through violence.'
http://milano.blogosfere.it/2009/03/ronde-e-sicurezza-la-nostra-intervista-a-mario-furlan-fondatore-dei-city-angels.html

ourselves [in order] to manage a fight, so we take care.' In 1995, Furlan also stated that there is a possibility that his group may encounter hostility from immigrants and homeless people, and that this would not be treated passively: '*Diventano persone da fermare solo quando diventano violenti. Se uno ruba o scippa noi non guardiamo se è italiano, algerino, milanese. Noi lo fermiamo.*'[316]

Conclusion

This section analysed the activities of the City Angels as embedded in the securityscape of the *Milano Centrale* train station. The City Angels are an integral component of this securityscape, along with the discourses of centrality and movement, and the state's security practices. I have argued that the logic of this securityscape is the nexus between poverty and security. Poverty is considered a crime and is dealt with through security means.

The discourses around the station construct it as a lost space, in need of recovery. This recovery is performed mainly through increasing security. The station is seen as a dangerous space because of the people that inhabit its surroundings: illegal immigrants, homeless people, drug addicts, sex workers, Roma people and so on. The discourse of the authorities articulate an intimate connection between the marginality that is common to these people and (in)security.

The City Angels plug their activities directly in this discourse. Focusing mostly on the space of the *Centrale*, the group combines social work with clearly delineated security practices. These practices are intentional and programmatic, and they follow a distinct logic of security that criminalizes poverty. In the next section I highlight and develop this logic, and argue that the practices of the City Angels reproduce and reinforce it.

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[316] 'We stop people only when they become violent. If somebody steals or robs, we do not care whether they are Italian, Algerian or Milanese. We stop them.' http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1995/02/06/milano-notte-di-ronda-con-guardian-angels.html

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3. *Poverty, crime and security*

This section develops the political-economical dimension of the previously outlined securityscape. I have argued that its logic is the nexus between poverty and security. Here, I want to further expand on this argument, and briefly explain how the nexus operates. Poverty is being considered a crime, and treated not through social or administrative measures, but through security means. Security methods exclude those categories of people that are considered to be dangerous based on their position in the political-economical hierarchy. Marginality and poverty converge in the discourse of danger and insecurity. Thus, rescuing the space of the train station means first and foremost eliminating poverty. In this process, the security mechanisms and discourses of the securityscape have a double function: one is connected to spatiality and the other to criminalising poverty. I will start with the first function.

3.1 Space and Security in Milan's Central Train station

The train station is an arena where an entire array of security forces performs: from the military to the vigilantes, the display of security-prowess in a single space is telling for the importance attached to this train station. This display alone is enough to create a speech act of securitization, to generate the impression that in its absence, the space of the train station would constitute a threat. Moreover,

this impressive spectacle of security forces illustrates the way in which the exceptional situation becomes normalized in a set of everyday practices. To this, one can add the multiplicity of surveillance and control systems in Centrale (lights, CCTV's), all of them constituting a security dispositif whereby technology and infrastructure fuse in a continuum that illustrates the materiality of security. Matter gains its own agency, and is able to generate and reinforce security discourses (Aradau, 2010).

Yet this matter also operates in space: the assemblage of security forces, dispositifs and practices perform in a specifically delineated territory: the proximity of the train station. In this way, this assemblage creates the Centrale Milano as a distinct space of security, a space where the gravity of threat determines a more decisive set of responses than 'on the outside'; a space that has to be protected in a more active way than other spaces in the neighbourhood. In this way the securitization process also serves to place the Centrale in the centre: it reverts the image of a dangerous and marginal space into one that is more akin to the elitist and polished 'downtown' of Milan. Security creates selective spaces – some areas are safer than others.

Conversely, the space of the train station itself is able to generate (in)security discourses. The train station is either seen as a dramatically dangerous zone, a hot-spot of delinquency, a space of no-entry; or, it is seen as a new haven of safety, a space where people should feel secure once they enter it, a zone of refuge from the 'urban jungle' that is outside. The train station becomes something resembling a fortress, a bastion of safety. Even its architecture emanates this impression: a large, heavy structure that protects those inside, and keeps the unwanted outside.[317] Space creates selective

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[317] Crucially, the 'inside' space of security and the 'outside' area of (yet) insecurity are not in fact sharply outlined – their boundaries overlap in the buffer zone of the piazza that is in front of Centrale. However, there is still a sense of a boundary between a secure territory, and the area where security 'ends'. This boundary is given precisely by the presence/absence of the security assemblages that make the Centrale a security-scape.

security – not everyone is welcomed in the security-scape; those seen as potential threats are to be kept away. Security and territory become mutually constitutive.

Architecture, elements of control and surveillance embedded in the infrastructure, state and urban planning, location within certain areas within the city, and the location of the city in certain networks and global flows – all these facilitate certain security discourses and practices. Space drives security in concrete ways. In the case of the *Milano Centrale* train station, the spatial context renders security as a public good that is supplied to citizens. Security is also a main stake in upholding a competitive stance: security and order make the train station more 'central', and they raise the status of Milan as a global city. At the same time, the urban environment generates and facilitates discourses and practices of exclusion. Security is achieved only when certain people are evicted from those spaces that have to be upgraded.

3.2. Poverty and crime

The interweaving of security and territoriality that I have underlined in the case of *Milano Centrale*, revolves around the problem of poverty. The mutual constitution of space and security, and at the same time the set of exclusions that both of them perform in the *Milano Centrale*, can be explained through the treatment of the poor people as criminals. The space of the train station is not meant to exclude just anybody, but precisely those who, on the basis of their diminished access to resources,

are considered to be a threat to the space itself – the homeless, the beggars, the immigrants, the sex workers, the drug abusers and so on. Thus, the apparatuses of security that are present within this space perform a double function: they keep some people out, while ensuring that the rest move freely. This exclusion is performed first and foremost on economic grounds.

Criminalising poverty and spatialising exclusion produces the impression of order and safety for a general public that is overly concerned with public safety. For this public, the city becomes a space of horror and panic, and therefore many people strive to avoid it by moving out to the suburbs. As the periphery of the city becomes more developed, the suburbs become more attractive for social categories that have a relatively high income. The suburbs offer an idealized setting of safety, clean air and privacy. Often, these settings evolve into gated and enclave communities that create isolated spaces for those who can afford it. As an effort to bring people back and 'reclaim the city', the authorities attempt to create safe spaces inside the city, spaces from where the 'threats' have been eliminated, and from where future threats can be contained through spatial and architectural features and gadgets.

The logic that I underlined here is the criminalization of poverty. The poor, the immigrants and the homeless are considered to be factors of dis-order and violence. As such, security becomes a matter of difference: it follows the spatial segregation and exclusion, and it becomes a tool for achieving differential space planes. Urban environment is upgraded through security, and security becomes a good enjoyed only by some. Security becomes also a matter of creating and enforcing social hierarchies: it is only the well-off who can claim security in the city. While remaining a 'public' good, security gets translated into protection against the perils of urban life. This protection is given only to those that deserve it: those who can afford to use the public facilities, to shop, to travel and to have a home in a renovated or newly built neighbourhood. For the rest of the people, security

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becomes a series of menacing practices of brutal exclusion and eternal control and surveillance. It is crucial to underline, for the last time, that this 'rest' of the people is what can be called the 'underclass' – those without stable incomes, homes, citizenship, or even mental health. I underline also the material dimension of this divide between those who enjoy security and those who cannot – this is a divide that is reinforced by income and the consumer status. For these reasons, in Milan and in other global cities, the criminalization of poverty becomes the main logic of security.

Security articulations become successful and legitimised when the authorities provide for the security demands articulated by the public. This demand is directed as a plea for ridding the urban space of the unwanted elements – immigrants, homeless, poor, vagabonds, drug abusers and sex workers. The criminalisation of poverty is not the end of the story. This treatment is part of a hegemonic ideology, which contains diverse discourses and practices that have a certain political economy: the retreat of welfare, a focus on family and values, evolutionism, concrete ideas of social deserving and entitlement, workfare etc. Moreover, this political economy of poverty has also a global dimension, being connected to discourses of state failure.

In the Maroni security package, there is a section reserved explicitly for the treatment of homeless people. Tellingly, this is under the heading '*Lotta alla criminalita diffusa*'.[318] The package focused on multiple forms of crime that are associated with homeless people, such as crimes committed under alcohol or drug influence as well as night crimes. Milan has Italy's biggest number of *clochard* – people without fixed home.[319] The peculiarity of the situation is that most of these people are illegal immigrants. Indeed, the presence of illegal immigrants in Italy, and especially Roma people from Eastern Europe, has been regarded as a serious security problem by the authorities. Roma camps

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[318] 'fight against diffuse criminality'
[319] http://social.tiscali.it/articoli/collaboratori/rapaccini/10/03/senzatetto.html

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were equated with a calamity or a natural disaster that needs to be addressed through extraordinary means.[320] These camps were places of extreme marginalisation, where people coming to live a better life in 'the West' were actually living under much harsher conditions than in their home countries, without access to water, electricity or health care. The authorised settlements were surrounded by a fence or a wall, and access to these spaces was limited. Segregation and stigmatisation became predictable outcomes of these conditions.[321]

By choosing to solve these problems through security means, the Italian authorities articulated an explicit connection between poverty and insecurity. Maroni's law raised concerns from a number of civil society groups that were working in the camps and immigrant settlements. These groups lamented that the government has only repressive measures for '*i disperati*'.[322] Berlusconi's decree from 2008 declared the state of emergency in Milan and surrounding areas where nomad camps existed. The motivation for this decree was Milan's 'specific urban configuration', which made the distribution of nomad camps 'impossible' without 'augmenting the social alarm' and the dangers for order and public security.[323]

For Berlusconi's government, the Roma camps around Milan were hotbeds of insecurity and social alarm. Within the city, in the *Centrale* train station, the improvised shelters of Roma, homeless and immigrant people were also connected to crime. As I have shown, the presence of these people created the image of the station as a space-forlorn in need of being rescued through increased security. In 2009, Milan's authorities, sustained by De Corato launched a bus in which presumed

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[320] Statewatch, 22, 4, p. 9
[321] Idem, p. 12
[322] http://www.repubblica.it/2008/05/sezioni/cronaca/sicurezza-politica-5/ong-contrarie/ong-contrarie.html
[323] DECRETO DEL PRESIDENTE DEL CONSIGLIO DEI MINISTRI 21 maggio 2008 - Dichiarazione dello stato di emergenza in relazione agli insediamenti di comunita' nomadi nel territorio delle regioni Campania, Lazio e Lombardia.

illegal immigrants were being picked up from around the city, detained and identified.[324] The *Centrale* was seen as the heart of delinquency, brought about by the homeless people: '*La Stazione Centrale ha sempre rappresentato a Milano uno dei simboli del degrado cittadino. Nelle vie intorno alla mastodontica costruzione fascista infatti, gravita un micromondo fatto di senza tetto e piccoli delinquenti.*'[325] Two years later, poverty and insecurity were still connected in the train station, where the locals were faced with the constant presence in the station of 'large groups of people, sometimes in desperate conditions surrounded by bottles of alcohol, drunks and drug addicts, homeless and poor people of all nationalities.'[326] The trope of *terra di nessuno* establishes a direct link between poverty and insecurity. The degradation of the train station was considered to be associated with crime, and the criminal acts were carried out by the people living in the perimeter of the station.

The position of the City Angels within these discourses is quite straightforward. The group's practices are plugged in the general narrative of the train station as a space of crime and deviance. Thus, the group's double approach that combines security and social work is clearly a way to address the nexus between poverty and insecurity. On the one hand the City Angels perform social work such as feeding the homeless and offering the people around the station assistance; on the other hand, they do this with a clear mind for increasing the security of the space. For example, already in 1995, Furlan articulated a link between poverty and violence, claiming that there is a need for a firm approach to his social work: '*Indulgere al rambismo sarebbe pericoloso, ma sarebbe altrettanto rischioso fare le suorine; bisogna mantenere un' aria decisa di fronte ai malviventi, perché non tutti*

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[324] http://milano.repubblica.it/dettaglio/milano-vigili-a-caccia-degli-immigrati-il-bus-galera-imprigiona-i-clandestini/1734491

[325] 'The Central Station has always been in Milan one of the symbols of urban degradation. In the streets around the mammoth fascist construction fact, there is a microcosmos of homeless and petty criminals.' loreto.milanotoday.it/stazione-centrale/sicurezza-in-stazione-centrale.html

[326] '*nutriti gruppi di persone, in condizioni talora disperate circondati da bottiglie di alcol, ubriachi e tossicodipendenti, senzatetto e poveracci di ogni nazionalità.*' http://sostenibile.blogosfere.it/2011/07/milano-sicurezza-lite-la-russa-pisapia-sui-militari.html

gli abitanti della stazione sono stinchi di santo, e se siamo troppo morbidi rischiamo di non esser

presi sul serio quando malauguratamente dobbiamo intervenire per bloccare i violenti.'[327]

Despite the fact that the relationship with the state is uneasy, the City Angels have managed to adapt to each administration and become a big organisation. As such, it also obtains credentials from some parts of the population, which, in the words of my respondents, support them in great proportions. Here also the situation is uneasy, and for many people, the group is not radical enough. However, through their combination of philantropical work for the needy and firm approach to insecurity, the City Angels seem to respond to exactly what the Milanese public needs: a resolution of the problem of insecurity brought about by poor and homeless people in the 'sensitive areas' of the city.

Conclusions

In this chapter I dealt with vigilantism in Italy. I have outlined the context in which the state authorities and other actors have articulated discourses and performed practices that underline the Italian vigilantism. This context revolves around the problem of the city space and its dwellers. While some parts of the city are reclaimed and renewed by the municipality, the precarious categories of people are excluded and criminalised. The City Angels as a vigilante group provide security to a population that enforces and sustains this criminalisation of poverty. The group focuses on a derelict space – the train station – which the Milan population decries as being flooded with delinquency. It uses a softer approach than the Hungarian vigilantes. Despite the Angels' readiness

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[327] 'it would be dangerous to indulge in a machist attitude, but it is equally risky to be "a nun"; we must be determined in the face of criminality, because not all those who inhabit the train station are saints, and if we are too soft, we risk not being taken seriously when we have to intervene to stop the violence.'
http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1995/02/06/milano-notte-di-ronda-con-guardian-angels.html

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for close combat, they maintain a peaceful and paternalising stance towards the 'delinquents'. They respond to a security demand which is more oriented towards moderate, middle-class values. The citizens of Milan ask for a quiet, safe and clean environment. For sure, the homeless people and the drug dealers do not fit in their utopic city. Yet this does not necessarily lead to an exacerbation of the national sentiment, as in the Hungarian case, but to a desire for community work and to a certain extent, reintegration.

Does this imply a radical departure from the violent demands of the Hungarians for ending the 'Gypsy crime'? I would hesitate to answer affirmatively. By criminalising the poor, the population is still articulating an exclusionary and conservatory discourse. The security that is being demanded is beneficial for some, and oppressive for others. This mechanism enforces the economic, social and political inequalities of the capitalist system. In this way, I am led to argue that such a security demand, despite its softer appearance, shares a similar inherent violence with that of the Hungarian public. Paradoxically, this violence can even return against those who articulate it. Since the economic repression in Italy is heightening, more and more people remain homeless, and more and more people are forced towards the periphery of what constitutes the accepted 'citizenry'.

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis explored the security practices of vigilante groups in Italy and Hungary. It asked the question of the possibility of successful security articulations that emerge from actors endowed with lower levels of social capital. Vigilantism is one such possible security practice. After highlighting the main dimensions of the concept of vigilantism, the thesis set out the theoretical parameters for the main argument: vigilantism is a security practice that can be at the same time non-elitist and intentional. By using ethnographic methods, channelled through the concept of security-scape, I analysed two instances of vigilantism – in Hungary and Italy. I argue that in both these instances vigilante groups respond to, and legitimate their actions through the security demands that they pick up from the population. In the Hungarian case, the vigilantes supply spectacular security through a far-right programme. In Italy, the security demand is met in a strict connection to the discourse on urban insecurity, through a mechanism of criminalising the precarious segments of the population.

The theoretical contribution of this thesis lies mostly in the debate between the decisionist and the non-intentional models of security. Against the decisionist model, I argue that vigilantism does not need the support of the state or of actors endowed with high levels of political capital. Rather, vigilantism is an instance of everyday non-elitist security. However, against the proponents of the non-intentional model, I argue that while vigilantism is an example of mundane security, it is at the same time a programmatic and intentional practice. I departed from a view of security that is based on thin intentionality. The vigilante practices that I have shown are not unintended consequences of parallel processes and actors, nor are they dispersed to the extent that the locus of decision is lost. Vigilantes enact security with clear and explicit intentions, in an effort to provide security to demands articulated from different places in the society.

In relation to this, the second theoretical contribution of this project is another view on the oppressive nature of security. The debate in the literature has been carried so far between a position that sees security as being bottom-up and emancipatory, and a position that sees security as being state-led and oppressive. I showed here that vigilantism is an instance of bottom-up security that is oppressive and exclusionary. I am interested mostly in the contrast that this argument brings to the second position – the one that argues for the oppressive character of top-down security. I argue that it is politically misleading to see the state and its apparatuses as being solely responsible for the violence operated in the name of security. Vigilantism shows that groups of people that do not have the support of the state can be equally violent and dangerous as the police, the military or the surveillance apparatus. This fact needs to be taken seriously as a legitimate security articulation from the grass roots levels of the society.

Hence, I introduced the concept of security demand, as a way to understand and analyse bottom-up securitisations. I argue that the programmatic character of the security practices enacted by vigilantes can be best understood as providing security to social segments that articulate a sense of fear, danger and threat in relation to other particular social categories. I showed how in the Hungarian instance, this articulation took the form of the discourse on Roma people as being inherently criminals – the 'Gipsy crime' discourse – to which the vigilante groups responded by patrolling the streets of Roma neighbourhoods, dressed in military gear, and conducting acts of violence against the Roma population. In the Italian instance, the security demand took the form of a discourse of fear and disgust towards precarious groups such as illegal immigrants and homeless people. The population considered these groups to be inherently dangerous criminal. The Italian vigilante group City Angels responded to this demand by creating frameworks in which security and social work were combined.

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Thinking through the concept of security demand has important implications for the politicality of security studies. If the feelings of fear and insecurity that the population feels are not solely the creation of the state, this implies that such feelings have a distinct status as security articulations. Against the view that sees security as the work of the apparatuses of the state that need to survey and control the population, the demand for security shows that there is a series of concerns at the societal level that need to be taken into account – be they about high criminality among the Roma population or the danger posed by homeless people and drug addicts. Far from simply arguing for the artificial creation of demand in order to justify the supply, such a view upholds the authenticity and autonomy of security concerns. In other words, people perceive themselves to be vulnerable. They expect the state to protect them against violence, uncertainty and whatever else they perceive as being dangerous, and if the state fails to do so, they will direct this demand somewhere else.

I have shown two instances of how vigilante groups respond to security demands. In Hungary, this response was more militaristic and aggressive. The paramilitary patrols of Gyongyospata vindicated an image of hyper-masculinity, virility, courage and combative prowess. They talked about a civil war and held camps for self-defence. Their members were physically fit and oftentimes armed with lethal weapons. They grounded their actions on a hyper-nationalist ideology, and so their struggle took legendary dimensions.

On the contrary, in Italy, the City Angels were overly-concerned with social work, and with dissimulating the security nature of their work. Despite their slogan that combined solidarity with security, they could not and would not operate along the same militaristic lines as the Hungarian patrols. Their concerns were more civic, more attentive to find a middle ground between violence and tolerance. They aimed less at segregation and civil wars, and more at integration and normalisation through charity and social work.

The demand for security displaces responsibility from the state to the society. So far, most of the critical voices against security have focused on the state as the source of all its oppressive and violent elements. Shifting this focus – or at least adding the other side of the coin to the story – implies that the society should also come under a closer scrutiny. A critical security project should pay more attention to the ways in which societal groups not only resonate with the state violent practices, but also solicit them. As an effort to change the exclusionary and oppressive effects of security practices, a critical project should not limit itself at a critique of the state apparatus, but it should extend this critique to those societal processes that create and multiply these effects. Consequently, it should critique the multiple ways in which we cooperate to these violent effects, not merely as security scholars, but as members of a society that are situated in certain discursive formations, from where we have certain demands and expectations of safety and insurance.

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