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Security Dialogue

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Abstract

This article offers a bio suggests that security phenomena should be analysed in terms of the problematizations through which they are expressed. With reference to Foucault's concept of biopower, K&R insurance is studied as part of a *security dispositif* designed to deal with the problematic of kidnap risk. The biopolitical security that results is aimed at enabling the circulation of the client should a kidnap event occur. As such, it is a personalized private provision of security premised upon the promotion of an individual's capacity to circulate in the future. Using the story of a kidnap event, the article analyses the micro-practices through which a population of `kidnapping prospects' is created, the underwriting process through which prospective clients undergo a security audit, and the forms of security that derive from this dispositif. It argues that the value of the concept of biopower for security analysis is its potential for explaining problematics that are not circumscribed to a fixed referent object but relate to the emergent features of the changing character of the human being.

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1.

1 This term has been commonly translated into English as `apparatus of security'. Here, the term *security dispositif* will be used for want of a better translation. For a wider description of the concept, see Deleuze (1999: 159).

2.
2 Angie Wong (2004) has noted that `in fact, one condition of kidnapping policies is that the insured must not tell anyone they have coverage. According to Mack Rice Jr. of Marsh & McLennan, an insurance brokerage firm, the policies themselves are handled like top-secret documents. ″When we issue a policy, you are given a number,″ Rice says. ″We don't even put the company name on the file.″'
3.
3 Data taken from Gigerenzer (2002: 5) and originally provided by the Control Risks Group.
4.
4 Information provided in these two paragraphs is based on the author's experience as a risk and security adviser for an energy corporation operating in South America between 2000 and 2002. For a general view on corporate security risk assessment and risk management, see, for example, Roper (1999).
5.
5 Michel Callon (1998) has argued that markets are also the result of constructive activities.
6.
6 Deductibles are a way of controlling what the industry knows as 'moral hazard'. If the client has something to lose when making a claim, it should restrict its claims to legitimate events.
7.
7 An argument is made by Dillon & Lobo-Guerrero (2006) in which circulation, connectivity and complexity have become the quasi-transcendentals of contingency that determine the biopolitical imaginary of species being.
8.
8 `Tom Hargrove's improvised kidnap diary, day 325 of 334, 1994, somewhere in Colombia'; cited by Kroll (2006: 1); emphasis added.
9.
9 Leon Valencia is, at the time of writing, an analyst for the Colombian NGO Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris.
10.
10 Different approaches to biopower and biopolitics have emerged in recent years with the work of Giorgio Agamben, Paul Virno and Antonio Negri. The approach set out in this article differs from theirs and subscribes to a notion of biopower premised upon the promotion, enhancement and protection of forms of life rather than the subordination of the concept to sovereign forms of power or to class systems. Elaboration of this point, however, would require a separate article.

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