SAFE OR FREE?
Comparative analysis of media discourses on security

Petra Guasti
Zdenka Mansfeldová
Daniela Gawrecká

Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic,
Jilska 1, 11000 Prague 1, Czech Republic,
Email: petra.guasti@soc.cas.cz
zdenka.mansfeldova@soc.cas.cz
daniela.gawrecka@soc.cas.cz

Paper prepared for 23rd World Congress of Political Science, Montreal, Quebec – Canada, 19-24th July 2014, Panel RC 22.280 Challenges in Framing Research.

Abstract:
In recent years public awareness of security issues has grown exponentially, particularly in the aftermath of numerous scandals in which governments were revealed as prioritising security over privacy and civil liberties and doing so in a secretive manner, often on (or even beyond) the edge of existing rules and regulations. Thus, debates about the need for increased protection against global security threats are no longer met with uncritical approval from the public. Rather, citizens demand justifications for and answers to the question of who ‘watches the watchmen’. This conflict between degrees of freedom and security is an increasingly salient issue in the contemporary media. The aims of this article are primarily methodological and empirical: to present a novel methodological approach to a comparative textual analysis and demonstrate its use in an analysis of media debates on three security issues (3D body scanner, Stuxnet and CCTV) in ten countries (Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, UK, USA, and Turkey), over the period of forty months between January 2010 and 2013. The results offer important insights into the discourses and the justifications formulated in relation to security and risk in the print media.

Key words: security; threat perception; media; Stuxnet; CCTV; body scanner
Introduction

Changes in society and the lifestyle of its members, including greater spatial mobility, have led to significant change in the general perception and acceptance of risk. Although advanced modern societies are in many respects experiencing an unprecedented existential security compared to the past, they are at the same time, paradoxically, concerned about security risks and safety threats (Beck 1992, 2002; Giddens 1999, Inglehart 1997). Danger and insecurity have always been inherent to human life, especially in the form of natural disasters and the like. Contemporary societies, however, are faced with new types of risk, such as nuclear radiation, global warming, genetic modification of food, financial crises and terrorist attacks (Beck 1992, 2002). In contrast to the old types of risk stemming from the natural world, the new threats are mainly a product of human activity (Beck 1992; Giddens 1999). The repercussions of the new risks are also potentially much more severe than those of earlier risks. They are not temporally, spatially or socially circumscribed, they do not respect the boundaries of nation-states, they generally have a long latency period and the individual culprits behind them are difficult to identify (Beck 2002). The new risks have become one of the central dynamics of contemporary societies and are reshaping the current social order (Beck 1992). In response to the new kinds of security threats faced by postmodern societies, new methods of surveillance have been created (Beck 1992). Despite their usefulness for strengthening security, new methods of surveillance can pose a threat to people’s privacy, dignity and health (Davis and Silver 2004).

Public opinion constitutes an important factor in the public perception of security threats and the acceptance of security measures. Communication about security measures and policies is therefore crucial. The public perception of how intrusive and reasonable security measures are has changed as public knowledge of the relevant risk vectors has evolved. This is particularly so considering that it is through public opinion that security measures can come to be perceived as risk or privacy intrusions (Mackey and Smith 2012). It is therefore necessary to strike a sensitive balance between security and privacy.

Knowledge, together with personality, political orientation and cultural bias, is thus the key factor influencing the perception and acceptance of risks in contemporary society (Beck 1992, 2000, 2002; Wildavsky and Dake 1990; Dake 1991; Flynn, Slovic and Mertz 1994). In general, the population expects the government to maintain order and guarantee of internal
and external security (Keohane 2002). The consumer’s acceptance of various costs (e.g. monetary/non-monetary, visible/invisible, immediate/extended) and the willingness to accept risk is conditional and depends on the type of security issue, the type of security measures, and the degree of justification provided by decision-makers (Mueller and Stewart 2011). The conflict between degrees of freedom and security is an increasingly important issue in the contemporary media. The media may to some extent influence how citizens perceive risk (Sjöberg and Vahlberg 2000) and aid in to the acceptance or rejection of security measures. The media contribute to the public perception of security threats because they frame the communication about security problems by focusing on ‘what will be discussed, how it will be discussed, and above all, how it will not be discussed’ (Altheide 1997, 650). This article aims to fill the gap in the study of security and security risks by presenting a comparison of the coverage of transnational security issues in twenty media outlets in ten countries over a forty-month period between 2010 and 2013.

Our findings show that the media landscape, although fragmented and largely confined to the boundaries of nation-states, is undergoing a transformation as the importance of the international context grows. At the same time, the media are shifting from a focus on security threats to an awareness of the possible trade-offs of security measures in terms of health, privacy, freedom, and civil liberties. Security-related issues, such as surveillance, the right to privacy, and the protection of that right are not clearly defined in static terms. Rather, their perception is influenced by the security context, the mass media, cultural variables, laws, and the specific context of a particular state. Simultaneously, the public is becoming more sensitive not only to threats but also to the costs of security.

**Research design**

*Defining risk perception*

Risk perception is studied in various disciplines: sociological risk assessment analysis, social psychology and political science. While there is a long tradition of sociological approaches to the study of risk perception (an area which developed especially strongly in the 1960s and the 1990s), political science has only recently become more engaged in the study of terrorism. The more contemporary study of risk perception was a rather minor issue in political
psychology and public opinion research until the 9/11 terrorist attacks, after which it became the focus of many studies.

In social science, the operational definition of risk is ‘a perceived risk/threat’, and it is understood as the subjective assessment of the probability of this danger occurring, and how concerned people are about potential consequences (Sjöberg et al. 2004, 8).\footnote{There are two basic types of risk: personal and collective (Huddy et al. 2002; Sjöberg 2005, 2000, 2003). Personal risk involves a personal threat to an individual or a person’s immediate family and is often related to feelings of personal insecurity and fear of physical harm (Huddy et al. 2002). General, national, or collective risk is understood as a threat to a country or to society as a whole, and it need not entail any personal physical risk to an individual. Similarly, the two types also differ in their consequences. The literature on risk has widely studied individual sources of threat perception.}

The following three components of risk perception are important: first, the subjective assessment that individual people make; second, the (un)certainty that is intrinsic to this assessment; and third, a sense that something will have negative outcome (ibid.).

Various consequences of threat perception have been widely documented in the literature. Huddy et al. summarise the observed outcomes of threat perception in general: higher risk perception increases political intolerance, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and prejudices. Threat perception also reduces the cognitive abilities of the individual and leads to closed-mindedness and intolerance to challenging opinions (Huddy et al. 2002, 486). Viscusi and Zeckhauser (2003) analyse how willing people are to sacrifice civil liberties in order to reduce the risk of terrorism in the case of airport checks of passengers. Their analysis supports the opinion that the discussion about liberties and terrorism is not about extreme views, i.e. sacrificing all liberties or none of them in an effort to reduce the risk of terrorism. On the contrary, individual attitudes tend to be rather conciliatory and the result of a series of trade-offs.

**Political communication**

In democratic political systems the media function both as the transmitters of political communication that originates outside the media organisation itself and as the senders of political messages constructed by journalists and other sources such as bloggers. Political actors must use the media in order to have their messages communicated to the desired audiences. Consequently, all political communicators must gain access to the media by some
means, whether legislative, as in the rules of political balance and impartiality, or by an appreciation of the workings of the media sufficient to ensure that a message is reported.

The media of course do not simply report in a neutral and impartial way; media accounts of political events are laden with value judgments, subjectiveness and biases. Political ‘reality’ comprises three categories: first, objective political reality – comprising political events as they actually occur; second, subjective reality – the ‘reality’ of political events as they are perceived by actors and citizens; and third, constructed reality - critical to subjective reality – refers to the events as they are covered by the media.

While arguments about the precise efficacy of the media’s output continue, there is no disagreement about their central role in the political process, relaying and interpreting objective occurrences in the political sphere, and facilitating subjective perceptions of them in the wider public sphere. To this end, media ‘biases’ are of key political importance - the extent and direction of media bias varies in a modern democracy, but the fact that it exists entitles us to view media organisations as important actors in the political process.

In ‘ideal-type’ democratic societies media communication fulfils the following five functions: first, the media inform citizens about what is happening around them (this is the monitoring function of the media); second, the media educate the public on the meaning and significance of ‘facts’ (the importance of this function explains the seriousness with which journalists protect their objectivity, since their value as educators presumes a professional detachment from the issues being analysed); third, the media provide a platform for public political discourse, facilitating the formation of ‘public opinion’, and feeding that opinion back to the public, where it originated, and this must include the provision of space for the expression of dissent, without which the notion of democratic consensus would be meaningless; fourth, the media’s function is to give publicity to governmental and political institutions – the ‘watchdog’ role of journalism; and fifth, the media in democratic societies also serve as a channel for the advocacy of political viewpoints – this function may also be viewed as persuasion (McNair 2011).

For the persuasion to be executed adequately, and thus for the ‘public sphere’ to exist, a number of conditions have to be met. In Habermas’ view, there are four such conditions for
the circulation of political discourse: first, the discourse must be comprehensible to citizens; second, it must be truthful in so far as it reflects the genuine and sincere intentions of speakers; third, the means for transmitting information must be accessible to those who can be influenced by it; and fourth, there must be an institutional guarantee for the public sphere to exist. In short, democracy presumes the existence of an open state in which people are allowed to participate in decision-making and are given access to the media and other information networks through which advocacy occurs (Habermas 1996).

The distinction between ‘persuasion’, which is a universally recognised function of political actors in a democracy, and manipulation, which carries with it the negative connotation of propaganda and deceit, is not always easy to draw. The manipulation of opinion and the concealment (or suppression) of inconvenient information are strategies that issue from political actors themselves and are pursued through media institutions (McNair 2011).

The media offer a good basis for the analysis of communication channels and communication patterns between policy makers, stakeholders, and citizens in the area of security and risk, an area that is currently under-researched.

**Research questions**

The focus of the SECONOMICS project is the definition and perception of risk and security in different settings: airport security and air travel, critical infrastructure, and urban transport. Our research focuses on the role of the media in transmitting information and shaping attitudes to security issues and security measures. This paper focuses on a comparative analysis of the discourses and the justifications of security and risk in domestic and international media in connection with these three cases of critical infrastructure. The identification of effective channels and patterns of communication and risk prevention for specific target groups is a fundamental topic that needs to be explored. The paper is based on the results of a comparative analysis of domestic and international media around the world (Belakova 2013a,b; De Gramatica 2013; Gawrecká 2013; Gawrecká et al. 2014; Hronešová, Guasti, Caulfield 2014; Nitzche 2013; Pereira-Puga 2013; Sojka 2013; Vamberová 2013).

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2 The criticism of the media revolves around the question of manufacturing consent. The legitimacy of liberal democratic government is founded on the consent of the governed, but consent, as Walter Lippmann has observed, can be ‘manufactured’ (1946); it is defined as a ‘self-conscious’ art in which politicians combine the techniques of social psychology with the immense reach of the mass media. Further criticisms of the media include: the limitations of objectivity, the absence of choice and the failure of education.
Three issues were identified as transnationally salient in the current media and relevant for comparative analysis: 3D body scanners, CCTV cameras and Stuxnet. The 3D body scanners and CCTV cameras are highly relevant to the security versus privacy dilemma. The debate over 3D body scanners at airports has highlighted the issues of the costs of security and the potential health risks of security measures as factors that influence the perception and acceptance of a particular security measure. CCTV cameras are an example of a technology whose salience and social acceptance varies across different countries⁵ (Lyon 2002). Stuxnet was selected as an issue because it introduced cyber-terrorism and certain vulnerabilities in critical infrastructure into the public debate (Collins and McCombie 2012). From late 2010 up to the present, this topic has demonstrated its ability to be of significance for both policy makers and the public, generating debate in both general and special-interest media, namely, expert blogs.

CCTV cameras and 3D Body scanners are technologies used to prevent traditional crime and modern terrorism as well as to detect perpetrators. However, another area in the field of security studies, criminology, and counter-terrorism has become salient in the discourse on modern security risks – cyber-crime. Cyber-crime uses information systems and technology to commit extortion, identity theft, espionage, or even to paralyse or destroy critical infrastructure (Collins and McCombie 2012). Though there have been many examples of these viruses in recent years, Stuxnet is not a technology that directly affects the daily life of ordinary people. ‘Stuxnet, the computer worm which disrupted Iranian nuclear enrichment in 2010, is the first instance of a computer network attack known to cause physical damage across international boundaries’ (Lindsay 2013, 365).

In response to the media reports of the attack, many governments called for international coordination on cyber-security strategies, while also trying to secure an advantage in cyberspace (Farwell and Rohozinski 2011, 31). The reason why Stuxnet has shaken public views of cyber-security is that it was unprecedented in its scope and effectiveness. The media labelled Stuxnet ‘the cyber equivalent of the dropping of the atom bomb’ and claimed it heralded ‘a new era of warfare’ (Lindsay 2013, 365) and a ‘revolution in cyber-attacks’ (Collins and McCombie 2012, 80). Stuxnet has also shown that using cyberspace against

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⁵ According to David Lyon (2002), surveillance, as one method of ensuring security, can be placed on a spectrum that ranges between ‘care’ and ‘control’. At one end ‘care’ stands for watching over society for the purpose of its protection. ‘Control’, on the other hand, is about scrutinising people’s behaviour to enforce discipline and order.
enemies involves fewer costs and risks than traditional military means. In response to these developments, the British Government responded with the release of the National Security Strategy (NSS) and the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) in October 2010 and devoted over £650 million to bolster cyber-security (Cornish et al. 2011). However, a clear roadmap, which would structure the best practice and assure transparency in cyber-protection, is still under development.

*Conceptualising and operationalising political discourse*

The key element of the conceptual framework applied in this paper is discourse. Following Chilton, discourse is understood here as a ‘cognitive world constructed by actors’, and as a ‘discursive process’ (Chilton 2004, for more, see Liebert et al. 2008, 12–14), and following Dryzek and Berejikian, discourse is seen as ‘representing a coherent point of view’. Analysing political discourses thus requires de-constructing the analysed texts into components of discourse and re-constructing them into a coherent image (Dryzek and Berejikian 1993). As such, discourses are constructed by actors in a discursive process, but discourse also defines the discursive context of an actor (Diez 1999, 603), and as such it represents a constraint on actors’ agency. Consequently, not only do actors create and shape discourses, they are also structured and defined by discourses (see also Schukkink and Niemann 2012).

In this sense, the comparative media analysis will reveal the explicit and implicit ontological entities of the media debates. For this analysis, it is crucial to identify not only the defining and enabling power of a discourse, but also its power to exclude and dominate actors, categories, and justifications by withholding recognition and endorsement of them (Milliken 1999, 229). In conformity with Diez and his discursive construction of the European political order (1999), the comparative media analysis presented here goes beyond merely capturing and describing media debates on risk and security; it highlights how the perception of security is constructed and shaped by knowledge and the mediation of opinion. “‘Tracking discourse”, of selected news media illustrates how the focus and content of “fear” shifts over a period of time”’ (Altheide 1997, 647).

Following Diez, and like Chilton, we claim that these categories constitute an intersection of individual and collective mental processes and strategic processes, and that as such they are closely related to social behaviour (2004). Therefore, these are “not neutral representations of
an objective world’ (Habermas 1971, 1973, 1979, 1981, quoted in Chilton 2004, 42), and they are not stable but rather dynamic categories that shape and are shaped by actors, whose discursive context they delineate, shape, and transform.

Adopting the empirical method of discourse analysis developed by Guasti (2013; following Liebert 2007; Dryzek and Berejikan 1993; Diez 1999, 2004), we have developed a novel methodological approach to the analysis of security debates, the construction of security and risk perception, and patterns of interaction and communication. Utilising and further developing qualitative methods of textual analysis, we are able to shed light on discursive interactions in the media; to demonstrate how the risk and security threats are framed; and to identify the justifications given for security measures in terms of security, freedom and costs (economics, health, etc.). After we developed a comprehensive analytical framework and elaborate the structure and content of the training for the country experts, we identified the relevant media outlets in each country (the two main good-quality daily newspapers with the highest circulation, one left-leaning and one right-leaning per country) and, most importantly, we recruited junior researchers with experience in social science research and knowledge of the local language and domestic, and we trained them to use both the analytical framework and the technical tool (Atlas.ti program for qualitative analysis).

Data

The articles in the analysis are all drawn from the period between January 2010 and April 2013. Each article was sourced from the two most widely circulated, good-quality daily (i.e. mainstream) newspapers in the following countries: the old and the new EU member states of the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, the UK; non-EU member states either important in shaping the global discussions of the selected issues (the USA) or key in providing relevant cultural diversity (Turkey and Mexico); see table 1.

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4 This form of media analysis was developed and successfully applied to number of issues such as ratification of the EU constitution (Rakusanova 2006; Liebert, Gattig and Evas 2013), Euroscepticism (de Wilde and Trenz 2009: de Wilde; Michailidou and Trenz 2013), EU legitimacy (Guasti 2013), and presidential speeches (Rakusanova 2007). In the SECONOMIC project this methodology was further enhanced and proved an efficient tool for cross-national comparative media analysis.

5 Owing to technical problems it was not possible to perform an in-depth qualitative analysis of the Turkish press, but this only affected the general data.
### Table 1. A list of the media analysed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Mladá fronta Dnes, Právo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Süddeutsche Zeitung, Frankfurter Allgemeine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>The Telegraph and The Guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>La Repubblica, Il Giornale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>La Jordana, La Reforma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Gazeta Wyborcza, Rzeczpospolita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>SME, Pravda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>El Pais, La Vanguardia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>TIME (ZAMAN), SPOKESMAN (SOZCU)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SECONOMICS, ISASCR

More than 2800 articles were selected from twenty national newspapers for the given period. The qualitative sample analysed using Atlas.ti. software, was made up of between 40 and 45 articles per country, which were selected in conformity with the following criteria: representativeness regarding coverage over time, per newspaper and per topic. For each country an individual selection matrix was developed for the supervised selection of articles. In the comparative analysis both the proportion of coverage per topic and the total number of articles per country were considered in order to maintain representativeness and comparability cross-nationally and over time.

Security and risk were conceptualised as social phenomena and their mutual interplay was analysed vis-à-vis public opinion and attitudes. We used media salience,\(^6\) either strong or

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\(^6\) Salience is a term in public opinion, communication, and policy research which originally developed in semiotics and referred to the relative prominence of signs. In communication research salience refers to the accessibility of frames (i.e. narrative structures in which information are presented) in (mass) communication. For the purpose of this study, salience is defined as the public perception and reception of security issues and, more specifically, of security measures; for this purpose salience signifies the degree of acceptance (positive salience) and the degree of rejection (negative salience).
negative, as an indicator of the potential acceptance of security measures. For security measures to be accepted, the predominant direction of media salience should be positive. Depending on its strength and context, negative salience signifies a rejection of a security measure and a failure on the part of that security measure’s proponents to communicate the need for that measure effectively. This tool made it possible to generate a unique corpus of comparative data.

For the analysis, a comparative coding scheme was developed and applied both during the pre-test and during the main coding period. The minimum discursive elements of a coded statement included the following: (1) actors - a determination of which actors were taking part in the communication (both in terms of origin and type) and what the dominant patterns of interaction among them were; (2) topics: a description of the structure of each topic in terms of the individual subjects chosen or focused on was described; (3) argumentative strategies: a description of the ways in which statements were structured (definitive, evaluative and advocative strategies) with a focus on the positive and negative aspects of evaluative and advocative statements; (4) motivations and justifications: an analysis of the main motives (for security measures) (providing an answer to the question of why a certain statement is used and how it is validated) highlighted or refuted by dominant actors, with special attention paid to ideas about security, privacy, and freedom.

**Results and Discussion**

The three topics that we included in the analysis didn’t attract the same level of attention equally across the countries studied; the issue of body scanners was the most salient, followed by CCTV cameras and Stuxnet (Figure 1). More importantly, the US media were most vocal in the 3D body scanner and Stuxnet debates, determining the nature of the discourse for most media in the other countries under study. On the other hand, in the debate surrounding CCTV cameras the US media played only a marginal role. The subject of CCTV cameras drew great attention and fomented much controversy in Poland and Germany. The Polish media were among the strongest supporters of CCTV cameras, while the German media were at the opposite end of the pole and mostly argued against these devices.
The media debates in the countries under study each prioritised a specific aspect of national security – in reaction to both global events (i.e. terrorist attacks) and domestic developments (economic and political). Countries that are generally more active on the international stage or have experience with domestic and international terrorism are generally more exposed to (and hence concerned about) potential terrorist attacks. In those countries (the UK, the US, Spain, and Germany) security measures rank high on the policy agenda, as demonstrated by the prioritisation of body scanners in airport security and intensified CCTV camera use as counter-terrorism measures. In countries where there is no real threat of a terrorist attack from (international/national) extremist groups (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia), there is a weaker policy interest in advanced and costly security devices, such as body scanners at airports, and CCTV cameras are seen positively as a crime prevention measure.

Who communicates with citizens and how

It is not only the experience of terrorism and terrorist threats that determines what attention the media pay to different security measures and tools, it is also the nature of these measures and tools and the extent to which they are applicable to the domestic context. This also influences the composition of actors who communicate with the public through the print media. In the case of CCTV cameras, journalists dominate the debate; they were the most important actors in seven countries. Stuxnet represents a special case among the three selected topics, as it does not directly affect individual security, but national security. It is also a highly complex technical issue. It is therefore primarily experts who participated in the discussion about Stuxnet. In the debate about 3D body scanners, many different actors were involved. The United States is indisputably the most prominent country in the debate about 3D body scanners and the other nine countries in the sample tended rather to react to the US discourse.
in terms of actors, patterns of interaction, topics, and justifications.

Table 2 shows the dominant actors identified in the countries in our analysis, i.e. those actors who communicated with citizens through media. The debate on CCTV cameras is dominated by journalists; they were the most important actor in seven countries. In Italy, statements on the topic came prevailing from politicians, and this is true for all three topics in Italy. The Stuxnet topic is framed mainly by experts; they are the dominate actor in four countries. The debate about 3D body scanners involved the participation of many different actors, so there is no clear dominance of any one type of actor.

The United States is indisputably the most prominent country in the debate about 3D body scanners in terms of the number of different actors that made statements in the press. The discussion there began after the failed terrorist attack on the Detroit-Amsterdam flight in 2009. The most influential actor that made statements on this topic in the US is the Transportation Security Administration, which argued in favour of implementing body scanners. The media in the US devoted considerable space also to experts, who spoke mostly about the health risks of the scanners and evaluated them negatively. The other countries tended rather to react to events happening in the US. In Great Britain and Spain journalists also have a strong voice in the discussion. Italy is the exception to the other countries, as there politicians have the strongest voice in the media debate. Slovakia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Spain, and Mexico did not pay much attention to this issue, judging by the number and quality of articles published, mostly just reprinted US or other foreign articles and reported on the case at hand. Great Britain and Italy can be seen as the supporters of this technology in the EU, while, judging from the articles analysed, and the other countries take a more negative view of it. It is important, though, to discuss this topic at the European level. Regulation of the use of 3D body scanners is now in the hands of the member states. But in order to make better use of this device and consider its weaknesses as well as its strengths, it would be helpful to determine some common criteria for the entire EU.

Stuxnet represents a special case among our three topics. It does not directly affect the public, but it can have unprecedented consequences for their lives. Therefore, it is desirable that people are informed about issues relating to Stuxnet. The topic first emerged in discussion in 2010 following cyber-attacks on an Iranian power plant. Initially the topic was framed almost entirely in a definitive way. The leading actors in the discussion, i.e. those who made the most
statements, were experts and various state officials in Iran and the United States. As time passed, the debate moved from specific events to a more abstract level, with discussions of the possibility of cyber-war and quotations from a wider variety of actors who were not strictly experts. The evaluative strategies used in the articles about Stuxnet were mostly negative, but generally, except for the US, the countries in the analysis played the role of a detached observer, rather than forming any significant opinion of their own about the case. The only exception was Mexico, where some articles included an expression of fears of being similarly targeted in the future, and identification with the victim rather than with the perpetrator of the attack.

Table 2. The most prominent actors in the discussions of CCTV cameras, Stuxnet, and 3D body scanners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>CCTV cameras</th>
<th>Stuxnet</th>
<th>3D body scanners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Journalists</strong></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slovakia</td>
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<td>Czech Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td></td>
<td>Poland</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Great Britain</td>
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<td>Great Britain</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experts</strong></td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State institutions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Politicians</strong></td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private company</strong></td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transport Security Agency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: More than one dominant actors per country possible – it means more actors with the same number of codes.
Source: SECONOMICS, ISASCR
The last topic, CCTV cameras, garnered much attention in the countries analysed and the leading figures in the debates changed completely in comparison to the other two topics. Unlike in the other two cases, the US did not play any important role in this topic. CCTV cameras are apparently not a source of major controversy there. They only attracted more attention after the attack at the Boston Marathon in April 2013, when they helped to identify the culprits. The most prominent countries in the debate about CCTV cameras in our sample were Poland and Germany, though they stood on opposite sides of the debate. While Poland evaluates the use of CCTV camera use positively, viewing it as part of the process of modernising the country, Germany considers the use of CCTV cameras to be negative and a threat to privacy. The main actors who made statements in articles about CCTV cameras, apart from journalists themselves, were various state institutions. In Italy, again, we saw politicians as the main source of the information and opinions about CCTV cameras. In Mexico the most frequent actors were private companies working on the installation of CCTV devices. The debate about CCTV cameras is mostly framed within the domestic context and is relatively distinct in each of the countries analysed. This has to do with cultural differences, the specific security situation in each country, and a country’s past experience with terrorist attacks.

*The most salient topics related to and justifications given for 3D body scanners, CCTV camera systems and the Stuxnet virus*

Differences were observed in the number of justifications of views in favour or against these security measures found in the articles. Articles about Stuxnet typically had a relatively small number of justifications, while articles about CCTV cameras and 3D body scanners included many more justifications (Figure 2).

Newspapers paid the most attention to the first security issue, 3D body scanners. However, this fact should be taken with a grain of salt, as it is the result of the high degree of interest the US showed in this topic, significantly skewing and shaping the debate about scanners around the world. In fact, 3D body scanners were installed by governments in only a few countries, so the topic is not of particular interest to a relatively large number of the studied countries. It is no surprise that 3D body scanners were particularly salient for the countries in which the
scanners had been introduced (the United States, Great Britain, and Germany) and for the countries that had recent experience with terrorist attacks (the United States, Great Britain, and Spain). Issues surrounding body scanners were also more important in the old EU member states and the USA than in the new member states and Mexico. The most sophisticated debate over the 3D body scanners took place in the United States, while less attention was paid to this issue in Mexico and Poland.

**Figure 2. Total number of the most salient justifications for 3D body scanners, CCTV cameras, and Stuxnet in 2010–2013.**

![Graph showing the total number of the most salient justifications for 3D body scanners, CCTV cameras, and Stuxnet in 2010–2013.]

Source: SECONOMICS, ISASCR

In most countries newspapers focused on the trade-offs between security, privacy and health. Much attention was paid to security rules and regulations, the installation of scanners, and to describing scanning procedures. On one hand, the proponents of body scanners argued that scanners are useful for detecting potential attackers and their weapons. They also claimed that the machines were ‘efficient’, though this has been questioned in some respects. On the other hand, newspapers often claimed that the financial and other costs were sometimes too high. Daily newspapers also focused on the negative aspects of the scanners, such as the threat to privacy, dignity, and freedom they posed. Newspapers also reported on how scanners added to passengers’ discomfort and decreased the ‘quality of service’ in travel.

Overall, CCTV cameras were the second most salient security issue in terms of the total media coverage devoted to it. However, it was a more salient issue in more countries than the 3D body scanners and Stuxnet issues were. (This paradox is the result of different countries contributing differing amounts of data. This issue was controlled for by combining the overall analysis with in-depth case studies of the individual countries in the comparative analysis.) The reason for this is that CCTV cameras were a domestic issue, something interesting and
relevant for newspapers readers. No one country dominated and shaped the debate in the European and worldwide contexts the way the United States did in the case of full body scanners and Stuxnet. CCTV cameras were not even a particularly salient topic in the United States.

CCTV cameras received the most attention in Poland, followed by Spain, Great Britain, and the Czech Republic. It is interesting that the new EU member states, such as Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, focused on this issue so much, while they were not particularly interested in 3D body scanners or Stuxnet. The least interest and the shallowest debate surrounding the cameras were observed in Italy and Mexico. The Mexican and Italian press did not show more attention to 3D body scanners either, but their media coverage of Stuxnet was an interesting contribution to the debate about the virus.

When reporting on CCTV cameras, newspapers were generally most interested in the systems' ‘purchase and installation’, ‘security rules and regulations’, and ‘surveillance’. The topic of ‘security rules and regulations’ was often considered a negative aspect and was often spoken of in connection with topics such as endangering privacy. In these cases, newspapers called for better regulation of CCTV cameras. On the other hand, the purchase and installation of cameras was often framed positively by the proponents of cameras as an effective tool for fighting crime. ‘Efficiency’ and ‘crime prevention’ were the most salient justifications for CCTV cameras. Nevertheless, the actual efficiency of the cameras was often questioned, just as it was in the body scanner debate.

An interesting difference appeared between English-speaking countries and Germany on one hand and the remaining states studied on the other. In the US, Great Britain, and Germany, cameras were considered a useful tool in the fight against domestic and international terrorism. In the other countries, CCTV cameras were not primarily used for counter-terrorism, but were instead considered efficient deterrents of vandalism, robbery, and pickpocketing on public transport, and they were often framed as a tool for strengthening the security of road traffic.

The last issue, Stuxnet, garnered the least attention in the newspapers analysed. One reason for this lack of interest could be that, unlike 3D body scanners and CCTV cameras, Stuxnet is
not a technology that directly affects the lives of average people, so information about Stuxnet is not of as much interest to the general population. As with 3D body scanners, the US was the most prominent country in this debate, followed by Germany and Slovakia.

The articles describing Stuxnet were longer, more detailed, and contained more expert opinions than the articles describing the functions of CCTV cameras and 3D body scanners. The prevailing topics were: ‘Attack on Iran’, ‘Iranian uranium enrichment programme’, and ‘Deployment attack using Stuxnet’. The newspapers also speculated on the origin of the virus. Stuxnet was framed in the context of global cyber-security, industrial espionage, and cyber-war. Newspapers wrote about the wider consequences and negative impacts of the Stuxnet attack on geopolitical stability, such as potential counterattacks, and they discussed the legitimacy of cyber-attacks in regards to international law. Mexican newspapers even approached the topic at times from the Iranian perspective.

Regarding the justifications, the proponents of Stuxnet appreciated the complexity and efficiency of the virus and emphasised the matter of security. They considered this virus to be a quick and non-violent weapon, useful for pre-emptive strikes, and something that could prevent the development of weapons of mass destruction. On the other hand, concerns about the uncontrolled spread of the virus and the possibility of counterattacks were raised in 2011 and 2012.

The main factors affecting media coverage

The findings from our qualitative comparative analysis of the media perception of terrorism threats and security measures suggest that the way the media portray different security risks depends on several factors. Past experience with a particular security threat and the probability of the country being targeted in the future are the main factors that account for the differences in the extent of coverage dedicated to a security issue in the domestic media.

The way the public comes to understand a topic is a balance between their perception of risk and their perception of the pros and cons of a given technological measure, be it 3D body scanners, CCTV cameras, Stuxnet, or something else. Technologies viewed as intrusive receive more negative coverage, even if the risks they are designed to mitigate are high. This is particularly true of 3D body scanners. In these cases, alternative, less intrusive
technological measures are deemed preferable by the media and, by implication, the public. Here, potential terrorist threats do not outweigh the imminent health risks and threats to privacy. But if these measures are forced onto an unwilling public, they may come to be seen not as a solution, but as yet another threat, and viewed negatively in the media and by the public.

We found a two-step pattern in the political communication analysed. The first step is the presentation of terrorist threats in general, and the second is the need for security measures, especially 3D body scanners and CCTV cameras. Stuxnet does not strictly fit into this framework, as it is in part presented as a security measure against the Iranian nuclear threat, but it is also framed as a cyber-terrorist threat itself, especially after it apparently mutated and attacked companies in the US and Western Europe. Nevertheless, Stuxnet remained an external, international issue, of little relevance to the average citizen, especially in states where a terrorist attack is unlikely, such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and, to a lesser extent, Poland. But within this two-step pattern, coverage is dominated by the actions and opinions of different foreign states, state institutions, and politicians, as they debate the merits of introducing various security measures and the related regulations necessary to safeguard citizens' privacy and health. In these debates, health, privacy, and dignity concerns prevail over security risks (the probability of which is seen as low). In countries where the media are more analytical (Germany, the UK), the media also discussed other trade-offs, such as costs vs. effectiveness and privacy/freedom vs. security.

As regards the volume of coverage, the Stuxnet attacks were in the middle. The issue was presented as international or technological news. In most countries, with the exception of Mexico, the articles were mostly informative in nature. As a general rule, the coverage followed international developments and the information reported by newspapers abroad (mainly those in the US and the UK). The overall Stuxnet debate focused on three types of security risk. The first risk was the extensive scope of Iran’s nuclear programme; this may indicate that the media gave credence to the possibility of Iran developing a nuclear weapon and threatening the western world with it. The second risk was the deployment of new technologies in state cyber-warfare. The third risk, often indirectly suggested, was the potential risk of a nuclear or other environmental catastrophe.
The use of CCTV cameras was the most salient topic in those countries where the probability of terrorist attacks is perceived as low. The coverage was framed mainly in terms of the actions and opinions of municipalities, journalists, schools, and citizens in relation to the use and installation of CCTV camera systems. The evaluation of the merits of CCTV cameras and the acceptance of their introduction depended primarily on the domain that was being monitored and did not change much over time.

The second trend, observed especially in Italy, tended to be present in countries where the security threat is perceived as imminent and the media debate is dominated by politicians. In this trend an excessive emphasis is placed on the urgent need for solutions, the aim being to limit the possibility of any lengthy reflection or discussion the urgent need for solutions is overemphasised in order to avoid time for reflection. Political actors often emotional appeals to citizens’ inherent fears, such as can be witnessed in the case of the Lega Nord party in Italy, are motivated by the political saliency of the issues and the possible electoral gains they can bring. Unlike the first trend, where terrorism is something external and there is no immediate threat to the citizens of the country, in the second trend the world is portrayed as full of global risks, to which only modern technology, presented as an efficient solution, can provide the answer. In this over-simplified portrayal of reality, facts are less important than emotional appeals, and the surrender of privacy and intimacy in exchange for security is considered a necessity.

The coverage of Stuxnet in Mexico corresponds to the second trend, as, unlike any other country in the sample, the Mexican media clearly side with Iran, denounce the attackers (identified as the US), and highlight Iran’s right to sovereignty. In an interesting twist, and one that can be explained by the complexity of US-Mexican relations, Mexico sees itself as a possible target of similar attacks in the future.

Another good example is the coverage of the CCTV cameras in Poland, where we can observe an emerging debate on the need for comprehensive legislation to regulate the use of public and private monitoring systems. However, the debate is not framed in terms of public transportation security, but rather in terms of the use of CCTV systems to monitor public and private spaces for the sake of security, and is understood as a measure aimed at the prevention, detection, and solution of crime. Here, in some cases the acceptance of security
measures, especially given their complexity, is linked, according to the country studies, to post-authoritarian path-dependent trends (Poland, Spain, and Italy). However, the very opposite trend is observed in Germany, where the past experience with a totalitarian regime makes the country even more sensitive to the trade-offs between security and privacy, human dignity and freedom.

Conclusions

The safety and happiness of society are the objects at which all political institutions aim, and to which all such institutions must be sacrificed

James Madison

From an examination of the role of the media in political communication, our research confirms that on transnationally salient security issues the media fulfil two roles – that of information transmitter and public opinion maker (cf. McNair 2011). Our Case studies include took cyber-terrorism as an example of risk and 3D scanners and CCTV cameras as an example of security measures, although, as mentioned above, some media outlets framed Stuxnet as a security measure. The main factors shaping how the media report on terrorism threats and security measures are past experience with a particular security threat and the probability of the country being targeted in the future (cf. Beck 2000, 2002). These factors account for the main differences in the extent of coverage dedicated to the issue in the different domestic media.

The comparative media analysis presented here fills a gap in the study of security and security risks by presenting a comparison of the coverage of transnational security issues in the media outlets of ten countries. We found that the media landscape, although fragmented and largely confined within the boundaries of nation-states, is undergoing a transformation as the importance of the international context grows (cf. Habermas 1996). The British and German media demonstrated signs of this shift away from a focus on security threats towards an awareness of the possible trade-offs between security measures and health, privacy, and freedom. Terrorism and organised crime are increasingly framed as transactional and beyond the scope of nation-states to control. The public is becoming more sensitive not only to threats, but also to the costs of security.

In the quote at the opening of this section, James Madison stresses two features important to modern democracy – security and satisfaction. In recent months, however, it has become more
evident than ever before that these concepts are closely connected. The publication of information about wide-reaching surveillance in many Western countries, the reaction of the public to the information, the reaction of governments and the actions taken by these governments to severely prosecute whistle-blowers for ‘threatening national security’, all demonstrate that more security need not make for a happier society. The main reason is that happiness is not just connected to the absence of fear and a feeling of safety, it is also connected to the absence of far-reaching security measures that infringe on privacy and to a feeling of freedom. In addition to shedding light on the tension that exists between security and freedom, and the costs of security in terms of privacy, the recent whistle-blower cases (Manning, Snowden) have also highlighted the role of the media as outlets for whistle-blowers and as watchdogs of freedom, privacy, and civil liberties.

The dilemma of our times, for governments, for the media, and for individual citizens, is thus the question of how much safety we want and at what price. The answers to this question differ sharply according to the political orientation of the speaker. However, since Thomas Hobbes’s Leviathan, it has been evident that safety and security, two essential features of the social contract, have their price; that freedom, both personal and that of a society, is a defining feature of legitimate government; and that governments are seen as legitimate if they are able to resolve the tension between safety and freedom to the general satisfaction of the people. In this dilemma, the media play a critical role as an arena in which information is made available to the public, multiple claims and justifications are presented and discussed, and essentially opinions are formed.

To conclude by addressing the dilemma between safety and happiness, raised by James Madison, from our research we can say that not everything that makes us safe makes us happy, and not everything that makes us happy makes us safe. Therefore, while the balance of security and freedom is the crucial task of contemporary governments, the role of critical media as a platform for public political discourse and as a guardian of freedoms is gaining considerable importance.

**Acknowledgement**

This article presents the results of an international project founded by the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement n° 285223 –
SECONOMICS (Socio-Economics meets Security), www.seconomicsproject.eu. The goal of the project is to synthesise sociological, economic and security science into a usable, concrete, actionable knowledge for policy makers and social planners responsible for the security of citizens. The project is driven by industry case studies and aims to identify security threats in transport (air, urban and super urban metro) and critical infrastructure. The results of the project, which are presented in this paper, identify how the security threats in critical infrastructures are presented in the media and study the dilemma between security and the economy and security and privacy in three case studies – air traffic, the national power grid, and public transportation.

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