

**Balancing democracy and
security:
Biometric Identification in the EU**

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Guiding questions

- Why was **biometric** identification introduced in the EU, and what are the impacts ?
- What are the relations between **security and democracy**, and what is the role of **expertise** in this ?

Some puzzles and paradoxes

- More security measures, and more insecurity at the same time ?
- Can democracy work under the primacy of security, or vice-versa ?
- Debate without knowing, knowing without debating, or 'intelligence of democracy' ?
- Two faces of surveillance: to grant rights, to exercise (un-)due control

Why Biometrics ?

- First application in the EU: EURODAC - asylum seekers



- Border control
- New EU competences
- Target: Third Country Nationals

- Now: biometrics in visa and EU passports



- 9/11, USA policy (e.g. visa waiver programme)
- Strengthening of security policies within the EU
- Target: Third Country Nationals and EU citizens
- Strong role of executives, plus industry and int.org.
- And also EP, data protection authorities, advocacy organisations, experts in diverse fields

The Balance Metaphor

- Biometrics as:
 - 'Big Brother'*
 - Mild price for security*
 - Benefit for global economy*
- Article II-66 Constitutional Treaty: *Everyone has the right to liberty and security of the person*



A counter-intuitive finding

Biometrics as good candidate for technocratic decision making ...

...is instead characterised by (limited) **pluralism** through which *fallibility of technology, impacts on rights, costs, oversight*, etc. are highlighted and the question of 'balance' is considered...

Conclusions

- We are already living in a **surveillance society**, biometric adds to this ...
- **Who controls the controllers ?**
- Blurring of **internal and external security** makes things even more complex
- **Public and private sector's accountability** – different types
- **'Soft' security** measures with **'hard' impacts** on liberties, oversight, ...

The challenges ahead

- **Mass screening** as support to, or surrogate for, targeted policies –and its risks
- **Rule of law vs/and exceptionalism** (exception within law, or to law)
- **Multilevel, democratic governance**: beyond “intergovernmentalism”, ex ante and ex post accountability, public debate
- **Democratise expertise**: quality insurance through wider confrontation of different types/sources of knowledge

Further reading ?

- *Working paper written during fellowship, published at:*

http://www.iue.it/RSCAS/WP-Texts/05_30.pdf