US CITIZEN CORPS

Christos Boukalas

US CITIZEN CORPS:
PASTORAL CITIZENSHIP AND AUTHORITARIAN STATISM

In the considerable body of work produced about the US War on Terrorism, there is almost complete silence regarding the ways in which counterterrorism policy engages the citizenry.[1] The present article aims to open this discussion by focusing on Citizen Corps: a citizens' enlistment project, aiming to channel volunteers' work into the national security endeavour. Despite the rareness of such schemes in liberal democracies, the Citizen Corps remains ignored by both sociology and political science.

Here, I see the Corps as an attempt to construe an individual conditioned to the exigencies of the politics of security in its neoliberal form. My examination draws from contemporary North American citizenship theory, which highlights a shift away from democratic citizenship models, towards authoritarian ones based on the postulate of an anxious/neurotic subject.

As the kind of citizen provides indications regarding the kind of state, my study of Corps deciphers some (partial and inconclusive) indications regarding the present state-form of the US. 'State-form' refers to the structure of the state; the modalities of the exercise of power; and—most relevant for this study—the articulation between the state and society, including questions of legitimacy and their limits vis-à-vis each other. Operating at the grass-roots level, Corps are seen as advanced symptoms of the state form. Along these lines, my essay concludes that the Corps indicate a relapse of '*authoritarian statism,*' the state-form that Poulantzas identified as evolving in the mid-1970s to confront the crisis of the Keynesian/welfare arrangements, a state-form characterised by extended incorporation of authoritarian elements in the institutional framework of liberal democracy.

I will begin by examining the structure and rationale of Citizen Corps and then showing more specifically the same regarding its most developed programme (CERT). The findings of this investigation are incorporated to

---

[1] Conservative communitarians are a rare strand of academics showing some interest in the issue (e.g. Etzioni 2002)

theories of contemporary citizenship, which opens to the question of the state-form. The present US state-form is identified as a configuration of authoritarian statism, with Corps being both symptomatic and reproductive of it.

CITIZEN CORPS: LONELINESS, META-GOVERNANCE, PATRIOTISM

(a) Structure and Organisation

Citizen Corps is a nationwide umbrella organisation for volunteers in the area of 'homeland security:' emergency response, police, and medical assistance. It is federally initiated, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) assumes its overall direction. It is operated by local boards and agencies, in an effort to organise grassroots volunteers. Hence, the first issue with Corps is locating its organisational and directive anchor points. Is it a grassroots movement that builds upwards compelling subsequent levels of government to incorporate it, or the other way round?

Local and federal texts remind us that Citizen Corps came to light by the President's call to duty (it has no congressional authorisation). In his 2002 State of the Union address, G.W. Bush announced their creation as a platform enhancing a post-9/11 culture of citizenship, service and responsibility for the American people. As 'Americans are responding to the evil and horror of the terrorist attacks of September 11 with a renewed commitment to doing good,' he called all citizens to dedicate at least two years in voluntary service —the latter framed as an integral part of the American 'National Culture.' He also set an organisational principle: 'Our local mayors, council members and county commissioners know best what risks their communities face. They also know how best to use the talents and the time of their citizens […]' (FEMA, 2002:2; Congress 2007:38). So, the foundation and raw material of Corps is the willingness of citizens to volunteer as inherent in the national culture and activated by the catastrophe; and the most adequate manner to channel this popular urge is through local officials. Similarly, DHS stresses that Citizen Corps uses the resources and expertise of each community to mobilise everyone in securing it. While its 'mission' is the same everywhere, mobilisation attempts will be community-specific, given the particularities of each community. Thus, Corps looks like a federally-conceived, locally-managed, citizen-practiced project, with the local level being neuralgic.

The DHS recommends some general 'strategies for success:' maintenance of 'broad community representation' in the local Citizen Corps Councils (CCC);

development of 'knowledge of the community' and its 'security needs;' the filing of volunteers according to their skills; and liability arrangements, so that authorities can wave responsibility for volunteers' accidents.[2] Furthermore, Corps is organised on a 'self-sufficiency' basis: local CCCs are called to incorporate pre-existing preparedness/response volunteer groups in the Corps organisation, and to plan their finances without relying much on federal aid (DHS 2002). Finally, DHS has especially appointed staff that works with senators, governors, mayors and representatives to propagate the project, and has established channels for popular outreach in order to create a nation-wide, locally based 'movement' to raise public awareness, provide preparedness training and foster volunteer opportunities (Congress, 2003:34-35,70).

At the local level, the managing unit is the Citizen Corps Council. It comprises community 'leaders' in relevant sectors, bringing thus all 'decision makers' together to direct the volunteers. According to DHS guidance, the CCC should consist of: (a) elected local leadership: mayor, council members, commissioners; (b) emergency management leadership: police, fire, medical; (c) leaders of community and faith groups; (d) leadership from major industries and educational institutions; (e) minority representatives; (f) local media executives.

The overall purpose of the CCC is to tailor the national mission to the particularities of the local community, and to develop a local strategy to promote participation (DHS 2002a). Duties include: match the needs of first responders with the skills of volunteers; teach citizens what to do in a crisis; promote Corps' activities in the community and assess the level of awareness and participation; report innovative practices so that they can be replicated by other communities. Finally, DHS also provides a list of 'ideas for discussion' for the initial meetings of CCCs; and ideas on what to plan as Corps activities, and how (FEMA 2002: 5-9, 12-14).

Already at the local level the presence of the federal government is determining: it defines the CCCs as the directing boards for the local groups and prescribes who should be included in the Corps' direction and their proper functions. In the CCCs' composition we witness the management of volunteers is undertaken by a convergence of elected government, coercive apparatus, ideological mechanism, business, and 'third sector' elements.

---

[2] Agency-to-volunteer liability is so reduced, it is practically non-existent; the agency remains nonetheless liable to third parties for damage or injury caused by volunteers (see: FEMA 2009).

At the state level, all Governors have appointed a Citizen Corps State Coordinator accompanied by a State Council, charged with identifying needs, developing state-wide strategies for increased first responder-volunteer collaboration, and developing marketing strategies, all in close collaboration with the federal level (FEMA 2002:5-6,19).

The project is overseen at federal level by the National Citizen Corps Council, which is chaired by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Deputy Director and includes federal first responders' leadership, emergency management agencies, volunteer organisations and private sector representatives. The National Council's role is to promote the project nationwide; oversee its progress; develop training standards and materials for Corps' activities; and organise mentoring and idea-sharing. The National Council is not a governing body, nor is it to set a national policy: its purpose is to 'foster collaboration' (FEMA 2002:19; DHS 2002b; Congress 2007: 6).

Regarding Corps' management, information provided by a few Councils[3] shows that CCCs are usually appointed by the County Executive, and count about 25 members. Of them the majority is local officials: elected political and judiciary personnel (which among them assume the Councils' leadership), security experts and heads of emergency agencies (fire and police). The 'non-governmental' compartment consists of business and church representatives, while representatives of schools, universities, media, and 'minority communities' often complete the set.

The most striking feature of the directing bodies is that, at every governmental level, and both in federal prescriptions and practiced reality, there is *no representation at all* of the volunteers. This suffices to shred any illusion of Corps as a 'grass-roots' endeavour. The question is whether local or federal government predominate in their organisation.[4]

The DHS describes Corps' structure as an inverted pyramid. Local councils are situated at the top and are in charge of the creation, organisation and management of local volunteer groups, in accordance to community needs and capacities. An intermediate (state) level provides a platform for regional collaboration. And the National Council is the general point of reference and

---

[3] New York City; Fairfax, Virginia; Harris, Texas

[4] For a contrasting account of democratic, grass-roots groups (aimed to co-opt them to boost federal initiatives' legitimacy) see: Leighninger 2002.

facilitator of the project. A more careful reading reveals that the hierarchical pyramid is not inverted at all, but stands firmly on its basis. Local groups are 'autonomous,' inasmuch they are constructed in a certain manner, consist of certain agents, perform certain functions, and perform them in certain ways to meet certain ends. The CCCs are not in charge, but charged with implementing a federal project at local level. Their degree of autonomy consists in devising efficient ways of implementing the project to actual communities. Similarly, agents, strategies, ends and functions are federally prescribed to the state-level. And the National Council, composed by heads of federal agencies and whomever else they chose[5] but *not* state/local entities, oversees, develops standards, and coordinates the overall effort at the top. That the National Council has no direct authority upon the lesser ones does not change the hierarchical structure of the project. With DHS determining its purpose; the players involved and the role of each; and the project's structure, overlaying a line of command else is redundant. Organisationally, Corps is a metagovernance project.

This diagnosis, apart from the important implication of crooked lines of hierarchy that cannot be retraced as lines of accountability, does not explain much. Bob Jessop (2002:240-243) describes metagovernance as a broad organisational strategy, a context permitting wide internal differentiation, and notes that 'metagovernance should not be confused with some superordinate level of government in control of all governance arrangements nor with the imposition of a single all purpose mode of governance' (Jessop 2002: 242). This sits uncomfortably with the specifics of Corps, whose strategy and organisation derive directly from such a 'superordinate' level. Examination of the metagovernance fauna shows that Corps Councils of all levels belong to the 'quango' (quasi autonomous non-governmental organisation) family of entities that are nominally non-governmental, but are created by governmental agencies, and utterly depended on them (Holland and Fallon, 1978:7). Their personnel are appointed by governing politicians, on the basis of its expertise or its coincidence with governmental agendas, and their boards are often dominated by private sector interests (Sullivan and Skeltcher 2002:18, 60; Skeltcher 1998). The quango structure transfers responsibility for the management of public programmes away from elected political personnel to bureaucratic boards, and is especially attractive to government

[5] The appointment of capital's representatives secures funds, and brings private interests to govern citizen groups. The other 'civil society' partner in councils of all levels, nebulously referred to as the 'volunteer community,' consists of 18 (N)GOs: American Legion, Red Cross, Civil Air Patrol, Office of Safe and Drug-free Schools, National Crime Protection Council, Veterans of Foreign Wars, etc (Congress 2003:71-72; DHS 2002c).

because it depoliticises and 'managerialises' public sector activity, resulting to dismissal of transparency and accountability in governmental workings (Sullivan and Skeltcher 2002:18,137-138). As quangos, the Corps' Councils, while remaining in the metagovernance realm, are pertinent to its most statist variety. Like most quangos, Corps were introduced. This permits them to evade congressional review authority and public service regulations—hence exempting volunteers from insurance claims—and control from formal local government is also bypassed, permitting the public-private Councils a free hand with volunteers' governance.

Finally, the project is cheap.[6] Corps runs on gratis labour, and cost effectiveness is inbuilt in its rationale. The mobilisation of volunteers for a couple of days is said to save every locality in wages more than its annual Corps budget—a 'phenomenal return on investment' (Congress 2007: 23, 38). Its cheapness can be understood as an economically successful application of metagovernance,or may signal low prioritisation of popular participation in 'homeland security' by the federal government.

By late 2009 all States, and over two-thirds of US Counties (2409 of 3141) had developed Citizen Corps Councils, serving almost 80% of the country's population—but it appears that not all of them were active (Congress 2009: 21). While information about the number of councils is abundant, there is no mention of the number of actual volunteers and 'alumni;' and FEMA officials admit having no idea about the social and demographic composition of the volunteers (Congress 2008: 40)

(b) Programmes and Rationale

Citizen Corps consists of five programmes, administered by three federal Departments, DHS, Justice, and Health.

1. The *Community Emergency Response Team* programme (CERT) trains volunteers to respond to emergency situations. In an emergency, CERT members would give critical support to first responders, provide immediate assistance to victims, and organise

---

[6] Corps were allocated (in millions) in: 2003: $45; 2004: $35m; 2006: $50m; 2007: $14m; 2008: $15; 2009: $15; 2010: $13; 2011: $13; 2012: $13. (Source: US Budget -Department of Homeland Security for each year; found at: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys). The total of yearly State funding approximately doubles Corps' budget (Congress 2007:11)

spontaneous volunteers on the spot. In non-emergency situations, they would help in efforts to improve the safety and preparedness of their community. CERT volunteers receive relevant training by teams of first responders. CERT programmes nationwide are estimated at 3,300. The programme is administered by FEMA.

2. Fire Corps utilises volunteers to enhance the capabilities of an overstretched fire and rescue force. There are an estimated 700 programmes nationwide. It is implemented by the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Fire Fighters, and the National Volunteer Fire Council.

3. The *Neighbourhood Watch* (or *USA* on *Watch*) programme is ongoing for three decades. In collaboration with local police, residents look out for and report suspicious activity in their neighbourhood. Post-9/11, its focus shifted to include disaster preparedness and terrorism awareness issues. There are about 15,000 Watch groups countrywide. It is administered by the National Sheriff's Association.

4. The *Volunteers in Police Service* (VIPS) programme comprises efforts of local police departments to utilise volunteers. This motion accelerated since 9/11, as demands on state and local law enforcement increased dramatically, causing serious overstretching. There are approximately 1,600 programmes nationwide. VIPS is implemented by the International Association of Chiefs of Police

5. The *Medical Reserve Corps* (MRC) programme enlists professional medical personnel and untrained citizens who wish to perform supporting functions. There are approximately 650 nationwide. It is administered by the Department of Health (FEMA 2002: 6-7, 15-16; DHS 2002c; Congress 2007:10, 22-23, 29; 2009: 21).

Of these programmes, only two (CERT and MRC) have a clear role specific to an emergency. Neighbourhood Watch is a policing initiative; and VIPS and Fire Corps are meant to boost the numbers of a severely understaffed police and fire service. They operate independently from any emergency, while the other two also have a strong 'peacetime' component. Interestingly, FEMA admits inability to assess the performance and effectiveness of Corps. This is due to lack of accurate information from the local level, which is

mainly numerical (numbers of programmes, councils, etc) and not always accurate. But it also seems that FEMA does not know what to measure: a lack of strategic direction results to lack of specific orientation and target-setting (Congress 2009: 20-24).

Presenting the ways in which Corps 'benefit the community,' the DHS stresses that volunteerism enhances caring for oneself and others in a time of crisis; it promotes the concept that everyone has a role to play in making the community safer, stronger and better prepared; and gives residents a greater sense of security, responsibility and personal control. Hence, Citizen Corps will help to build a community's 'sense of cohesion, pride and patriotism' (FEMA 2002: 8, 11; Waugh 2003:384).

This showcases Corps' ideological premises. Under the presence of an imminent threat, state and population mobilise in unison, albeit in a 'mission' defined and organised exclusively by the former. Furthermore, against the background of fear and neurosis propagated by the state, volunteering appears as a half-measure to give the individual some of the sense of security and control that was taken away in the first place. In this context, popular mobilisation is only acknowledged when it occurs in a canvassed framework and according to prescription, while 'communal spirit' is strictly identified with patriotism. According to DHS, the post-9/11 environment provides an opportunity 'to reinvigorate our national identity' on the basis of a 'culture of service, citizenship and responsibility.' The opportunity lies in grasping the 'innumerable acts of kindness taking place in our communities everyday' to make them part of this 'profound cultural change' (FEMA 2002:20; Bush 2002). Corps is perceived as a way to exploit practices of solidarity and reframe them into a project whose structure, objectives, methods, and meanings are defined by the state.

Again, the local level reproduces the federal directives, sometimes in richer variety. To motivate citizens, the LA County CCC presents Corps' benefits for the volunteer: 'you have the opportunity to support an organisation and a cause you believe in;' to 'learn new skills and broaden your range of experience;' to 'meet new people;' and to 'strengthen your employment resume.' Thus, in Corps the authorities provide a platform in which citizens can somehow pursue crucial aspects of personal and social life: Meaning ('a cause you believe in'); self-fulfilment ('skills,' 'range of experience'); socialisation ('meet new people'); career and social survival ('employment resume').

This form of addressing occurs against the backdrop of frozen interpersonal relations and a disintegrating social tissue. Robert Putnam assesses a deep, overarching trend of de-socialisation, emerging in the US in the early 1980s and accelerating ever since. There is rapid decrease of popular participation in formal politics (voting, party membership) and in civic organisations, and practices of informal socialisation are also in radical decline. All forms of 'going out' are reduced almost by half, and so has the exchange of visits and the activities undertaken in common with neighbours (Putnam 2000: 31-62, 105-115). While Putnam acknowledges the dwindling amount of income and free time resulting from longer working hours and work-related anxiety as contributing to de-socialisation (ibid:189-190), critics insist this development, resulting from a strategic attack by capital, is the key factor. Therefore, Putnam's thesis is seen as a politically obfuscating, conservative-communitarian reaction: all interactions considered were thoroughly conformist (Boggs 2001). This provides an important insight to Corps: they provide a platform for social interaction and meaningful activity that promises to counter loneliness and tackle personal anxiety, i.e. they are defined in relation to anxieties mostly pertinent to conformist layers of the middle class. In short, Corps attempt to compensate a socialisation deficit by constructing a 'community' under the aegis of the state, and with a look to galvanise its support among adequately disposed parts of the population.

Following this discussion of the Corps' overall organisation, I turn to examine the groups at ground level and investigate volunteer groups participating in CERT, the par excellence 'emergency preparedness' scheme among the four Corps programmes.

CERT: HOMELAND SECURITY WORKFORCE

(a) Structure and Organisation

FEMA provides step-by-step guidance to local CERT Coordinators, detailing techniques for approaching, and securing and maintaining the involvement in the programme of various players identified as 'key shareholders:' local big business; media; fire, police and medical service agencies; and chief governmental officials (FEMA 2003:52-57). It also presents techniques to communicate with volunteers (bulletins, websites, surveys for periodical evaluation of the programme, newsletters); explains the merits of each, and even provides stylistic guidance—the issue is considered important because 'volunteers are priceless assets' (FEMA 2003:108-118). Finally, FEMA presents

the training curriculum (FEMA 2003:50), and instructs on how to choose the trainers (FEMA 2003:86-92). Apart from the thorough instruction of the local link by the federal agency, a full conscription to marketing concepts and discourse is apparent. The CERT Coordinator is a dealer, charged with selling the product to the locals.

The Los Angeles City CERT website (maintained by volunteers and by far the most complete of its kind), provides a unique insight on the programme's (pre)history. It begun in 1986, when the LA Fire Department trained selected Neighbourhood Watch 'leaders.' The first CERT teams where developed a year later, and in 1993 FEMA assumed the programme's nationwide organisation. In January 2002, CERT was incorporated to Citizen Corps and rapidly grew: from 100 programmes in 2002; to 900 in January 2004; to over 2700 by August 2007; and to 3,300 by mid-2009 (DHS 2004; DHS u/d; Congress 2009: 21). Yet, CERT history somehow starts in 1985 in Mexico City, when an earthquake demolished a large part of it. On the event, large groups of untrained volunteers organised themselves spontaneously and, in operations that lasted fifteen days, rescued more than 800 people and lost 100 of their numbers. Capitalising on that experience and on the knowledge that in almost all emergencies bystanders are first to provide assistance and operate rescues (Congress 2007: 7), the LAFD formed the first CERT teams with the purpose to make volunteer groups safer and more effective.

Replicating Fire Department terminology, LA CERT territories are called 'battalions.' Each battalion has a member appointed by LAFD to be its 'call-out contact.' Accordingly, 'CERT members will not self-dispatch to any incident,' for only the teams requested by the LAFD may respond. The CERT call-out process is as follows: 1. The LAFD calls the battalion's call-out contact; 2. S/he fills in the CERT Call-Out Assignment form; 3. The Contact calls the battalion members, repeating to each the information about the incident and recording their availability on the battalion's Call-Out List; 4. If the Contact cannot summon the number of volunteers requested by LAFD, s/he calls members of nearby battalions, until the number is met; 5. The Contact calls the CERT Battalion Coordinator and an assigned LAFD person to inform them of the incident call-out. After the incident, the Contact will fax to LAFD both the completed Call-Out Assignment and the Call-Out List, complete with call results. All CERT members involved should 'use their CERT forms at the incident' and fax them completed within 48 hours after the call-out ends.

This process is obviously designed to the convenience of the Fire Department: with a single phone-call the LAFD activates all needed teams. It is hard to

determine whether it is primarily focused on mobilising available forces or monitoring every volunteer. Furthermore, if not commanded to act, citizens who underwent training out of willingness to aid others are forced into inertia.

Once the teams arrive at the incident, they conduct themselves according to the CERT Incident Command System (ICS), a code providing a clear basic structure of command, permitting for increased complexity when necessary. At the top of the hierarchy is the Fire Department's Incident Commander (IC); he assigns each CERT team an area and a task. Each team has a Group Leader who watches the others work. S/he is instructed to: 'oversee and manage your resources. Do not get involved.' The Leader perpetually assesses the situation on the ground and reports it to the IC via a team member ('runner') assigned to messenger duty. If the deployment is big, the intermediate degrees of Division and Group Supervisors appear. All these 'chiefs' are instructed (apart from not getting involved with manual labour) to maintain documentation, which they submit to the IC at the end of the event (FEMA u/d).

Thus, CERT teams are structured as perfect pyramids of hierarchy, reproducing those of the fire service: the 'culture of service and responsibility' is proving to be a cult of hierarchy and discipline.

(b) Activity and Rationale

Regarding the CERT training schedule, common to all local programmes that offer such information[7] are the five modules prescribed by FEMA: (a) *Disaster Preparedness*: volunteers receive training on how to prepare oneself and the community for a variety of hazards; (b) *Team Organisation and Disaster Psychology*: how to organise spontaneous volunteers and manage people's stress in an emergency; (c) *Medical Operations*: basic first aid; (d) *Fire Suppression*: how to extinguish small fires; (e) *Light Search and Rescue*: locating and retrieving people trapped in debris; and, a post-9/11 addition to the syllabus, (f) *Terrorism Awareness*: FBI agents teach the definition of terrorism, terrorist goals, weapons used, indicators of an attack, and actions to be taken in a terrorist incident. The training concludes with a general simulation exercise. Finally, some localities develop 'Continuing Education' courses, offering periodic 'refreshers' and advanced modules.[8]

---

[7] Los Ángeles; Miami-Dade; Harris, Texas; Orange, Florida
[8] Miami; LA.

The LA CERT website provides a synopsis of the local teams' activities since 1999, divided in biannual sections -and hence a possibility to see the CERT project in some diachronic perspective, especially in pre/post-9/11 terms.

In the 1999-2000 period there had been ten CERT events. All of them were either drills and 'refreshers,' or conferences and fairs. Apparently, the members' number was remarkably low (one drill was effectuated by three people), while the public demonstrated perfect indifference.

In 2001-2002, while there was no increase in CERT activity, it was vested in patriotic spirit and gained in importance. Fairs enjoyed large turnout, and were attended by representatives of local and federal agencies and security-related firms.

In the 2003-2004 period activities multiplied. While most of them were exercises, the teams also participated in five 'real-life' incidents: two Election Days, two Marathons and the West Hollywood Christmas Parade. In the three latter events the teams' task was to help people in the crowd and be ready to provide first-aid if needed. On the 20th of May 2003 Election they were dispatched in depots to count the ballot bags. And on the 2nd of November 2004 election they looked after the fire stations and helped fire trucks enter and exit. Finally, there was one genuine emergency in which CERT participated. On 29 October 2003 one battalion was deployed on a fire incident, helped the traffic evacuating the area, and distributed oxygen masks.

The previous period settled the agenda of CERT activities. In 2005-2006 CERT events were exercises and marathons, while 2007-2008 sees them employed at peripheral tasks during wildfires (assessing damage, looking for missing pets). In 2009-2010, CERT activity seems to be picking, again comprising of several exercises (including a state wide one), the monitoring the Hollywood Santa Parade, helping with patient data entry for the marathon, promoting anti-flu vaccination, etc. This period sees the inauguration, by the California Governor, of 'Disaster Corps,' an elite unit of CERT veteran 'professional' volunteers, followed by a high intensity exercise. Then, CERT activity seems to stop abruptly: the only activities in 2011 were a 'refresher' and some babysitting of the Fire department. Whether this is a temporary blip, or the end of the LA CERT glory days is too early to tell.

This account makes apparent that the volunteers have become an unpaid, jack-of-all-trades subunit of the Fire Department, performing any task it

assigns them to.[9] They are also bereft of insurance for accidents they may suffer in training or in deployment. In a document adjunct to the volunteer application form, the applicant releases the County (its agencies, offices, etc) from any liability for discomfort, trauma, injury or death occurring to her while 'on service,' and testifies that any medical treatment costs will be covered by her own means.

In sum, CERT places the volunteer within concentric hierarchical structures: the team itself is one, the team's relating to emergency agencies is another, and the Citizen Corps structure a third. In this structure, the volunteers surrender to the unconditioned authority of the managing agency. The disciplined volunteer is moulded as an example of the ideal worker: obedient, gratis, flexible, skilled, disposable.

Apart from providing biometric introduction into social life and work in a homeland security regime, there is not much else that CERT does. While in the wildcat, semi-suicidal groups of Mexico City 100 volunteers died saving 800 fellow citizens, in the efficiently trained and thoroughly organised CERT case, both counts are zero. This is not due to lack of 'demand.' No CERT group was mobilised in Florida in the autumn of 2004 when the state was ravaged by hurricanes. No CERT group was mobilised in Louisiana a year later, when Katrina visited (they were providing shelter to victims, at other states (Congress 2007: 9)). It seems that LA CERT teams were having a 'great time' doing 'refreshers' both times California faced true emergency, during the October 2007 and the August 2009 big wildfires. The absence of CERT in time of real emergency (with reference to Texas) even raised some eyebrows in Congress (2007:51-52). The Mexico-CERT contrast is one between spontaneous, self-organised citizen action, and a statal conscription project. While in the former volunteers mobilise, deliberate, organise, and act on issues that affect them; in the latter the citizens' participation urge mutates into an authority structure, its initial purpose forgotten. Elaine Scarry draws similar conclusions by studying the unfolding of the 9/11 attacks. She juxtaposes the flight that hit the Pentagon with that brought down by its passengers in Pennsylvania, as exemplifying two different conceptions of national defence: the first, authoritarian, centralised and top-down; the other, distributed, inclusive and egalitarian. Despite having the advantages of much better knowledge of the large picture, double the amount of time to

---

[9] Reports from Texas confirm this perception. There, CERT volunteers are utilised in backline border duty, something that raises mission-creep concerns among certain Congress members (Congress 2007: 23, 42, 50-51).

act, a clearly defined line of command, and impossibly superior technological equipment, the military has failed to protect its own house. On the contrary, citizens equipped with mobile phones and shoe laces managed within less than 23 minutes to gather information on their situation, deliberate, decide —and their own lives were the stakes of the decision- and act (Scarry 2003:4-7,28). Similarly, when contrasted with the spontaneous urge of bystanders to assist, CERT seems to have a de-mobilising effect. Perhaps, if they forced to inertia until they receive the Commander's call, and were not confronted with impressive amounts of reporting, the volunteers might do what they volunteered for. This is precisely the point: CERT is a project that captures the urge to mutual aid to forge disciplined submissive citizens.[10] Democratic decision and action is faster because the participants are *de facto* interested in resolving their problem; the state's problem by contrast, is to subvert such dynamic into practices prescribed by its summits -not least, practices that would perpetuate a cult of authority: 'The essence of modern politics is not policies formed on one side of this [state-society] division being applied to or shaped by the other, but the producing and reproducing of this line of difference' (Mitchell 1991:95).

NEOLIBERALISM, NEUROSIS, AND PASTORAL CITIZENSHIP

There seems to be a convergence among contemporary citizenship theorists focusing on North America, that the ideal type of the 'democratic-liberal' citizen—one inclined to augmentation of freedom and equality, and concerned with rights, government accountability and control—cannot account for the content of present day citizenship (Bhandar 2004; Isin 2004; Brown 2006). During the last three decades, citizenship is increasingly organised on the basis of anxiety, fear and trauma, giving rise to a subject in constant awareness, alert and anticipation of drastic un-adverted changes in its daily life (Bhandar 2004). In line with the neoliberal policies that introduced it by disrupting social cohesion, confronting this anxiety becomes a 'private' affair, undertaken by each individual in isolation and through marketised solutions. Moreover, there is straightforward connection between neoliberal strategies and the rise in importance of volunteerism: with the dismantling of social welfare, the state pressures volunteer agencies to cover the ensuing gap at ground level. The effects of the advent of volunteerism are both functional

---

[10] Characteristically, 'spontaneous volunteers' are seen as a necessary evil, and the only guidance offered to Corps officers for the utilisation, is their introduction into the Corps structure (FEMA/PLF 2006).

and ideological: while it compensates for the withdrawal of the welfare state, it also instils a certain morality to volunteers and members of the broader community (Ilcan and Basok 2004). The overall effect of neoliberal policies on citizenship is that the management of anxiety becomes its organisational basis. In its context, a sense of stability can be restored through the apparition of strong (state) leadership, claiming submission to its authority on the basis if the truth it represents. This 'pastoral' model is profoundly inegalitarian, as it inherently legitimises inequality and stratification on the basis of perceived distance from the truth (Brown 2006).

Citizen Corps seems to constitute a tube case of such shifts in the nature of citizenship. It is a citizenship project based on anxiety management. They prescribe to, and propagate, a sublimation of the generalised anxiety caused by the violent neoliberal disruption of prior frameworks of social life, into the form of an imminent, physical disaster; and provides therapeutic channelling of the adequately defined anxiety in ways beneficial to the social order that produces it, forging along the way a subject conditioned to live in it. Characteristically, in Congress (2004: 97,129) 'statesmen' and 'civil-society-men' concluded that the political imperative of homeland security faces a vital challenge in engaging citizens to live daily according to the requisites of a state in permanent emergency. To achieve this, they unanimously suggested introducing programmes that would make the condition of immanent threat biomatic for the population. In short, we've made Italy, now we have to make Italians...

Inasmuch Corps testify for the broader character of citizenship, they are indicative of tendencies in the overall political culture, on how individuals contextualise the political constellation and their place therein. Here politics appears as a largely indecipherable system of lines of authority, with the President at the top, and the citizen/volunteer at the bottom. From the top downwards, this is a system of command; from the bottom upwards, it is a system of accountability. Thus, the citizen lives in, and develops affinities with, a form of socio-political organisation in which s/he invariably is the executant of decisions whose production does not involve her; and accountable to a structure of authority beyond her control.

In short, Corps are a project of governance-through-neurosis (Isin, ibid.), based on the postulation of an anxious citizen (Bhandar, ibid.) and the management of social anxiety. In the homeland security project the state installs and defines said anxiety, as imminent threat of violent catastrophe. Through Citizen Corps it provides a solution whose organisation, structure,

and practice is state-determined, either in a top-down manner, and/or through re-appropriation of neoliberal modalities of (meta-) governance. Finally, as Corps is initiated by the President's call to a 'mission' defined by the moral characteristics of an eternal National Culture; and it constitutes a cult of authority, structured as lines of command hierarchically organised according to each unit's distance from alleged knowledge of the imminent threat; it seems that Brown's 'pastoral' citizenship, one fetishising hierarchy and avert to democratic/egalitarian postulates, is indeed the point of arrival.

The notion of citizenship implies a relationship between the population and the state. Consequently, the forms of citizenship and shifts thereof, imply a certain state presence in their effectuation, and a certain interrelation with forms of statehood and shifts thereof. This is certainly not lost to analysts of citizenship. Isin sees the shift towards the 'neurotic citizen' as the outcome of governmental projects, while Bhandar notes that the anxious citizen is the (re) productive agent of a 'new normality' implemented by the state. In Wendy Brown especially, this connection is developed and explicit. Her account of marketised citizenship echoes Foucault's (2008) analysis of neoliberalism; while her assessment of the 'pastoral' type is informed by Foucault's account of a pastoral modality of power, whose essence consists of 'pure obedience' to a leadership providing direction in the pursuit of truth (Foucault 2007: 163-185; Lemke 2001). In Foucault, both neoliberalism and the pastorate refer to logics and modalities of power, including the subjectivities they imply. Accordingly, Brown makes clear that successive reconfigurations of citizenship (marketised; pastoral) are components of state-driven governance projects: the neo-liberal, and the neo-conservative, respectively, with the latter being a particular version of the former (Brown 2005, 2006). The advance of neoliberalism signifies the cancelling of liberal democracy, as its specifying characteristics (representative democracy, public sphere of civil society free from state intervention, the rule of law, etc) are all rendered irrelevant for a mode of governance that imposes the logic of the market on all aspects of political and social activity.

While the main thrust of Brown's argument is correct, especially in establishing the interrelation between configurations of citizenship, state projects, and configurations of the state; there is some, potentially misleading, confusion in her analysis of these configurations. On closer inspection, we see that, for instance, the predominance of the executive among state branches becomes an issue only with the advent of neoliberalism (while it is something persistently addressed by political and legal theorists at least since the 1930s); that we pass from a prolonged age of liberal normality to a state of permanent emergency; or that the liberal-democratic configuration

is not restricted to the 'classic' features of parliamentary democracy, rule of law, etc, but also envelopes the welfare state and redistributive policies. This makes the liberal configuration stretching, potentially, from the days of Adam Smith, to the days of Ronald Reagan. And while this vast temporal expanse is treated as a continuum, the last three decades are marked by multiple shifts: from marketised, to pastoral modalities of power, and now to a 'sacrificial' configuration of citizenship.[11] Moreover, the assessment of these configurations and their shifting is always observed, but never explained. While configurations (suddenly, in the last 35 years) come and go, the questions of why this is happening, to what objective, and to whose benefit or cost, remain not un-answered, but un-raised. There is, in short, concern with Brown's assessment regarding the periodisation of the phenomena it addresses; and the apparent randomness of the 'emergences' it identifies.

Without going into detail, I would suggest that the latter problem could be overcome by conceptualising the state as a parameter of social dynamics: as a creation, a terrain, and an agent of/in social antagonism. In this manner, its policies, initiatives, projects, powers, and institutions (and shifts thereof) can be studied in conjuncture with the dynamic inter-relating among social forces, the objectives and strategies of which inform state action, shape the institutional outlook of the state, and are also co-determined by them.

As a remedy for the problem of confused periodisation, I would suggest the notion of the 'state-form.' By state-form I mean the socio-historically specific articulation among: (a) the state apparatus and state power; (b) state structure and state strategy; and (c) the state and its social 'outside' (Jessop 1985: 124-125, 340-341; 1990: 260-262; 2008: 7-8, 36-45, 79; 2012: 59, 61-63, Poulantzas 1973: 104, 129; 1976; 1978: 44-45, 136-142, 147-152; Bratsis 2006: 114-120; Boukalas 2008; 2013, ch.2). Each of the components of these three couplets is understood as a social relation; and each of them, and their articulation, is over-determined by developments in the field of social dynamics. In this more nuanced and informed by social dynamics analytical framework, we could reassess the normality vs. exception bi-pole into a more elaborate account of different state-forms and their specific crises; we could distinguish between the liberal, the big/interventionist, and a contemporary, neoliberal state-form, each with numerous variations (phases) in their articulation in the context of a society.

---

[11] A new, yet unpublished, conceptualisation of citizenship under austerity –see: http://globalization. gc.cuny.edu/sacrificial-citizenship-neoliberal-austerity-politics/

In this analytical framework, I conceptualise Corps as pertinent to the contemporary state-form, and as a partial and inconclusive indication of reconfigurations therein.

CRASH-COURSE IN AUTHORITARIAN STATISM

(a) US State Form: Authoritarian Statism, Phase III

Brown insists that the form of governmentality imposed neo-liberal/neo-conservative projects, while disposing of liberal democracy, does *not* constitute a fascist form (2005, 2006). Rather, 'the substance of many of the significant features of constitutional and representative democracy have been gutted, jettisoned, or end-run, even as they continue to be promulgated ideologically [...] basic principles and institutions of democracy are becoming nothing other than ideological shells concealing their opposite...' (2005: 52). For this new form of statehood 'we do not yet have a name' (2005: 51); but we may '[f]or want of a better term' call it 'authoritarian statism' (Poulantzas 1978:203).

Indeed, contemporary US is neither a 'dictatorial' nor an 'exceptional' state-form. The institutions of political democracy keep their shape and continue to function normally; there is no attempt to cancel constitutional democracy, but rather to transform it towards more exclusive/oligarchic forms. This attempt is undertaken by both dominant parties: it is the outcome of political consensus, not of acute antagonism. And, crucially, there is no failure of existing political parties and networks in representing the dominant (Belandis 2004:122-123; Poulantzas 1974). In the late 1970s, Poulantzas coined the term *authoritarian statism* (AS) to account for the reshaping of the state (its apparatus, mode, and terrain of operation) towards 'intensified state control over every sphere of socio-economic life *combined with* radical decline of the institutions of political democracy and with draconian and multiform curtailment of so-called 'formal' liberties...' (1978: 203-204). In a wave-length strikingly similar with Brown, Poulantzas also insisted that AS is not a fascist state, nor a chrysalis form of such a formation: '*it rather represents the new "democratic" form of the bourgeois republic in the current phase of capitalism*' (1978: 209; original emphasis). In other words, AS is a normal form of capitalist state, which nonetheless incorporates, normalises and *renders permanent* a variety of emergency-type features. Among the key characteristics of this state-form are concentration of power to the summit of the executive, to the detriment of the legislature;

disruption of the rule of law; increased volume and political importance of state-bureaucracy; proliferation of parallel networks of policy-making that overrun formal channels of authority; shielding of the political process from popular input through the reversing of the role of parties and—later—the exclusion of unions from policy-making forums; the augmentation, intensification of policing and its focused targeting of potentially subversive social and political groups (Poulantzas 1978: 210, 217-240). The overall effect of these trends is the drastic repression of the population's capacity to produce politics and influence the state. Instead, the state attempts to provide the population with platforms for 'appropriate' political (pseudo) participation: 'greater exclusion of the masses from the centres of political decision-making' is coupled with 'increased attempts to regiment the masses through "participation" schemes' (Poulantzas 1978: 238).

A crucial factor in the advent and transformation of AS is crisis—i.e. the intensification of social antagonism, so that it exceeds the established institutional frameworks. Authoritarian statism is a state-form pertinent to the management of 'permanent crisis' (Poulantzas 1976: 320). Most of its key characteristics were forged by the need for flexible, *ad-* and *post-hoc* state intervention to secure the continuation of capital accumulation in the face of acute popular challenge and intra-capitalist antagonism. While its first formation dates back to the mid-1970s and the crisis of the Keynesian/welfare establishment; the rise of Brown's 'neo-liberal governance,' which Jessop (2002) describes as a 'Schumpeterian workfare post-national regime' (SWPR), was effectuated by an adequately adjusted AS form. The eve of 9/11 was characterised by crisis of the SWPR settlement, as its economic strategies and political organisation faced acute opposition from populations throughout the world, while the fiscal collapse of 1999-2000 caused increased capitalist unease with the accumulation regime (Boukalas 2013: ch.3). In response to the crisis, there is a tremendous intensification of all key AS features in post-9/11 US. Moreover, there is a qualitative transformation in AS, with an astonishing rise in importance of security logic and policy; its establishment as a central platform for state legitimacy; a drastic ascendance of the policing mechanism among state apparatuses; and of its role in organising state-population relations (Boukalas 2013: ch.13).

(b) Corps: 'Participation' in Authoritarian Statism

As the state and dominant capital opted to counter the crisis without touching its causes,[12] homeland security effectuates a substitution. It conceals the political and economic character of the crisis and constructs it as one of security, thus helping the 'anxious citizen' to finally pin down the cause of his anxiety. And, in Corps, it provides him a way to sublimate his neurosis in a politically appropriate way, in a context where this sublimation is immediately socialised.

While in Corps the state directly constructs platforms for sublimation and socialisation, the volunteers are thoroughly excluded from participation in their organisation and direction. This is mostly effectuated through the Corps' structure. A differentiation between structure *of*—and structure *in* Corps is pertinent here. 'Structure *of* Corps' refers to the organisation of the project's managing entities (Corps as state structure): a quango pyramid formed by one national, fifty state, and 2400 local Councils, with relations of over-determination rather than of direct, formal command from the summit to the base. In each level the directing entity is a conglomerate of government, capital, ideological authorities, and the security mechanism. This structure sets entities unaccountable to anyone outside their own context (business, churches, etc) in position to direct the volunteering citizens.

'Structure *in* Corps' refers to the structure of the teams, and volunteers' place therein (Corps as political culture). Here hierarchies and lines of command are not in a 'cooperative' limbo, but clear and hard, and invariably with the volunteer at the bottom. Additionally, the implementing authorities determine and introduce special intra-volunteer hierarchies, transforming the milieu or group of volunteers to hierarchical *teams*. There is no operational need for, or benefit from, such hierarchisation. It is solely introduced to secure detailed control of the agency over and into the teams. The volunteers are under the boot of a clearly defined hierarchical structure, which is in turn situated within a twilight zone of responsibility and accountability. The volunteers can have no impact upon these structures, or upon their work.

Thus, the anxious, isolated individual is re-socialised in a thoroughly statist model, where social relations are relations of authority, and social bonds

---

[12] Political exclusion and material deprivation of the population; political power and expanded profitability for capital: all have accentuated since 2001

are lines of command, and are passed-down by a mysterious structure from beyond. In there, the person is embedded with the coercive apparatus, identifies with the security personnel, and is indoctrinated to its logic. Finally, this person is acclimatised in being the competent, submissive, and devalued employee in a set of working relations that grants them nothing.

To sum up, post-9/11 US is not an exceptional (fascist or dictatorial) state, but a state-form that incorporates emergency features into a permanent reconfiguration of the republican institutional cell. The embedding of the citizen in the coercive apparatus in Corps, shows the coercive mechanism as a central platform for organising state-population relations. This, in turn, is symptomatic of the increased gravity of security policy and logic in this phase of AS. The amalgamation of hierarchical command with 'parallel networks' into the Corps' structure, is typical of AS and effectuates the total exclusion of the volunteers from influencing their work. Determination of all aspects of social life by the state; combined with total exclusion of the population from influencing the political process: Corps partakes the core characteristic of authoritarian statism. Operating at 'ground' level, the overall effect of Corps is to accommodate the citizenry to the modalities of social existence in the context of authoritarian statism. Here the state operates in the deeply intimate level of the affinities of the psyche for survival, self-fulfilment, and companionship, casting thus Corps as a laboratory for the production of the type of citizen pertinent to the authoritarian republic in its 'homeland security' version.

While Bhandar notes that the citizen is the 'reproductive agent of the state' (2004:265), the study of Corps shows that it is also its *product*. Conditioned to live under the shadow of a permanent threat, in identification with the security mechanism, and within hard hierarchies and arbitrary rule, the volunteers are meant to be the first citizens of the authoritarian republic: its products and re-producers.

WORKS CITED

Belandis, D. (2004) *In Search of the Internal Enemy*. Athens, Proskinio (in Greek)

Bhandar, D. (2004) "Renormalising Citizenship and Life in Fortress North America," *Citizenship Studies* 8/3:261-278

Boggs, C. (2001) 'Social Capital and Political Fantasy: Robert Putnam's Bowling Alone,' *Theory and Society* 30:281-297

Bratsis, P. (2006) *Everyday Life and the State*. London, Paradigm

Boukalas, C. (2008) "Counterterrorism Legislation and the US State Form: Authoritarian Statism, Phase 3" *Radical Philosophy* 151: 31-41

Boukalas, C. (2013/in preparation) *Counterterrorism Law and Policy: Homeland Security as a New Configuration of Power for the 21st Century*. Oxford, Routledge

Brown, W. (2005) "Neoliberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy," in idem *Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics*. Princeton University Press

Brown, W. (2006) "American Nightmare: Neoliberalism, Neoconservatism, and De-democratisation," *Political Theory* 30:690-714

Bush, G.W. (2002) "State of the Union Address" http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html

Congress (2003) "Hearing: How is the Department of Homeland Security Improving Our Capabilities?" *Select Committee on Homeland Security*, House of Representatives, 19 June

Congress (2004) "Hearing: Homeland Security Advisory System: Threat codes and Public Responses." *Subcommittee of National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations*, House of Representatives, 16 March

Congress (2007) "Hearing: Citizen Preparedness: Helping our Communities Help Themselves." *Subcommittee on Emergency Communications, Preparedness, and Response* House of Representatives, 13 June.

Congress (2008) "Hearing: Moving Beyond the First Five Years: Ensuring FEMA's Ability to Respond and Recover in the Wake of a National Catastrophe." *Subcommittee on Emergency Communications, Preparedness, and Response* House of Representatives, 9 April

Congress (2009) "Hearing: Preparedness (Part I and II)." *Subcommittee on Emergency Communications, Preparedness, and Response*, House of Representatives, 1 and 27 October

DHS (2002a) "Citizen Corps Councils," http://www.citizencorps.gov

DHS (2002b) "National Citizen Corps Council," http://www.citizencorps.gov

DHS (2002c) "Citizen Corps Programmes," http://www.citizencorps.gov

DHS (2004) "Citizen Corps Celebrates Success at Two-Year Anniversary," http://www.citizencorps.gov

DHS (Unknown Date): "CERT Map," http://www.citizencorps.gov

Etzioni, A. (2002) "Mobilise America's Foot Soldiers," *Christian Science Monitor*, (July)

Fairfax, Virginia: http://www.fairfaxcountycitizencorps.org

FEMA (2002) "Citizen Corps: a Guide for Local Officials"

FEMA (2003) "Starting and Maintaining a CERT Programme"

FEMA / Points of Light Foundation (2006) "Managing Volunteers in Times of Disaster"

FEMA (2009) "Citizen Corps Volunteer Liability Guide"

FEMA/ Emergency Management Institute (unknown date) "CERT Incident Command System"

Getha-Taylor, H. and Brudney, J.L (2006) "Volunteers and the Department of Homeland Security: Help or Hazard?" paper: *8th Public Management Research Conference*, Taiwan

Harris, Texas: http://www.harriscountycitizencorps.com

Ilcan, S. and Basok, T. (2004) "Community Government: Voluntary Agencies, Social Justice, and the Responsibilisation of Citizens," *Citizenship Studies* 8/2:129-144

Isin, E.F. (2004) "The Neurotic Citizen," *Citizenship Studies* 8/3:217-235

Jessop, B. (1985) Nicos Poulantzas: *Marxist Theory and Political Strategy*. London, Macmillan.

Jessop, B. (1990) *State Theory*. Cambridge, Polity.

Jessop, B. (2002) *The Future of the Capitalist State*. Cambridge, Polity

Jessop, B. (2008) *State Power – A Strategic-Relational Approach*. Cambridge, Polity

Leighninher, M. (2002) "Enlisting Citizens: Building Political Legitimacy," *National Civic Review* 91/2: 137-148.

Lemke, T. (2001) "'The Birth of Biopolitics:' Michel Foucault's Lecture at the College de France on Neo-liberal Governmentality" *Economy and Society* 30/2: 190-207

Los Angeles: http://www.cert-la.com

Holland, P. & Fallon, M. (1978) "The Quango Explosion" *Conservative Political Centre*, London

Miami-Dade: http://www.miamidade.gov/homeland

Mitchell, T.J. (1991) "The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and their Critics," *American Political Science Review*, 85/1: 77-96

New York :http://www.nyc.gov/html/programmes/citizencorps.html

Orange, Florida: http://www.ocoem.com/citizen_corps.htm

Poulantzas, N. (1973) *Political Power and Social Classes*. London, New Left Books

Poulantzas, N. (1974) *Fascism and Dictatorship*. London, New Left Books

Poulantzas, N. (1976) "The Political Crisis and the Crisis of the State," in J. Martin (ed.) *The Poulantzas Reader*, Verso, London 2008

Poulantzas, N. (1978) *State, Power, Socialism*. London, Verso (ed:2000)

Putnam, R. D (2000) *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York, Simon & Schuster

Scarry, Elaine (2003) *Who Defended the Country?* Boston, Beacon Press

Sullivan, H. & Skelcher, C. (2002) *Working Across Boundaries: Collaboration in the Public Services*. Hampshire, MacMillan

Skelcher, C. (1998) *The Appointed State: Quasi Governmental Organisations and Democracy*. Buckingham, Open University Press

Waugh, W.L (2003) "Terrorism, Homeland Security, and the National Emergency Management Network," *Public Administration Review* 3: 373-385.