Title: Value-based governance of security technology

Abstract: A couple of years ago, the traveling world saw the first full-body scanners at airports. These devices were supposed to replace or at least enhance traditional security technology such as metal detectors in order to protect air travel. Since these early days, a lot has changed, both in terms of the technological state of the art and in terms of the societal awareness. However, few work has been done in political philosophy to integrate various aspects of the ethics of security and the political processes of security policy. In this paper, I want to fill this gap and provide such an integrative model.

To this end, I will propose to follow a value-based governance model of political decision-making. This includes, first of all, establishing an understanding of value and values that is compatible with both a scientific approach and a philosophical one. Values are seen as arising out of valuations, consisting in subjective evaluations with an objective commitment, that are reified by the process of proposing values as intersubjectively binding orientation marks.

Based on this, I will then review what values are at stake in the context of using full-body scanners at airports. Among the most prominent are privacy and security. However, I will discuss the values of justice, democracy and dignity as well.

Finally, then, I will propose a model of political decision-making that takes into account the essentially private nature of values, the intersubjective commitment of someone who holds a value, and the most efficient way to make values become real and effective. This model will not focus on states as primary agents of security, but will leave the political decision-making process to the interplay between private security agencies and individual business and consumer behavior. Basically, this model comes close to a libertarian view of political decision-making, as was recently put forward by Michael Huemer (2013). How this is consistent with the value-based approach and how it can be applied to the case of airport security will be discussed in this final section.