



## Book Review

**Deflem, Mathieu, ed. 2008. *Surveillance and Governance: Crime Control and Beyond. Sociology of Crime, Law and Deviance, Volume 10. Bingley (UK): Emerald.***

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Both experts and those simply curious about the structure, evolution, sociology and politics of surveillance will find this collection of works intriguing and informative. Chapters are short and to the point – though sometimes the reader will wish for a bit more detail or further analysis – and cover an extremely varied lot of manifestations of surveillance in all its guises. Foucault’s ghost of course floats above the collection, well set up in Deflem’s introduction.

The book is organized in four parts, the first exploring the concept of watched, surveilled spaces and the social construction of boundaries. It starts with a fascinating history of the “Minuteman” phenomenon along the US Southern border with Mexico (and to a lesser extent its border with Canada), presented by James Walsh. Thoroughly late-modern creatures, Minutemen conceive of the state, and the nation, mostly in terms of borders – and rarely in terms of contents – and assign themselves the mission of complementing what they see as wholly inadequate official border protection. Their focus is space, and more specifically individuals who are “out of place,” wrongfully allowed to reach where they do not belong: over the border and into enthusiastically patriotic representations of the homeland. In the second chapter, Kevin Haggerty, Laura Huey and the late Richard Ericson examine the social function of video surveillance in two very different areas of Vancouver. Though neither project was the thin edge of the übersurveillance wedge it was feared to be, the authors recognize that the 2010 Olympics and its hypertrophied security plans will turn both into mere footnotes in future surveillance books. The third chapter points back to the oldest form of surveillance: following people around. Kristen Christiansen describes how NYC’s “Tactical Assistance Response Unit,” essentially attempts to interdict political protests through ostensible surveillance and investigation. This spectacle of surveillance, deemed “suffocating” by some protesters, aims at deterrence: not the explicit, announced deterrence of violence and riots, but the far less politically correct deterrence of dissenting public discourse. Fabien Jobard and Dominique Linhardt compare security apparatuses, techniques and consequences in two settings. The surveilled spaces are neighbouring, but might as well be on different planets: one, Paris’ Orly Airport, is the realm of the upper middle class and its privileged mobility, structured by the security rituals of post 9-11 air travel. The other is the run-down “banlieue” where the have-nots and the ethnically disadvantaged are confined, immobile. The first is based on snapshot “checks” on persons and objects in transit; the second on the policing of everyday life, political activity and a permanent state of belligerence between those policing and those being policed. The last chapter of the section, by Thomas Mathiesen, reviews the main European information exchange technological structures (SIS, TECS and EURODAC), their objectives and practical applications, and observes two trends: on the one hand, the progressive integration of databases, intelligence gathering and analysis activities as well as actual organizations, while on the other the increasing independence of the resulting structure from the power of nation states.

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The book's second section looks at four practices of surveillance and opens with a chapter by William Staples and Stephanie Decker on house arrest. Taking from Nikolas Rose, they explain the popularity of house arrest sentences by their fit with dominant discourses of freedom and rational choice. "Obligated to be free," those under home monitoring regimes quickly adopt the language, rationales, identities and, more importantly, the proper conducts that are integral to the discourse and practice of home arrest. The second chapter, by Scott White, recalls the history of the FBI's counter-subversion practices and shows how control institutions unfettered by accountability frameworks or effective oversight structures tend to extend and redefine their original missions as new targets and new threats are continuously constructed. Unfortunately, though the FBI's history is in some ways unique – in no small part thanks to its eccentric and autocratic leader, J. Edgar Hoover – the casting of intellectuals and dissident groups as enemies of the state and threats against national security is all too common. The third chapter in this section also examines FBI practices, at a more micro level: in what might be described as infectious paranoia, how those under official suspicion and surveillance become pathologically suspicious of all strangers. Finally, Michael McCahill evaluates the function of camera surveillance within the new framework of "plural policing" or "nodal governance of security." He concludes that the rumours about the death of state power have been greatly exaggerated, and that in fact with the proliferation of public and private video surveillance the state-centred goals of crime fighting and law enforcement have entered the private security sphere. The distribution of surveillance technologies in the hand of non-state actors, far from empowering the masses, actually channels surveillance and control powers back to the state.

The third section of the book offers four points of view on the dissemination of surveillance throughout civil society – and an interesting contest around the power of the state to turn surveillance potential into actual control action. Janet Chan tells of the state's efforts at recruiting citizens into its surveillance network, as watchers and reporters of suspicious activities, objects and persons. Evidence of this trend can be seen in the US, in Canada, Australia and the UK. Though the actual results of such diffuse watching are questionable, often drowning valuable information in a flood of useless "noise," on the post-9-11 planet the public has become an indispensable surveillance resource to official social control institutions. The next chapter casts "racial profiling" as a panoptic technology, since at the microscopic level it does have a disciplinary effect on those who "fit the profile." Benoît Dupont, in his chapter, reverses the lens and underlines the often overlooked practices of resistance to and subversion of surveillance technologies and structures. This is distributed surveillance not on behalf of the state, but, as David Brin would put it, something which affords the public the ability to "look back;" Steve Mann's "sousveillance" also comes to mind (though in this version those attempting to engage in open sousveillance are quickly entangled in a web of authorizations, permissions and microscopic oversight). To this must be added various counter-surveillance technologies such as encryption, anonymization, and the new powers of information distribution afforded by "web 2.0" applications. Closing this section, Kevin Stenson describes the evolution of state sovereignty in the globalized world: far from fading quietly, the political, legal and technological structures that solidify state sovereignty have been reinforced, mostly through the identification of new threats, that can only be faced with aggressive surveillance and protection.

The final section explores new fields of surveillance, well beyond the ordinary targets of crime, terrorists and subversives. John Gilliom analyses the new US standardised testing of school pupils under the "no child left behind" strategy. Far from producing better education, the standardized tests encourage a narrow focus on testable matters and various forms of cheating at the administrative level (since inadequate test results are taken as markers of poor institutional performance). Nathan Harris and Jennifer Wood look at the organisation of child protection policies and institutions and suggest a decentralized control structure, closer to the community and those involved with the matter. The final chapter, by Minas Samatas, describes the controversy around the Olympic legacy of a vast network of 12,000 security cameras spread in key areas of Athens. Successive attempts to "sell" the continued, post-Olympic operation of the network for national security reasons, and then for more pragmatic automobile traffic control, all failed. The author explains this outcome by the still fresh memory of the years of military dictatorship in Greece and the fear that total surveillance might lead to totalitarian control.

By and large the essays in this book offer fascinating glimpses into the amazingly diverse forms surveillance practices may take. This diversity is in some ways perhaps too extreme, and in some instances the reader will be confronted to the problem of just *what* is surveillance, exactly.