

## Review Article

### Situating Surveillance Studies

Hier, Sean P. and Josh Greenberg. 2007. *The Surveillance Studies Reader*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

408pp. Paperback £20.99 (UK, \$45.95 (US)); ISBN13: 978-0-335-22026-7

Lyon, David. 2007. *Surveillance Studies: an Overview*.

Cambridge: Polity Press.

256pp. Paperback £14.99 (UK), \$24.95 (US); ISBN-13: 978-0745635927

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#### Introduction

The status of surveillance as an academic enterprise has grown and changed enormously over recent years, but with the publication of both an introduction to the subject and a reader, it would seem that Surveillance Studies is showing signs of coming of age. As one might expect from the formats, the two volumes are very different but the differences are more than superficial matters of presentation and perhaps reflect rather deeper issues concerning the nature, of the enterprise we call Surveillance Studies. This article deals with these two summative efforts in this context.

#### *About the Books*

Lyon's work is deliberately and ironically sub-titled 'An Overview' and there are few people better positioned or qualified to conduct such an exercise. The book is smartly and subtly organised into three main parts, each of which is further divided into three chapters. Part One, Viewpoints, lays out the definition and scope of Surveillance Studies, looks at surveillance in five 'sites' (warfare, state administration, the workplace, policing and consumption), and finally deals with theory. Part Two, Vision, deals largely with the systemic aspects of watching, that is the organisation of surveillance and the spatial dimensions, with regard to both the urban and the mobile, the way bodies move across borders. The third part, Visibility, deals with the way in which those whom are watched are made visible and how they understand this and respond. It covers media and popular culture, the politics of surveillance, and finally, ethical issues. This framework allows Lyon to deal with the vast range of disciplines that have contributed to Surveillance Studies effectively and in a way that seems natural rather than forced. And almost everything is covered. The range of theory is extensive but this does not mean the volume is theory-heavy, rather the understandings of scholars from Marx and Weber through Foucault, Baudrillard and Deleuze, to Agamben, Hardt and Negri and McGrath are succinctly explained and their particular relevance made obvious. A massive range of empirical work is also drawn upon from many countries and the work is set clearly in context.

An introductory single-authored volume like Lyon's is of necessity going to be organised rather differently from a Reader, which cannot avoid the fact that it has to make its case for the most part through the authors chosen with far less space for the development of a single coherent argument. This makes several things absolutely vital: the knowledge of the field of the editors; decisions about structure (i.e.: what in general is to be covered); and finally, the specific pieces to be chosen and authors to be represented. The first thing that is obvious here is that although Sean Hier and Josh Greenberg are emerging scholars of great promise, they are not of the level of experience and knowledge of David Lyon, nor of comparable centrality to the enterprise of Surveillance Studies as it has emerged over the last twenty years. The *Reader* is structured around six parts, which appear both more obvious and far less coherent than Lyon's. The first two parts are both to some extent about theory. Part One, 'Surveillance, the Nation-state and Social Control,' deals with the historical development of surveillance and provides readings by James Rule, Anthony Giddens, Christopher Dandeker, John Torpey and Michel Foucault. Part Two brings in the digital, represented by Gary Marx, Bill Bogard, Kevin Haggerty and Richard Ericson, and Sean Hier himself. Part Three deals with 'Surveillance and Everyday Life,' and essentially is doing the same job as Lyon's chapter on 'sites' of surveillance, though with a slightly different selection of sites: Lyon on personal data, Oscar Gandy on data mining, Susan Hansen on the workplace and Kevin Walby on CCTV. Part Four deals with 'Surveillance and Inequality' and includes pieces by John Gilliom, Steve Graham and I, Roy Coleman, and Dawn Moore and Haggerty (again). There follows a rather shorter section on Surveillance and Public Opinion, with Mike Nellis, Gandy (again) and Alasdair Roberts. Finally, there is a bit of a grab-bag of a final chapter which does a strange mixture of the conceptual, the political and the ethical, with Mimi Sheller and John Urry on mobility (but not surveillance!), Colin Bennet and Charles Raab on privacy, Graham Sewell and James Barker on the ethics of surveillance, and finally, Lyon (once more) on resistance.

The question then is whether the choices are justified given firstly, the state of the field, and secondly, the aims and framework set out. The initial impression is that as Readers go, it is not very long or wide-ranging. This may be down to the publisher and their demands, but just 24 readings, all of which are reprints, with no new commissions, leaves little room for the range of material one might want to include, the numbers of scholars and perspectives one would ideally like to see represented, or the possibility of much in the way of welcome surprises (Nellis' piece on surveillance fictions being a notable exception). This is clearly very much an undergraduate level book. The general and section introductions are also cursory, with plenty of space for some basic questions for discussion along with some suggestions for further reading, which in many cases merely mentions works one might have liked to see excerpted in the *Reader* itself. Certainly the desires of students and scholars vary and many may not want new pieces of uncertain provenance but, in comparison, plucking another reader of my shelf: Steve Graham's 2004 *Cybercities Reader* (published by Routledge as part of their excellent Cities Readers series) appears superficially less weighty, but contains 63 readings, 31 of which are selected reprints, 32 of which are newly commissioned pieces by leading experts. It also has a lengthy introduction, and all of the pieces are both widely varied and carefully edited. What Hier and Greenberg appear to have done in dealing with the problem of selection is to keep their reader as mainly a 'Sociology+' enterprise. This of course makes marketing the Reader at undergraduate social science reading lists much easier, but as I will argue in the pages that follow, it does little justice to Surveillance Studies.

### **Surveillance Studies in Historical Context**

Surveillance Studies is the offspring of a multitude. Whilst also giving a special place to sociology, as Lyon remarks early in his Overview, "Surveillance Studies is necessarily a multi-disciplinary enterprise" (18). While its ancestors are Marx and Weber (as well as Kafka and Orwell), its immediate progenitors were from either side of the Atlantic: from France, the post-structuralist philosopher and historian of ideas, Michel Foucault (1975), and from the USA, the sociologist, James B. Rule (1973). Both are given their dues by Lyon and by Hier and Greenberg, though only Lyon really acknowledges the importance of the context in which they were writing, and even Lyon perhaps does not emphasise it enough. As Deleuze (1990) later stressed, the late 1960s and early 70s was a time of multiple crises and changes. These

included: the final collapse of colonialism; the Cold War and its hotter eruption in Vietnam; the crisis of the institutions and the first glimmerings of the contradictions of the post-war political economic settlement; the growing recognition of the failure of the Soviet or Maoist model to provide a real alternative and, of particular relevance here, of the totalitarian character of many of the Communist regimes. The western progressive movement was also becoming increasingly self-critical after the events of 1968, and was accompanied by the growth of the New Social Movements. More importantly for Surveillance Studies, progressive organisations were subjected to monitoring, subversion and repression by democratic states which supposedly protected the rights of citizens, in particular the wiretapping activities of the FBI in the USA which led to widespread outcry and congressional investigations. Their projects and approaches were somewhat different but complimentary: Foucault was seeking the hidden foundations of the construction of the modern subject, asking essentially ‘who am I?’ and finding that surveillance, social control and punishment made up the subject, the ‘I,’ as much as scientific progress, rationalism and culture. Foucault is often criticised by those who pay little attention to what he said he was doing, for ignoring the ‘now’ of when he was writing, the emerging digital revolution, however Rule’s work was all about the emerging potential of the database. Rule’s work is essentially solidly empirical and predictive in the best traditions of mainstream Anglo-American sociology; Foucault’s work on the other hand is brilliant, suggestive, allusive, and often infuriating<sup>1</sup>.

This unsettling combination is still I think what drives Surveillance Studies – something neither author set out to create. And indeed neither did. From the late 1970s and into the 1980s the study of surveillance remained an occasional thing, a sideline of those studying media, policing or prisons. Baudrillard (1987) indeed asked us to ‘forget Foucault’ and ‘social control’ became an unfashionable concept in the social sciences. However none of this meant that in the real world outside of academia that surveillance had gone away. On the contrary, the 1980s was the time of the extension of US military surveillance in ways that had not been possible twenty years previously. The computer (and therefore the database. had shrunk to a size where it could fit on a desktop, and the neoliberal economic revolution of Thatcherism and Reaganomics saw a surge in financial, workplace, consumer management and in entertainment that both necessitated and exploited the newly available computing power. Several people noticed. In the mainstream sociological tradition there is the Weberian Anthony Giddens, who is given his due by both works, as is Christopher Dandeker who built his rather excellent book *Surveillance, Power and Modernity* (1990) on Giddens’ foundations. There were also those who revived the social control tradition, like Gary Marx in *Undercover* (1988), Stanley Cohen (1985) who is considered by Lyon but not by Hier and Greenberg, and Beniger, whose perhaps somewhat apocalyptic but pioneering volume, *The Control Revolution* (1989), goes unmentioned by both. However it was Shoshana Zuboff’s *In the Age of the Smart Machine* (1989) that set the context for much of what has followed, stressing the changes to *work* and *management* that flowed from computerisation. Lyon recognises the centrality of workplace and Organisation Studies, Organisation Theory and Management. He deals with workplace issues throughout and not just in the box of workplace surveillance, using illustrations from his own study of workplace surveillance to illuminate more general points. But the workplace does not feature strongly in the *Reader*, and given that it constitutes the largest part of waking life for the vast majority of adults in the western world one might expect it to be given a little more prominence. There is one paper on workplace surveillance in Hier and Greenberg and whilst it is a good summary, it is hardly a groundbreaking in Surveillance Studies. So we don’t get Graham Sewell (1992, 1998) (or at least not in the context of workplace surveillance, nor Ball and Wilson (2000), any of the extensive and detailed observational work of Christian Heath and Paul Luff, from as far back as Heath and Luff (1992) to the far more recent Heath *et al.* (2002), nor any number of other workplace specialists who have been absolutely essential to the development of Surveillance Studies.

The late 1980s and early 1990s also saw four contrasting analysts of the database: historian Mark Poster, philosopher Gilles Deleuze, information specialist Oscar Gandy, and computer scientist Roger Clarke. The latter was the originator of the term, ‘dataveillance’ and his 1988 piece which outlines the concept is

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<sup>1</sup> My own view of his contribution and how Surveillance Studies has dealt with it is Murakami Wood (2007).

surely seminal, however he is another ghost haunting the *Reader*. Poster, who was really the first writer to attempt to theorise the database is not referred to either, but Lyon's *Overview* deals with his contribution at some length. Deleuze, regarded by Foucault himself as the most important philosopher of the late Twenty Century, only wrote one short piece on surveillance but manages to say more in these few pages than Poster does in his entire book. Lyon recognises the massive importance of the 'Post-scriptum sur les sociétés de contrôle' (1990) and refers to it frequently. Hier and Greenberg do not, and the piece is not included, which would seem an almost criminal omission from a Surveillance Studies Reader, especially given that it is so short. Perhaps it is already too widely available, but one could say the same about Foucault or Giddens. What Hier and Greenberg do include is discussion of the adaptation of Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of the 'assemblage' and of rhizomatic technologies which was famously introduced to studies of surveillance by Haggerty and Ericson (2000). Whether the idea merits much more than this is debatable, as it is really a more general issue in social theory, developed much further by scholars like Manuel De Landa (2006), and similar points have been made by the Actor-Network theorists, but Hier also includes his own critique of Haggerty and Ericson – I suppose that is the prerogative of an Editor! The final and perhaps the best contribution from this early flourishing of work on electronic surveillance is of course Oscar Gandy's *The Panoptic Sort* (1993). Gandy has two chapters in the *Reader* reflecting a renewed recognition of his importance at the end of a distinguished career, though again, given space limitations, it seems difficult to justify assigning two chapters to anyone, even someone of the status of Gandy or Lyon.

However in the 1980s and into the 1990s, other things were happening too. And they were happening in three specific contexts. The first was the end of the Soviet Union and its allies and the discovery (or more accurately the public admission. of the extent of the surveillance state that had operated in many of the eastern bloc countries. It is quite surprising to see that nothing written about totalitarian social control in this period features in the Reader. The other context was very different. The free market apotheosis of Los Angeles had produced a school of urban theorists who like those of Chicago in the 1950s had seen in their city the future, but a future which didn't work. This was Philip K. Dick's dystopian suburban sprawl, with its identikit neighbourhoods where orange groves had once flourished, where massive shopping malls replaced the Mom and Pop stores and where in the centres, guarded and monitored steel and glass business districts made sure that no-one would disturb the sandwich-eating executives at their lunch in the corporate plazas, where the American dream reached its western extremity and fell off the cliff. The analysts of this sunshine nightmare were not represented by a conventional academic but rather by Mike Davis, a passionate activist journalist as much as a scholar. *City of Quartz* (1990) and the works that followed are essential for Surveillance Studies scholars to understand the origins of the differentiated postmodern 'splintered urbanism' (Graham and Marvin 2001) that gave rise to public space CCTV, the technological trope of the 1990s surveillance society. Neither Lyon nor Hier and Greenberg so much as mention Davis, or indeed the LA school geographers like Steve Herbert (1996) and Steve Flusty (2000) who provided further critique and indeed analysis of the everyday resistance of many watched and excluded groups to this neoliberal fundamentalism and the transformation of their cities into homogenised theme-parks. Further, surveillance developed with strong connections to actual theme-parks and the entertainment industry in the 1980s, as was explored in a hugely influential piece by Shearing and Stenning on surveillance at Disneyworld (1986), which surely should be anthologised in any Surveillance Studies reader and which Lyon gives its rightful place.

The third set of developments took place in the UK, and led Britain to become in the 1990s the archetypal emerging surveillance society, largely because of the massive extension of CCTV in urban areas. The reasons, as Clive Norris and collaborators outlined in two classic texts, *The Maximum Surveillance Society* (1999) and *Surveillance, Closed Circuit Television and Social Control* (1998), were multiple but the roots lay in exactly the kind of neoliberalising urban politics and the effective semi-privatisation of urban spaces and the sanctification of shopping that Davies had identified in LA, but in the more cynical, hierarchical, secretive and constitution-free environment of the UK. Established Surveillance Studies scholars like Nic Groombridge (with Murji, 1994) and Steve Graham were there at the beginning, the latter with his classic piece 'Towns on the Television' (Graham et al. 1996), and a very important

theoretical piece which brought together Marxist, Foucauldian and Baudrillardian strands of surveillance theory (Graham 1998). There soon emerged a multitude of influential and important studies by European criminologists, geographers, sociologists and urban studies specialists like Fyfe and Bannister (1996), Matt Hannah (1997) Short and Ditton (1999), Hille Koskela (2000), Mike McCahill (2001), Ben Goold (2004) and Roy Coleman (2004). Whilst Coleman does have a reading in Hier and Greenberg, there is no excerpt from Norris and Armstrong's *The Maximum Surveillance Society*, described by Lyon as 'seminal' as indeed it is. The British experience is woefully underplayed by the two young Canadians in favour of more from their own country, Canada, in this case from Hier's erstwhile collaborator, Kevin Walby. Like Hier, Walby is also a fine emerging scholar (and, like Hier, also published in *Surveillance & Society*. but I think he would be the first to acknowledge that his work on CCTV could not yet be considered more important for Surveillance Studies than that of Norris or indeed of the many scholars from the UK mentioned here. Indeed one could go further and ask why the work that established the basis for the understanding employed by Norris and many others, Simon and Feeley's (1994) post-Foucauldian work on ideas of new penology and actuarial justice, is not here either.

Further, one might ask why there is no mention of the huge amount of work that came out of Leon Hempel and Eric Töpfer's Urbaneye project that extended the work on CCTV across Europe<sup>2</sup>. There's also been substantial and important work in many languages on surveillance in Europe for example, from Greece's Minas Samatas (2004) to Nils Zurawski, who recently edited a collection in German also entitled *Surveillance Studies* (Zurawski, 2007), however none of these scholars feature in the Reader. Lyon on the other hand spends quite some time expanding on European studies, from the work of the deeply pessimistic Italian theorist, Giorgio Agamben (e.g.: 2005 – see also Douglas, this issue) to France's hugely important Didier Bigo, who has conducted significant empirical work on exclusion and the 'ban' in the context of migration and border control, and his entire largely francophone *Cultures et Conflits* network<sup>3</sup>.

The increasing interest in CCTV also caused historians and historical geographers from Britain and beyond to return to Foucault and beyond and examine the precursors and historical roots of the surveillance society in history and the struggles over identification, policing, gating of streets and terrains as diverse as the public house and the library. Lyon has at least some grasp of this extensive literature and, for example, spends several paragraphs on Le Roy Ladurie's magnificently detailed account of heresy, surveillance and repression in a small French town, *Montaillou* (1990) as well as Edward Higgs' excellent 2004 book on the history of the information society in Britain. However Hier and Greenberg appear oblivious to most of this. Lyon is in general far surer on the historic range and contemporary global spread of surveillance practices and techniques and on the scholarship that this has generated. He quotes work from India, from South Africa and from Japan and beyond and just as one example from my own experience, the amount of work that has gone on in Japan is increasing all the time, with researchers like Kiyoshi Abe who has published in English (e.g.: 2001) and Taro Igarashi (2004) who has not, as well as activist-scholars like Toshimaru Ogura (e.g.: 2004). But in the *Reader* the world outside North America sometimes appear to be a largely empty place perhaps only relevant for the 9/11 effect. This may be unfair – and Hier has elsewhere co-edited a special issue of *International Sociology* on global surveillance with David Lyon – but a volume claiming to be a definitive reader in an evolving field to have not a single piece of recent scholarship that was originally published in a language other than English or which originated beyond the anglophone academic world seem to be wide open to accusations of being much too narrowly focused..

## Contemporary Surveillance Studies

<sup>2</sup> The outputs from this project can be accessed at <http://www.urbaneye.net>

<sup>3</sup> See: <http://www.conflits.org>

So where are we now? Whilst the late 1990s saw an obsession with the technologies of surveillance (and in some sense this is still prevalent), the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century is showing more concern with surveillance in everyday life (e.g.: Staples, 2000) and both books rightly stress this. However there is a danger of going too far the other way. The understanding of information and categorisation that has evolved in STS is crucial for the theoretical approach adopted by Lyon. Ian Hacking is frequently quoted in *Surveillance Studies: an Overview* and Bowker and Star's essential book, *Sorting Things Out* is a foundational text. From my own point of view it would have been good to have extended this a bit further with Law's *Organising Modernity* and more of the work of Bruno Latour, but the fact remains that STS is at the heart of what Lyon is arguing despite him being from well outside this field. STS only features in the *Reader* indirectly through Lyon and through Graham and Wood, indeed there is very little in the way of any work that starts with technology or technological development. The work on surveillance utilising sociotechnical theory that has been emerging around a post-Deleuzian or Latourian/ANT (and after) perspective would seem to merit closer attention than that given by Hier and Greenberg. Certainly the work of Michalis Lianos (2001) in *Le Nouveau Contrôle Sociale*, Jones on 'digital rule' (2001), Thrift and French's 'automatic production of space' (2003), Galloway's 'protocol' (2004), or even Latour and Hermant's (1998) suggestion of the multiple narrow-viewing but comprehensive oligoptica of contemporary society would seem to merit further exploration. There is also remarkably little empirical work on recent sociotechnical developments such as geodemographics and consumer surveillance (surely one of the key issues in contemporary Surveillance Studies?). This could reflect again the rather narrow sociological approach adopted by the editors, were it not for the fact that some of the best work on spatial sorting has been done by sociologists, Mike Burrows, and collaborators (2004, 2006) on class and neighbourhood formation and geodemographics are pieces, at least one of which no reader in *Surveillance Studies* should be without. One might also argue a very strong case for earlier geographical work by Michael Curry (1998). The *Overview* gets the balance rather better and even deals with the implications of pervasive or ubiquitous computing of which there is in itself a massive literature, starting with Weiser (1991), a lot of which deals directly with surveillance and privacy (e.g.: Dodge and Kitchen, 2005).

We are also in an important time of contestation over the cultural meanings of surveillance as control, as repression and as empowerment and pleasure. I would question whether it is adequate, as the *Reader* does, to give surveillance and public opinion a whole section to itself, especially when too much work on responses to surveillance in a broader cultural sense are missing or underrepresented. The response of artists, and in particular media artists, to surveillance, and indeed their use of surveillance tropes and techniques has been perhaps the most exciting area of Surveillance Studies. Both Hier and Greenberg and Lyon consider 'cultural' responses more generally, which in both cases stick to pretty safe and established (and remarkably similar) ground with Orwell, Atwood, Kafka and Dick. Lyon has a more extensive consideration of film with a lengthy discussion of *The Conversation*, *Enemy of the State* and the more recent *Red Road*, and Hier and Greenberg include Mike Nellis' exhaustively knowledgeable piece on the fictional depictions of electronic monitoring. Neither work has any consideration of other art forms. In thinking about this, it is worth comparing Levin et al.'s *Reader* in all but name, *CTRL [SPACE]* from 2002. Whilst functioning ostensibly as a catalogue of one of ZKM's innovative exhibitions, it also features reprints of classic texts (including both Foucault and Deleuze) plus some new pieces ranging across such subjects as Bentham, aural surveillance, the concept of the Eye of God and of course descriptions and excerpts from a whole variety of artistic responses to surveillance. It's a beautiful and brilliant *object* (not just a text) and still my favourite collection on surveillance ever published. Lyon does deal with some of the excellent cultural criticism of surveillance that has emerged over the last ten years, including Thomas Mathiesen's (1997) 'The Viewer Society,' an essential piece on the concept of synopticism and its relationship to the panoptic drive in contemporary society. He also engages with Thomas Levin (editor of *CTRL [SPACE]*), and with John McGrath's 2004 *Loving Big Brother*, an instant classic which deals beautifully with the interface of performance, pleasure and surveillance. Further, he discusses digital critics like Larry Lessig (1999) and Alex Galloway (2004) and communications scholars like Mark Andrejevic (2002, 2004), whose pieces on the work on being watched are again, vital. One could even argue that Lyon, for a 'grand old man' of the field, seems far more au fait with the fluid shifting world of new media than the hip young tyros, Hier and Greenberg. There's no space in the *Reader*

for anything from Cultural Studies past or present, which seems more than a little perverse given the claims as to the intended readership. It would have been so much better with Matthiesen, Andrejevic and McGrath at least. I also wonder why they have chosen to include one piece (by Urry and Sheller) which has nothing directly to do with surveillance at all, but deals with the sociology of mobility. Certainly mobility, its enabling and prevention, is key to contemporary surveillance but why not reprint a piece that deals with this head on? There are plenty of such works and there was even a special issue of *Surveillance & Society* on this very topic.

We are also entering, as Galloway (2004) suggests, a bioinformatic age: the importance of the ‘body as information’ (van der Ploeg, 1999; 2003 – the latter piece from one of Lyon’s previous collections) is at the heart of contemporary surveillance in all domains and not simply the medical where it might be more obvious. The only piece in the *Reader* than deals with this in any way directly is Moore and Haggerty on drugs testing, but this is more about responsabilisation – a key concept in itself of course – rather than issues of the body. One would have particularly liked to have seen something of the work of the late advisory editor of *Surveillance & Society*, Dorothy Nelkin (1994, 1999) for example, the aforementioned Irma van der Ploeg, the work of Nikolas Rose on the intersection of policing and biological models of culpability and predisposition to crime (2000), or Hillary Rose’s path breaking 2001 report on the Icelandic government’s privatisation of its citizen’s DNA, not to mention any of the massive legacy of work on bodily identification and what has come to be called biometrics, including the more polemical works like Phil Agre’s ‘Your face is not a barcode’ (2001) or Agamben’s ‘Non au tatouage biopolitique’ (2004).

Finally, it is of course also a post-9/11 era. *CTRL [SPACE]* also includes a piece by Duncan Campbell on ECHELON (see also: Campbell, 1999) which serves to highlight another significant area of Surveillance Studies and which is under-emphasised by Hier and Greenberg, that of warfare, espionage, military intelligence and military surveillance. Military developments have a tendency to cross-fertilise into the civil arena, indeed the entire contemporary surveillance economy emerged immediately after the Cold War with corporations involved in supplying the armed forces looked to open up replacement civilian markets by exploiting a growing fear of crime. This of course has only been highlighted further by 9/11 and after. Work by many including James Der Derian (2001), Manuel De Landa (whose 1991 work, *War in Age of Intelligent Machines* deliberately echoed Zuboff) and others such as Jon Coaffee (2003) and media artists like Jordan Crandall, might have served to highlight this area. There is a danger that we in Surveillance Studies get too caught up in various post-9/11 agendas which end up legitimating arguments about ‘balancing’ liberties and security (which arguments ultimately libertarians tend to lose). Both books avoid this, but whilst even Lyon doesn’t delve deeply into the new importance of the military in the *Overview* he does at least acknowledge its importance in more fundamental ways than he has done in previous work: it is a significant part of the mix.

## Some Conclusions

Both these works are situated within Surveillance Studies and will help in turn to situate the field for the future, and as such both have much to offer but also leave much to be desired. Certainly, Readers are more tricky enterprises than they might appear and I would not condemn any attempt to produce one, and especially not the first one in its field. However, the more one examines Hier and Greenberg’s *Reader*, the more it appears to be overly Canadian / Anglo-American, and lacks something in range, clarity and discrimination. In this regard it isn’t really a ‘Surveillance Studies Reader’ rather it is a ‘Sociology of Surveillance Reader,’ with one or two nods to anthropology, geography and social policy. Why the *Reader* is the way it is could be down to a range of possibilities, including: first, the undergraduate focus; second, that the requirements imposed by the publisher were too constraining; third, that this was a deliberate strategy by the editors in making their own implicit argument about the boundaries of the field; fourth, that there was not quite enough thought put into the range and contents; or, finally – and the least likely explanation given the talent involved – that the editors’ knowledge of the multiple areas that touch on this field is too limited. I cannot give an answer. Most of what they have included is entirely fine and I

am sure it will serve adequately as an introductory source book for undergraduates in sociology. However it does not represent the range, diversity and transdisciplinarity of Surveillance Studies as I know it. Perhaps I look at the field with rose-tinted spectacles and perhaps also I claim too many works to be ‘Surveillance Studies’ and, to be fair to both sets of authors, I am really using their works to make a general argument about Surveillance Studies. But this is only because of what both works claim to be.

Whereas the *Reader* leaves one slightly dissatisfied, the *Overview* on the other hand is clearly the best summative work on Surveillance Studies yet produced. It is not without its flaws and limitations however and my final impression was that I was unsure whether I learnt anything new from it. This is a strange thing to say perhaps, and it could either reflect the fact that this is a summary work that draws on the huge amount of other writing Lyon has produced over the last twenty years in Surveillance Studies or from the fact that Lyon’s style is so deceptively simple. The writing has clarity and directness, both of which are all too infrequently found in academia, but at the same time he manages to marshal a massive range of complex issues and fashion a coherent central argument. What this means is that after reading the book, you feel as if you had known everything in it all along. If I have any more significant criticism it is simply that there is not enough on the future of Surveillance Studies. There are some suggestions scattered in the text on what needs to be researched and of course one comes out of the book with many ideas of one’s own on this, but it would have been nice to have some of ‘the vision thing’ towards the end. But, if I had to recommend one book on Surveillance Studies that everyone should read, regardless of what they think they know about surveillance, this would be it. It really does make me feel part of an exciting, growing, diverse and worthwhile enterprise.

And, whatever the colour of my spectacles, Surveillance Studies is truly global and thoroughly transdisciplinary, with researchers from all over Europe and North America, Australia, Japan, India, South Africa, Brazil and beyond. It crosses Anthropology, Communications, Criminology, Cultural Studies, Geography, Organisation Studies, Philosophy, Social Psychology, Sociology, STS, Urban Studies, and many more. Scholars in all these fields have been working on surveillance in relative isolation, but more and more are now increasingly aware of something recognisable called ‘Surveillance Studies’. I think that it is vital that we allow this diversity to flourish and cross fertilize rather than for any one discipline to try to colonise the field and subsume it as part of its own terrain. I am wary of Surveillance Studies, as it becomes more recognized, becoming at the same time more institutionalised. However the scope and direction of the field needs to be debated and discussed. These volumes both contribute handsomely to that discussion, and I hope that the authors and others will continue respond to the challenge.

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