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Surveillance Studies needs Gender and Sexuality. That is why this issue came into being. Although this is a comparatively short issue of *Surveillance and Society*, perhaps representing the fact that the critique of surveillance through these lenses is still in its infancy, its contributions highlight some of the ways in which studies of gender and sexuality are fundamental to mounting a critique of surveillance.

Surveillance theory holds that surveillance processes are routine, systemic, purposeful and focused (Surveillance Studies Network 2006). They are woven into everyday life. They aggregate individuals into populations, in part by creating robust, replicable analytical categories. This is done with the strategic objective of institutional management of those populations and the everyday life of the individuals that comprise them. Marginalisation, exclusion and mass discrimination are necessary byproducts of this manageable order.

On reading the papers in this issue, it emerges that the political economies, methods, outcomes, and profound normalizing tendencies associated with surveillance are deeply amenable to critiques informed by theories of gender and sexuality.

These articles turn our attention to three particularly problematic phenomena that surround surveillance practices. The first is the oft-cited and fallacious public response to surveillance as being ‘if I have nothing to hide then I have nothing to fear’. The second concerns the outcomes of categorisation for gendered and sexualised subjects. The third highlights how intermediated surveillant methods produce new forms of vulnerability.

Nothing to hide: nothing to fear?

One of the common concerns amongst the papers in this issue is that of subjectivity and the experience of surveillance. Hitherto, studies of the surveilled subject have been limited to a very narrow range of areas, as Ball (2009) describes:

To date, discussions of the surveillance society have assumed a limited range of positions for the surveilled subject, reducing the experience of surveillance to one of oppression, coercion, ambivalence or ignorance. Few studies have suggested to the contrary (Koskela 2004; McGrath 2004). In some circumstances it is the case that the experience of surveillance features coercion (for example, in the mandatory provision of DNA on arrest in the UK to feed the Police National Computer DNA database), oppression (for example, those whose international mobilities are deemed ‘risky’) ambivalence or ignorance (for example, consumers who are unaware that their data doubles are structuring their access to goods and services), but this is not the whole story. Indeed if the subject is perfectly docile and compliant, as Foucault predicted, then we have perfect surveillance, which is rarely the case. The fact that individuals sometimes appear to do little to counter surveillance does not mean that surveillance means nothing to them. Surveillance may be tolerated or even sought after because the giving of data satisfies individual anxieties, or may represent patriotic or participative values to the individual. It may also be the case that individuals are ambivalent towards surveillance because there is sometimes no identifiable ‘watcher’ or perceivable ‘control’ being asserted, or because the pleasures of performative display override the scrutinies that come hand-in-hand with self-revelation (Ball 2009: 640-641).

Papers within this issue begin to augment the documentation of the experience of surveilled subjects. In particular they challenge the normative statement of ‘nothing to hide: nothing to fear,’ a response which is often cited in ‘vox pop’ media coverage of the surveillance society. They do so by problematising the association between that which is hidden with that which is shameful - an association which is implicit within the phrase ‘nothing to hide: nothing to fear’. In the Anglo-American north, the politics of what is hidden and what is revealed are imbued with gendered and sexualised politics of heteronormativity and shame, and of vulnerability and fear. In this volume, Toby Beauchamp and Kevin Walby, for example, highlight how the equating of ‘what is hidden’ with ‘what is shameful’ is problematic for transgender and genderqueer communities.

Beauchamp’s article on transgendered people and border security explores contradictory revelation and concealment practices across medical, political, and security discourses, and the almost insurmountable difficulty of managing a usable gender identity at their intersection.

In Walby’s paper ‘Are you looking for fags?’ we are reminded of McGrath’s (2004) accounts of the Manhattan gay bar ‘Splash’, and of other sexual practices within queer subcultures that embrace exposure as both political tactic and erotic thrill. Walby explores how that sort of publicness is necessarily marginalised and suppressed within institutional frameworks of “official” and normative publicness, such as that maintained and policed by Canada’s ‘National Capital Commission.’

Categorically just?

To date, one of the themes within surveillance studies has been the discriminatory and exclusionary outcomes of social sorting. Discussions of practices within *inter alia* consumer surveillance (Danna and Gandy 2002), the surveillance of mobile populations (Amoore and DeGoede 2005) and surveillance within political processes (Sussman and Galicio 2004) highlight the difficulties with categorisation which arises as a result of social sorting.

Social sorting has very real consequences for subjects. For example, errors occur when databases are combined, inaccurate or unrepresentative data are used and missing data are ‘filled in’ (Danna and Gandy 2002), leading to the observation that social sorting is nearly always ‘wrong’ at the level of the individual (Berry and Linoff 2000). Recent evidence (Canhoto 2007; Beckett 2008) also suggests that the production of profiles is socially embedded and replicates the prejudices of data mining experts. Potential is created

for prejudices to be written into algorithms which identify risk, entitlement and criminality. As a result data subjects may unwittingly suffer discrimination, or may be wrongly allocated to categories they do not belong. Moreover inadequacies tend to be perpetuated because replacing legacy systems is both expensive and complex (Head 2007).

Social sorting is often based on geodemographic information, and ascribes value judgement to different groups of people. For example, particular consumption preferences, whilst forming distinct groups, are mapped onto places when combined with information such as a postcode. Lifestyles and places hence begin to merge (Burrows and Gane 2006) and neighbourhood characteristics come to determine the products and services offered to individuals living there. Some of these characteristics include discriminatory categories the likes of which would be illegal in other settings. For example, in *Cherry vs. Amoco Oil Co*, a noteworthy legal case in the US, it was revealed that a white woman who lived in a predominantly black neighbourhood was refused a credit card not because of her personal credit history, but because the postcode in which she lived was considered too risky in the credit checking system.

One of the most important things to note about the categorisation practices usually discussed in studies of surveillance is that categories are statistically generated. Central to the operation of a category is its norm, or average: the ascription of any case – human or otherwise – to a category implies some kind of proximity to the norm expressed by the category. Categories thus have a normalising tendency. And whilst the majority of the work on categorisation to date critiques at the level of systems and practices, some of the papers within this issue address the implications of categorisation itself at the local level. Kathryn Conrad, in particular, critiques the normalizing tendency of categories in terms of the pressure it places on queer subjects, while Anthony Coronos and Susan Hardy, and Kevin Walby show how essentialist discourses around gender and sexuality normalise diverse responses to surveillant processes.

Intermediation and vulnerability

Surveillance typically occurs at a distance. It is characterised by chains of intermediaries which link the watched to some distant watcher. ‘Intermediation’ is a key socio-technical process which ‘binds (or unbinds) networks of individual actors or institutions’ (Mansell 2002: 4). The intermediary, therefore, is a person, object or thing, which helps to achieve this binding. As Callon (1991) states, intermediaries comprise ‘anything passing between actors that defines the relationship between them’ (Callon 1991: 134 - 135), and can be forms of texts: books, newspapers, magazines, or material artefacts, skills, or money, in its various formats.

Taking the general example of a housing estate CCTV system, information becomes an intermediary as it circulates from residents, to security guards and local services. Mugshots, data, electronic keys and other information bind the system together and enable it to function. People also act as intermediaries: their savviness with the operation, scope and location of surveillance technologies, local knowledges of CCTV operators, background cultural knowledge and awareness about surveillance as a whole, are all significant. Similarly, competing local knowledges of urban residents, local workers (some of whom can resist surveillance), and larger, opposing organizations can disrupt and contest local orders created by surveillance systems. Nowhere is this phenomenon more clearly illustrated in the film ‘Red Road’ (Andrea Arnold 2006), where a CCTV operator uses the system to seek her own revenge on the perpetrator of a crime which resulted in the deaths of her partner and son. The film starkly reveals how, despite her ability to track the ex-offender to his flat and understand his movements and location, the profound social distance between them is a gap which she struggles to bridge.

This is precisely the point examined by Brian Beaton, in his artistic presentation ‘Random Digit Darling’. Beaton argues that the development of the telephone survey, which was supposed to protect research workers doing door-to-door survey work, created new forms of vulnerability for survey respondents. He examines the experiences of women who are subject to ‘databating’ – obscene phone calls made by individuals posing as telephone interviewers. Beaton highlights how more socially distant forms of

surveillance – surveillance, which occurs through chains of intermediaries – creates new and implicitly gendered forms of erotics and vulnerabilities.

Conclusion

Although the critique of surveillance from the perspectives of gender and sexuality is at an embryonic stage, these papers present a first foray into what we hope will be a rich and illuminating way of reading surveillance practices. We see the contribution of these perspectives to concern the local, the discursive, the performative and the embodied: analyses of which are deeply lacking within surveillance studies. At this point we'd like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their help in producing this issue, and everyone who has been involved. We know it's been a long time coming.

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