

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

KEVIN D. HAGGERTY and RICHARD V. ERICSON (Eds.), *The New Politics of Surveillance and Visibility*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006, vi +386 p.

Books about surveillance that offer little theoretical or empirical rigour are becoming quite commonplace in academic and popular literature today. *The New Politics of Surveillance and Visibility*, edited by two of the biggest names in the field of surveillance studies specifically and criminology more generally, is thankfully not one of these generic dust collectors. The edited volume is bursting with papers that push theoretical limits and challenge readers to take the politics of intensified surveillance and visibility seriously. In their introduction, Haggerty and Ericson note that the analytical category “surveillance” does not adequately represent the diverse practices and processes involved in “watching” and “being watched.” Much of the book deals with “being visualized” by means other than cameras or cards (i.e., various media). In this vein, David Lyon argues contemporary societies are “scopophilic” inasmuch as they enjoy watching others as well as, very often, being watched by others. Of course, “watching” is metaphorical language referring to many surveillance practices that are not necessarily visual (use of social insurance numbers, giving information when you book an airline ticket, etc.).

The major contribution *The New Politics of Surveillance and Visibility* makes to surveillance studies is to show how the relationship between various communication processes informs the legitimation and thus the proliferation of various kinds of surveillance, and how media themselves can sometimes be thought of as forms of surveillance (hence the focus on visibility in the title and in the papers). Organized in three parts (Theorizing Surveillance and Visibility, Police and Military Surveillance, Consumer and Electronic Surveillance), this book draws together well-known sociologists, criminologists, communications scholars, and political scientists, giving the book a very transdisciplinary feeling.

Gary Marx expresses delight in his chapter at the growth of surveillance studies compared to the modest attention surveillance used to garner as a topic of social scientific inquiry. Those who have been following surveillance studies for some time might be glad (or shocked, depending on the allegiances one holds) to read that William Bogard breaks with his own work and argues he previously focused too narrowly in his book *The Simulation of Surveillance* (1996) on the hyperreal elements of prediction-oriented monitoring. In his chapter, Bogard offers a succinct reading of

Foucault and Deleuze's writings on the topic (focusing on the differences between spatially-bound disciplinary apparatuses and more extensive societies of control). If Bogard's contribution is the most theoretically astute, Aaron Doyle's is perhaps the clearest demonstration of how watching and being watched are intimately connected. An extension of his mediatization thesis from *Arresting Images* (2003), which argues that images in media reports feed back on and reshape the organization of policing and other institutions, Doyle conceptualizes the broadcasting of surveillance images as emotionally charged and "anti-actuarial." Its affective appeal resonates with audiences and influences the desire for more or less surveillance.

Christopher Dandeker and Kevin Haggerty focus on surveillance, war and military. Dandeker argues that the fine calibration of contemporary weaponry as well as networks of information allowing for precise targeting and continuous system operations are part of a military transformation towards downsized, versatile and entrepreneurial armies. An equally important aspect of this transformation is the emerging role of the soldier-statesmen who must be adept at handling diplomacy and media interaction. Contra the argument that advanced technology accelerates the speed of war, Haggerty argues whilst new information and mobility technologies allow militaries to move at speeds inconceivable in decades past, the same technologies decelerate the speed of war and often contribute to mission failures.

Both Brodeur/Leman-Langlois and Whitaker touch on the American government's dream of (and concrete plans for) "total information awareness," offering different analyses of the Patriot Act and erosion of the distinction among law enforcement, intelligence gathering, and national security practices post-9/11. Joseph Turow, Serra Tinic, Emily Martin, David Wall and Oscar Gandy Jr. discuss aspects of consumerism and electronic surveillance. For instance, Turow introduces the concept "customer relationship media" for theorizing the connection between consumerism, surveillance and interactive television. Martin discusses mood charts as a technique of self-governance and monitoring of the mental self.

This volume's broad scope and the way the contributors dissolve disciplinary boundaries are the great assets of *The New Politics of Surveillance and Visibility*. Yet I do not believe the book takes its title seriously enough, at least not when it comes to the question of a radical surveillance politics. What is this politics and what can it become? Certainly unease with institutional power is underlying most of the pieces, and is made overt in Gandy's argument that techniques of data collection and knowledge production often transform public and private relations. A hazy concern with resisting institutional power is similarly underlying all of these writings, and given strong voice in John Gilliom's piece on struggles against and subjectivities of surveillance. But a key topic we know little about in surveillance studies – how people experience surveillance – is not explored in this book. The relationship between

articulated experiences and a radical surveillance politics remains severed. It seems as if mainstream surveillance studies are frightened by the prospect of phenomenology and subject-oriented inquiry. The humility of an approach to people that starts with their everyday world as problematic has a radical potential because of the limitations that define substantive theories and category-driven scholarship. A critical politics of resistance to surveillance must be situational and based on sociality. To have any hope of supplementing this politics, surveillance studies must make an ontological shift so that the dialogic structure of experience is at the center of inquiry. What this politics can become is always emergent as surveillance relations of ruling and the places of people in those relations are unconcealed.

Although, like previous works in the field, *The New Politics of Surveillance and Visibility* does not meet the challenge of expanding surveillance studies towards serious engagement with the everyday experience of surveillance; it is, nevertheless, a dynamite combination of excellent scholarship and profound thought.

Kevin Walby, Carleton University.

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