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Book Review

Ball, Kirstie, Kevin D. Haggerty and David Lyon eds.
2012. *The Routledge Handbook of Surveillance Studies*. London: Routledge.
437pp. £108 (Hardback), ISBN 978-0-415-58883-6

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This ground-breaking book contains over forty essays by some of the leading commentators on the burgeoning academic field of Surveillance Studies, covering most if not all of the critical challenges of surveillance and population control; policing, intelligence and war; the new social networking media; the emerging capacities of geo-location, identity recognition and real time tracking, as well as the thorny questions of future regulation and resistance, over a generous volume of some 437 pages.

Whilst there are other excellent Surveillance Studies readers, such as the work edited by Hier and Greenberg (2007), the formidable profile, diversity, breadth and scope of the Routledge collection, make it quite simply, definitive. Here we have authors such as James Rule, Gary Marx, David Lyon and Clive Norris—who essentially founded the field—mixed with new authors who take the insights of these pathfinders into new domains. The Handbook could not be more timely, as the pace of technological innovation in surveillance transcends many of the existing legal and cultural limits and understandings of its role and function. The year of its publication sees new evaluation and ethical initiatives by the EU, such as the PACT project which will question 27,000 citizens on their perceptions of the trade-off between security and privacy. 2012 also heralded a new awareness of policy in research funding into security to fully evaluate the societal impacts of surveillance research which is now a formal EC requirement for all the work it funds. But the wave of second and third order impacts of the new surveillance capacity are affecting people world-wide, often with little comprehension of what can now be remotely seen.

The Handbook is divided into four substantive parts which cover (i) the broader issues of understanding surveillance; (ii) surveillance as sorting, (iii) the variable contexts of surveillance and (iv) the question of how we should limit surveillance: each part coming with an invaluable introduction to core concepts and background material.

The first section has a comprehensive overview of Surveillance Studies by the editors, Lyon, Haggerty and Ball, which provide key building blocks to understand surveillance covered by the introductory chapters. Contributions by Elmer, Bogart and Ceyhan take theories of surveillance beyond Foucault. Such theory is complemented in chapters by Koskela who examines the problematic of surveillance and gender, looking at victims, targets, perpetrators and players; Weller who looks at the historical rise of the ‘information state’; Browne who critically appraises the process of radicalising surveillance; and Rule’s examination of the creation of the ‘needs’ for surveillance and the early days of forging a movement to protect privacy.

These preliminary reflections are complemented by a section examining the evolution of ‘cultures of surveillance,’ which focus on how it is performed (McGrath); how it has become ubiquitous (Andrejevic); the creation of ‘surveillance workers’ some of whom are ordinary citizens persuaded to either watch or upload imagery (Smith), and how society reimagines these processes of monitoring through literature, film and TV (Kammerer).

Part II examines the various dimensions of surveillance as sorting with fascinating creative contributions by Gandy on statistical surveillance which provides so called ‘actionable intelligence’ via remote sensing which can change life chances whilst targets remain unaware of how or why they were ‘sorted.’ Turow and Draper explore the advertising industry’s new logics of targeting via organised knowledge of people’s habits provided by the web and how specific users prioritise their search choices. Neyland and Kroener evaluate these new capacities in terms of mass supervision and the proliferation of tasks now allocated to digital surveillance from traffic monitoring, anti-terrorism and drug dealing control. They critically challenge how the justification of the ‘stranger society’ are invoked to further the notion that perceptions of security/insecurity can be risk managed with technology.

Van de Ploeg questions the practical and normative relevance of the new capacities to surveil human bodies and what biometrically authenticated and profiled bodies means in terms of individual health via screening but also the potential for a new techno-politics of exclusion at borders where people can be automatically categorised as wanted, unwanted, legal or illegal, low, medium or high security risk. Sa’di shows how historically such sorting has always been used by colonialism to create tiered systems of those who can pass and those who must be monitored. Such notions are taken further by Jenkins who looks at identity, surveillance and modernity in terms of knowing and sorting out ‘who is who’ in an impersonal sense of confirming identity. We are just at the beginning of fully automating the architecture of such systems and Hayes’ chapter explores the role of the commercial players who will make this all happen for a price: the surveillance–industrial complex. Hayes views the role of this complex as corrosive since governments are currently outsourcing policy to private companies who create lucrative new technical fixes based on ever more powerful surveillance systems. Hayes criticises the pre-eminent role of this complex in militarising many dimensions of normal life post 9/11: at borders, within cities, and across nations and regions as lucrative ‘joined up’ security systems or ecologies evolve into new security ideologies such as ‘Homeland Security.’ His chapter highlights the roles of business orientated NGO’s (BONGO’s), the enormous amounts of money involved and how such business can be practically researched.

Part III acknowledges that surveillance and the surveillance society ‘are not singularities.’ Everything depends on context and the differing norms, beliefs and associated power relations of ‘inclusion, exclusion, normativity and exception.’ These contexts are explored in detail, always with the caveat that surveillance scholars need to reflect on their own boundaries in engaging with surveillance phenomena.

This section contains some fascinating contributions on population control, with Adey exploring systems of border control and filters and the many ways that distributed systems of data-capture facilitate the export of border controls; crime and policing, where Fussey and Coaffee delve into urban spaces of surveillance and how certain spaces in the UK and in China have pioneered new surveillance architectures. Ruppert takes this notion of population supervision further with an evaluation of census practices and the attempt to oversee the population as a whole. But why stop at people? Donaldson reports on surveillance and non-humans and core issues such as borders, biosecurity and trade and the emergent processes of food chain surveillance, in terms of rapid trace back to source. The relevance of animal surveillance to evolving maximum security prison processing is part of the record but how do such institutional surveillance paradigms further proliferate? Taylor provides some insights in her chapter on the rise of surveillance in schools, whether it is via CCTV, RIFID, faceREGISTER systems or other

biometric access controls, such microcosms breed institutionalised security cultures, which Taylor shows have not gone unchallenged—especially by the ACLU in the United States.

Haggerty expertly opens up the wider vistas of surveillance, crime and the police from the social constructionist viewpoint that crime is not a naturally given phenomenon—‘but that certain acts become crimes through highly variable institutional practices of categorisation, monitoring and processing.’ Through this critical lens, he deconstructs practices of ‘snitching,’ ‘undercover policing’ and the wide array of police surveillance technologies and practices as well as the new phenomena of the surveilled police and what that means, especially in terms of police-public relations. This is a theme further analysed by McCahill, addressing crime surveillance and the media. How has crime and surveillance become part of what he labels ‘infotainment’? Just as important is the understanding of media effects and their role in creating ‘moral panics,’ especially evident post 9/11. McCahill echoes Haggerty’s observations about what Brian Martin has called the ‘backfire’ potential of citizen journalists, who watch the watchers, to ensure accountability.

In a paradoxical contribution on the ‘success of failure,’ Norris drills down into the objectivity of this notion of accountability of surveillance technologies as praxis. He quotes Stephen Graham’s works on ‘CCTV as the fifth utility’ which predicted the inevitable spread of CCTV within 20 years to a near ubiquitous mosaic of sub-systems. Norris examines the politics of this development in practice. He documents the proliferation of systems, notwithstanding the fact that any impact on crime reduction remains unproven, and predicts CCTV networks will rapidly globalise. Botello exemplifies this process by using the case study of surveillance and urban violence in Latin America. His analysis shows emerging patterns of social exclusion via gated communities which are designed to protect elites from violence and insecurity in the urban sprawl; but also as an indicator regarding how ‘particular forms of governance are exercised.’

Part III also includes sections on security intelligence and war, where Wilson examines the burgeoning area of military surveillance. Some of this is historical and theoretical but he also covers the so called Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) which has seen an integration of new stealth, surveillance and targeting technologies such as drones and ‘Combat Zones that see.’ He also mentions the extent to which expensive military R&D surveillance since the Vietnam war has cascaded down into civilian police via helicopters with flight-stabilised CCTV, C4I police control rooms and biometric driven real-time ID recognition. Some of the analysis here draws on the work of Stephen Graham regarding future urban warfare and is excellent. It is a sign of how rapidly this area is changing that the notion of automated self-deciding weapons and surveillance systems, which are dismissed as potentially fanciful, was—at the time of review—the subject of a new DoD Directive (DoD 2012) and a new campaign report by Human Rights Watch (HRW 2012). Bigo, however, cautions against assuming that the contemporary situation is now more dangerous than ever, since there are what he calls professional ‘guilds’ whose role is to market and prioritise such perceptions. In a piece which critically deconstructs aspects of the politics of (in)security, he provides further ammunition for those suspicious of the limitations of current realist and idealist constructivist approaches. Monahan makes a practical stab at determining recent catalysts for enhanced population surveillance in his chapter on surveillance and terrorism, highlighting the fragility of old civil liberty certainties in the US, post 9/11—with specific reference to the Patriot Act. Gates’ work segues into the deconstruction of this multi-faceted and multi-funded paranoia by detailing the subsequent proliferation of the ‘Homeland Security’ paradigm, especially to neighbouring countries Canada and Mexico, with contaminating fallout for all of Europe.

The surveillance of production, consumption and administration is addressed here by Sewell who creatively examines workplace surveillance from a range of vertical, horizontal, simple, complex, direct and indirect perspectives. His pungent views on university managers who have successfully imposed such quantitative performance measures on research outcomes brought some light relief as even in writing

this review piece, the reviewer is subject to such intrusive surveillance. What is worse perhaps is the added torture of being surveilled by urgent stress management pro-formas, that themselves cause stress because everyone knows such practices are mere lip-service to 'objective' welfare indicators of the new designated academic work units of production. Sewell makes important observations on how to live with workplace surveillance that might be extended into other dimensions of living sanely in over-scrutinised work and living spaces. Webster reminds us of how public administration processes and bureaucracy have normalised such surveillance practices and embedded them in modern life but that this is not an egalitarian process—certain redlined zones and geographic spaces are over scrutinised. For him, 'administration is the engine of modern surveillance.' Such administrative surveillance has also infected the business of consuming goods and services, according to Pridmore, in an effort to 'influence, control and monitor consumer choices.' Pridmore goes on to show how the power of this surveillance depends on consumer collaboration while 'mass customisation depends on creating the illusion of personal relationship, whilst personal data sharing can undercut such manufactured frameworks.'

In the global context, Murakami Wood explores the symbiotic needs of globalisation and surveillance. In a perceptive analysis he recognises that the globalisation of surveillance practices is also entwined with the 'surveillance of globalization.' He factors into that paradigm notions of investment, credit worthiness, the demands of the IMF, the markets, various co-dependent policies such as the war on drugs/terror; the monitoring of national resources which Murakami Wood sees as 'tools of global hegemony,' or what Johan Galtung has identified as structural imperialism. He correctly identifies the surveillance of the international telecommunications systems as a vital part of maintaining extant inequalities. Murakami Wood recognises the challenges in rectifying such an inhumane system and this analysis will in all probability become increasingly important as the international crisis deepens. So how do these experts believe that challenge can be accomplished? The short answer is with great difficulty!

One paradox identified by Bruno is that the very convergence of information technology, telecommunications and distributed communications networks which facilitate participatory movements for change, also lend themselves to expanded possibilities for monitoring and classifying personal information, friendship networks etc. She informs us that so-called 'digital natives'—the generation who have grown up accepting digital communications as part of their tool box for organising their personal lives, are more than willing to share personal information on networks and platform. Official intelligence and policing networks have grown up around surveilling such data. Some enable members of the public to engage in this surveillance, either on behalf of the authorities, or simply in using systems that reproduce police methods to data-mine contacts, friends and family in their own networks to uncover personal information. He warns that underneath participation, new capacities emerge for data profiling, data mining and dataveillance. Yet users have shown little awareness of these emergent capacities. Young people are especially vulnerable to such paternalistic monitoring and Steeves explores the history of the online surveillance of children, whether out of concern or for reasons of more efficient control, or for better commercial exploitation.

Part IV is concerned with the vexed question of limiting surveillance, whether by individuals or NGOs such as Privacy International or No2ID. Core issues of ethics, law and policy are explored by authors such as Stoddart who questions whether rights-based approaches are adequate to deal with the technological sophistication of contemporary surveillance. If, as David Lyon has asserted, instrumental approaches to surveillance oust past approaches in examining the form and type of principles which were based on morality, how best should we intervene and when? His answer in part is to follow a rights-based set of principles which, even if they are limited, can generate regulatory frameworks. Raab takes this notion further in examining how principles and norms covering not just individuals but groups can be implemented to regulate surveillance. He asks in this context whether old norms such as privacy or data protection have been rendered obsolete. His solution is to revise and extend these principles into prophylactic systems which can in time produce a new surveillance ethics.

And yet as Kerr and Barrigar observe, actually protecting privacy, identity and anonymity is now extremely difficult in our networked societies. Shifting social and technological architectures are rapidly emerging which ‘transcend the legal domain.’ Such challenges of regulating surveillance networks through new institutional arrangements are further taken up by Regan. At the time of reviewing, in the UK these issues are very much ‘live’ in the wake of the Leveson Inquiry into the phone hacking scandals of News International. She evaluates whether surveillance and privacy regulatory arrangements are best handled by government; by extra-governmental regulatory bodies; by international arrangements or whether self-regulation is adequate.

Unfortunately, except for the wealthy few who can afford legal counsel when things go wrong, taking a legal route to challenge unwanted surveillance is a prerogative of only a well-heeled minority. The final sections include analyses by Gilliom and Monahan on how ordinary people exert ‘everyday resistance’ to reject unwanted surveillance by a simple politics of the deed. According to them, these everyday resistances enable people to ‘carve out spaces of personal power and control.’ Whilst such actions by their very nature are hidden, they forge a practical critique of surveillance. This covert critique approach is contrasted by Bennett with the full frontal opposition to the surveillance society and related practices taken by privacy advocates. For him this is a world-wide phenomenon which needs to be promoted in a transnational way to ensure global democratic health. The book ends with a welcome essay by Abu-Laban on the politics of surveillance, which emphasises the role of using Human Rights norms, rather than just a privacy approach, in resisting encroaching surveillance. This insight may become more potent over time since Surveillance Studies researchers, by becoming ever more embroiled in the politics of developments, will need political as well as academic common sense to prevail against the on-going militarisation of surveillance capacities, with all that that entails.

If I have one fundamental criticism of this volume, it is its cost of over £100—and that is from a reviewer who has already bought four hardback copies and an e-copy for our university library. Routledge would do a service to the Surveillance Studies community if they published an inexpensive paperback version that students in these austere times could afford to buy rather than steal.

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