Dialogue | Introduction: The State of Sousveillance

Bryce Clayton Newell

University of Oregon, USA
bcnewell@uoregon.edu

In a landmark essay published in the third issue of *Surveillance & Society* in 2003, Mann, Nolan, and Wellman (2003: 332) described an inverted form of "veillance" (or watching) by resituating surveillance "technologies of control on individuals, offering panoptic technologies to help them observe those in authority." And, with that aim in mind, the concept of *sousveillance*—an "inverse panopticon" (Mann, Nolan, and Wellman 2003: 332) that, at its simplest, "means 'watching from below'" (Mann and Ferenbok 2013: 19)—was born. Only a few years later, Ganascia (2010: 491) argued that "sousveillance now plays a dominant role in modern societies." This, we are told, ushered in "a new regime… in which powerful people were permanently observed by those they are supposed to dominate" (Ganascia 2010: 493). Indeed, "sousveillance is… generally framed in terms of social control, but it flips the tables on the traditionally panoptic framing of state surveillance and power, offering individual citizens (or noncitizens) some ability to watch back and hold the state accountable" (Newell 2019: 63).

Indeed, Mann, Nolan, and Wellman (2003: 347) described sousveillance as liberating, as a way to confront power and turn it on its head. Others have described it as "the present state of modern technological societies where anybody may take photos or videos of any person or event, and then diffuse the information freely all over the world" (Ganascia 2010: 489–90) and as achieved when "the power of recording people or events is put in the hands of everyday people who can cheaply acquire a small sousveillance device, such as a cell phone camera, and disseminate the recordings and images all over the world via the Internet" (Fan 2016: 406). These developments, of course, have led to a flood of surveillance/sousveillance—a world where many are watched by many, and where many records are kept.

A simple keyword search of *Surveillance & Society*'s past issues, through issue one of volume eighteen, reveals that the term "sousveillance" has appeared in dozens of published pieces (and, of course, the term has also been used in papers published in numerous other venues). Although a plethora of surveillance-related terminology has grown up within the surveillance studies literature over the past few decades, including related terms like inverse surveillance (Brucato 2015), coveillance (Palmås 2015; Mann, Nolan, and Wellman 2003), and reciprocal surveillance (Newell 2014), sousveillance appears to have attracted considerable attention and staying power within surveillance studies research.

Browne (2015: 21) used the term "dark sousveillance" to refer to ways in which black epistemologies had been used to contend with "the tools of social control in plantation surveillance or lantern laws" or other forms of antiblack surveillance—for example, practices that "appropriated, co-opted, repurposed, and challenged [these antiblack social control measures] to facilitate survival and escape." Thus, dark sousveillance is a "way to situate the tactics employed to render one's self out of sight... [plotting] imaginaries that are oppositional and are hopeful for another way of being" (Browne 2015: 21). Burke (2020: 75) has recently framed "digital sousveillance" as a research method, involving "the co-optation of

digital data and the use of computational methods and techniques (e.g., network analysis) to resituate technologies of control and surveillance of individuals to instead observe the observer—as a method for studying surveillance" (Burke 2020: 77). Sousveillance practices can be intimate, like when a civilian engages in "incidental sousveillance" (Brucato 2015: 456) by recording a police officer with their smartphone in an unplanned moment of witnessing (Newell 2019: 63). But they can also be broadly impersonal, as in cases of "crowdsourced countersurveillance" where many individuals contribute data— such as locational data about police—creating "countersurveillant assemblages [that] attempt to neutralize surveillance measures through mapping their locations in real time" (Wood and Thompson 2018: 34).

Besides cell-phone cameras and other forms of recording by those not in power of those who are, the concept of sousveillance has also been applied to forms of state surveillance that serve the purpose of overseeing (underseeing?) powerful state institutions, like the police. For example, police body-worn cameras have been referred to as sousveillance devices, at least "in the sense that they are mechanisms of control by the people using transparency to check power holders" (Fan 2016: 407). However, from a different (perhaps more realist) point of view, police body-worn cameras are not examples of sousveillance, but rather as "counter-sousveillance devices" because the "police are using the wearable cameras as surveillance devices to procure video evidence to use against criminalized civilians" (Brucato 2015: 468). This situation is complex, as "the crossed lenses of police body cameras and bystander cameras… represent a clash between two visibility regimes and, in many ways, a disintegration of the distinction between sousveillance and surveillance in practice" (Newell 2019: 72). This clash exemplifies how "the coexistence of surveillance and sousveillance leads to a fragile equilibrium that is identified by Steve Mann as a state of 'equiveillance'" (Ganascia 2010: 491; see also, e.g., Kerr and Mann 2006). Kerr and Mann (2006) described the promise of equiveillance as "a balance between surveillance and sousveillance." They claimed that:

> If achieved, such a balance will result in a better ability to document the world from a diversity of perspectives. From an evidentiary point of view, an equi-veillant state would better preserve the contextual integrity of veillance data. For example, the decentralized capture of personal experience would provide an enriched evidentiary record which could prevent one-sided (surveillance-only) data from being taken out of context. The search for truth and justice has already experienced glimpses of this potential as more and more controversial episodes of public interest are caught-on-tape. (Kerr and Mann 2006)

Or, as Monahan (2006: 527) has framed it:

> When viewed from a distance, surveillance and counter-surveillance appear to be engaged in a complicated dance, with the larger, cumbersome partner pushing and pulling while the smaller, defter dancer negotiates herself or himself—and others—out of harm's way. The oafish leader is, of course, the state and corporate apparatus surveilling the public, and the partner is the collective of activist adversaries circumventing or destabilizing surveillance systems.

For this Dialogue, we asked contributors to reflect on the current state and future of sousveillance. We asked them to look back at the intervening years since 2003 and consider whether sousveillance—in theory and on the ground, in practice—has served its liberating purpose or whether it has simply become another surveillance tool (or data source) for governments and/or corporations, maintaining the very structures of power it was designed to overcome. Have the long-touted social, political, and democratic benefits of sousveillance been realized in practice? Additionally, contributors were asked to imagine what the future of sousveillance might look like. These reflections were guided by reference to Mann, Nolan, and Wellman's (2003: 347) initial depiction of sousveillance's possible futures:

> The social aspect of self-empowerment suggests that sousveillance is an act of liberation, of staking our public territory, and a leveling of the surveillance playing field.

> Yet, the ubiquitous total surveillance that sousveillance now affords is an ultimate act of acquiescence on the part of the individual. Universal surveillance/sousveillance may, in the end, only serve the ends of the existing dominant power structure. Universal sur/sousveillance may support the power structures by fostering broad accessibility of monitoring and ubiquitous data collection. Or as William Gibson comments in the feature length motion picture film CYBERMAN ("You're surveilling the surveillance. And if everyone were surveilling the surveillance, the surveillance would be neutralized. It would be unnecessary.").

This Dialogue encompasses five contributions. The first, penned by Steve Mann, provides an update on Mann's conceptualization of what sousveillance is and what it has become, as well as a glimpse at efforts to integrate the concept of sousveillance into cross-, multi-, or anti-disciplinary academic discourse. Mann also offers new definitions for, and ways of thinking about, surveillance and sousveillance. Diverging in approach from oft-cited definitions (e.g., Lyon 2007: 14), Mann defines surveillance as "the veillance performed by an entity that has the authority to prohibit other veillances"[1]—or as "the veillance that has the capacity to forbid other veillances"—claiming that this (potential) prohibition is evidence of the hypocrisy inherent in surveillance—i.e., when oversight is limited and/or unidirectional. Consequently, then, Mann defines two forms of sousveillance, what he calls "hierarchical sousveillance" ("the veillance that does not have the capacity to forbid or allow itself or other veillances") and participatory sousveillance ("the recording of an activity by a participant in the activity"). Mann continues by examining a variety of veillances, connections to wearables, and their convergence in healthcare. Building on the ideas of "Quantimetric Self-Sensing" and "Quantified Self," he presents what he calls "health sousveillance"—or "a bold new engineering, medicine, law, and business initiative aimed at empowering individuals with technologies like wearables that let them access, understand, and use their own health data in new ways."

In their contribution, Borradaile and Reeves reflect on the relationship between sousveillance and capitalism. Building on Zuboff's (2017) notion of surveillance capitalism, the authors argue that sousveillance practices, although framed as counter-surveillance moves, feed into the aims of surveillance capitalism. Indeed, as they note, "If the *modus vivendi* of digital capitalism is to continuously develop new sites and methods of data creation, sousveillance—including cop-watching—can allow digital corporations to discover, capture, analyze, and potentially undermine yet another relatively esoteric activity." They call out for caution, arguing that "while calls for transparency vis-à-vis the police (and other authorities) generally make good political sense, we should be cautious about why, how, and to what ultimate effect sousveillance is carried out." To situate their arguments, Borradaile and Reeves analyze the American Civil Liberties Union's Mobile Justice app, an app designed specifically to document police violence and brutality. Although sympathetic to the intended aims of such sousveillance practices, Borradaile and Reeves remind us that these tools often rely closely on surveillance-capitalist infrastructure for their very functionality, such that sousveillant practices may be complicit, to some degree, with digital capitalism and the surveillance structures it supports. In their own words, "sousveillance will fail to live up to its political promise if it relies on the technologies and methods of surveillance capitalism."

Similarly, Brandim Howson argues that "professionalised forms of sousveillance… partake in the same visual practices as the state that they seek to denounce" and that such "sousveillance has 'serve[d] the ends of the existing dominant power structure'" (citing Mann, Nolan, and Wellman 2003: 347). Brandim Howson draws from a case study of visual activism taking place within Brazil's favelas, and in particular at ways in which these sousveillant practices have become professionalized by the introduction of "written field guides, video manuals, and training courses" produced by NGOs and other organizations that "give detailed guidance on how to actually capture moments of state abuse." Far from the "spontaneous image capture" (Kreimer 2011: 344; Newell 2019: 62) that characterizes much incidental, unplanned sousveillance, Brandim Howson finds that these professionalized practices have organized "the visual field into something unexpectedly composed." This results in the collection of *evidence* that is useful to both the activists and

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, all direct quotations in this introduction refer to dialogue pieces in this issue.

the organizations that provide the training. However, Brandim Howson argues, "to participate in the police's visuality also works to maintain the social order that they are active in constructing."

Harju explores copwatching in Germany, specifically a project called "Cop Map." The project emerged in 2018 within an established ecosystem of activist organizations and projects, predominantly "driven by activists from marginalized communities," and "was born out of opposition towards new legislation to increase police powers in Bavaria." Much like some forms of what Wood and Thompson (2018) call "crowdsourced countersurveillance," Cop Map utilized an interactive map that members of the community populated by indicating where the police have been seen (although it has now become essentially a map of static CCTV locations, after use decreased). Within the project, sousveillance "subverts police surveillance and disrupts the internalized assumptions on who or what qualifies as 'dangerous.'" To counter criticism that the project feeds into and perpetuates "the logic of the surveillance state," collected data is abstracted and not individualized. In the words of one of the activists, this is "to highlight the systemic nature of the problem" rather than "expose individual transgressions." In conclusion, Harju argues that sousveillance "can be understood as more than actual practices of technology-enhanced counter-surveillance, and becomes a subversive practice of re-imagining dominant narratives and hierarchies." Drawing analogies to Browne's (2015: 21) "dark sousveillance" as "an imaginative place from which to mobilize a critique of racializing surveillance," Harju argues that "projects like *Cop Map* successfully insert counter-narratives into mainstream discourse."

Returning to the topics of equiveillance and police body-worn cameras, Houwing and Ritsema van Eck examine the introduction of police body-worn cameras in the Netherlands. They argue that more regulation is needed to ensure body cameras meet their stated aims of equiveillance. In contrast to how body cameras were framed in the United States (that is, as tools of police oversight), they explain that Dutch police adopted body cameras "to record and discipline the behaviour of people interacting with the police." In fact, police body cameras were introduced as a direct response to police concerns about civilians wielding smartphone cameras and recording the police, as such sousveillance "excludes the perspective of the police officer." In some ways, these cameras act as tools of equiveillance, although they seem to start from the position that the police need more control, and more surveillance, in the face of widespread sousveillance. In the end, Houwing and Ritsema van Eck argue that a police body camera is not "just another neutral observer" and that, "If bodycams are truly to function as 'objective referees,' then the Dutch police must consciously assign this role to them" (citing Flight 2019).

The contributions to this Dialogue highlight both the breadth of sousveillance as a concept and the continuing focus within surveillance research on visual forms of sousveillance directed at visualizing state (e.g., police) action. They also offer some concise and illuminating critiques of sousveillant practices, and continue to raise questions about whether sousveillance—in theory and practice—has really lived up to its liberating premise or whether it simply feeds more data into the data-hungry, capitalist surveillance state. Of course, these contributions represent only a small set of viewpoints, and we haven't space here to reference much of the voluminous sousveillance literature that has grown up in the past couple of decades. There is room for additional research and argument here. Hopefully this Dialogue can serve as provocation for even more discussion, research, and debate within the surveillance studies community focused on the past, present, and future of sousveillance in society.

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Dialogue	Wearables and Sur(over)-Veillance, Sous(under)-Veillance, Co(So)-Veillance, and MetaVeillance (Veillance of Veillance) for Health and Well-Being

Steve Mann

University of Toronto, Canada
mann@eyetap.org

Abstract

At the University of Toronto, we're embarking on a bold new initiative to bring together these four disciplines: law, business, engineering, and medicine, through what we call "sousveillant systems"—grassroots systems of "bottom up" facilitation of cross-, trans-, inter-, meta-, and anti-disciplinarity, or, more importantly, cross-, trans-, and inter-passionary efforts. Passion is a better master than discipline (to paraphrase Albert Einstein's "Love is a better master than duty"). Our aim is not to eliminate "big science," "big data," and "big watching" (surveillance), but to complement these things with a balancing force. There will still be "ladder climbers," but we aim to balance these entities and individuals with those who embody the "integrity of authenticity" and to provide a complete picture that is otherwise a half-truth when only the "big" end is present. This generalizes the notion of "open source," where each instance of a system (e.g., computer operating system) contains or can contain its own seeds (e.g., source code). Sousveillant systems are an alternative to the otherwise sterile world of closed-source, specialist silos that are not auditable by end-users (i.e., are only auditable by authorities from "above").

Introduction

Many fields and disciplines, such as law, business, engineering, and medicine, are undergoing a pivotal shift on a quest for a certain kind of integrity that we call the "integrity of authenticity," a transition from centralized "big data" to a more distributed "little data" through tools such as blockchain that embed the "seeds" of a system within each instance of it.

In *Rules for a Flat World*, Gillian Hadfield (2017) writes that law is the subjecting of human conduct to rules made by peers—that law is (or should be) formed among equals, the same way a family living in a log cabin on an island in Lake Ontario makes rules in order to coexist. She calls this "making law without lawyers" (Hadfield 2017: 20).

Traditionally at least, most business schools don't actually conduct business. Ajay Agrawal has challenged this trend by creating an entity within the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Business. This approach, together with other related ideas like crowdfunding (Agrawal, Catalini, and Goldfarb 2014), creates a new world in which business is done, or can be done, by ordinary people of all ages, genders, ethnicities, etc., thus "creating business without businessmen."

Traditionally, many engineering schools are places that don't actually do engineering, but that is also

changing. The "maker" movement is allowing ordinary people to invent, design, and build the technological future; that is, ordinary people "doing engineering without engineers."

Medicine has traditionally been about "big data," "big pharma," etc. However, today our most up-to-date medical record might very well be of our own making through "wearables" (wearable computers).

At the University of Toronto, we're embarking on a bold new initiative to bring together these four disciplines: law, business, engineering, and medicine, through what we call "sousveillant systems"— grassroots systems of "bottom up" facilitation of cross-, trans-, inter-, meta-, and anti-disciplinarity, or, more importantly, cross-, trans-, and inter-passionary efforts. Passion is a better master than discipline (to paraphrase Albert Einstein's "Love is a better master than duty").

Our aim is not to eliminate "big science," big data," and "big watching" (surveillance), but to complement these things with a balancing force. There will still be "ladder climbers," but we aim to balance these entities and individuals with those who embody the "integrity of authenticity" and to provide a complete picture that is otherwise a half-truth when only the "big" end is present.

This generalizes the notion of "open source," where each instance of a system (e.g., computer operating system) contains or can contain its own seeds (e.g., source code). Sousveillant systems are an alternative to the otherwise sterile world of closed-source, specialist silos that are not auditable by end-users (i.e., are only auditable by authorities from "above").

Surveillance Facilitates Inequity, Hypocrisy, and Half-Truths

Surveillance ("big watching") and its associated "big data" are well known and well understood as the purposeful sensing by an entity of greater authority over an entity of lesser authority, e.g., "a watch kept over a… suspect, prisoner, or the like" (dictionary.com, n.d.) or the "close observation of someone, often in order to catch them in wrongdoing" (ourdictionary.com, n.d.).

Surveillance often embodies an inherent inequity through the facilitation of the powerful keeping watch over the vulnerable. This inequity sometimes takes the form of a "male gaze," popularized in Margaret Atwood's dystopian concept of "UNDER HIS EYE" (Calogero 2004; Patterson and Elliott 2002), and, in particular, a "white, male gaze in the CCTV control room… [that has] a particular bias" (Galič, Timan, and Koops 2017). Surveillance often means that "[p]eople of color, migrants, unpopular religious groups, sexual minorities, the poor, and other oppressed and exploited populations bear a much higher burden of monitoring and tracking than advantaged groups" (Eubanks 2018: 6). Surveillance tends to target predominantly black (Browne 2015), poor (Ferguson 2017), and other vulnerable groups.

Hypocrisy of Surveillance

Surveillance often (but not always) embodies an inherent hypocrisy in the sense that entities conducting surveillance may choose to (and have the capacity to) prohibit other veillances (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1: *Three examples of surveillance hypocrisy. Surveillance is the veillance that has the capacity for hypocrisy. That is, it is the veillance that has the authority to watch while prohibiting others from watching. This creates a possible conflict of interest in which one party hoards all of the evidence while attempting to destroy others' capacity to collect evidence. Consider, for example, someone wearing a medical device that helps with visual memory. This device captures their entire life but is unable to see. Thus, the otherwise unbroken record is broken or missing data. When called to testify in court, a person with a memory impairment who normally relies on such a device could argue that the entity of greater authority destroyed the recording by prohibiting it. This creates a possibility of corruption, e.g., a selective retention of evidence that is more favorable to the authority, and a selective degradation (or even complete deletion) of evidence that might support others taking legal action against the authority.*


Figure 2: *Privacy is often cited as a reason for the hypocrisy of one-sided watching. But this is not true privacy. It is the panoptic privacy as prophesized by Bentham's prison design in which inmates have privacy from each other while being watched by guards. Here, for example, is the counter where we return books at the Terman Engineering Library at Stanford University. The librarian is often absent, so we often photograph the books that we return as they appear lying on the counter. This is so that we have a "visual receipt" showing that we returned the books, even though doing something as practical and necessary as this is against the rules and therefore, perhaps, an act of civil (or other deliberate) disobedience. Photograph by the author.*

Precise Definition of Surveillance, etc.
Google translates the English word "oversight" to the French word "surveillance" (see Figure 3).
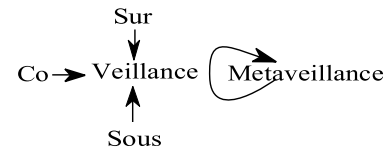
English:
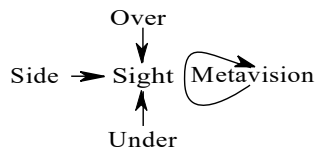
French/Latin:

Figure 3: *Google translates the English word "oversight" into the French word "surveillance." Analogously, we proffer "undersight" ("sousveillance"), "side-sight" (coveillance or soveillance, i.e., the side-to-side peer-based watching of social networking or neighbourhood watch), and "metavision" ("metaveillance"), which is the watching of watching or sensing of sensors and the sensing of their capacity to sense.*

More recently, the words "undersight" and "side-sight" (or "social-networking-sight," the vision of social-networking) emerged (Mann 2001a).

We tend to use the French/Latin word "surveillance" rather than its English equivalent "oversight" because the English word has two quite different meanings. "Oversight" can mean "surveillance," or it can mean "an error or omission" (e.g., "It was an oversight on our part").

Sousveillance, loosely defined as the vulnerable watching the powerful, coveillance (côtéveillance or soveillance or sociaveillance or mediaveillance), loosely defined as the side-to-side gaze between peers via social media and the like, and metaveillance, loosely defined as the sensing of sensors and the sensing of their capacity to sense, are relatively recent concepts emerging around the generalized idea of "veillance," which is defined as purposeful sensing (Janzen and Mann 2014; Reynolds 2011; Bakir 2010; Mann 2002; Ali and Mann 2013; Ganascia 2010; Vertegaal and Shell 2008; Michael and Michael 2012; Bakir 2009; Fernback 2013; Reilly 2015; Cardullo 2014; Ali et al. 2013a; Nolan, Mann, and Wellman 2008; Ali et al. 2013b. Weber 2012a, 2012b; Mortensen 2014; Quessada 2010; Manders 2013; Cammaerts 2015). We shall more precisely define surveillance as follows:

Surveillance is the veillance performed by an entity that has the authority to prohibit other veillances.

More succinctly, in the actor-network theory (ANT) sense (Munro 2009), akin to other anthropomorphisms like "information wants to be free" (Giles 2007; Stewart 1987):

Surveillance is the veillance that has the capacity to forbid other veillances.

In this way, surveillance may be *defined* in terms of its increased capacity for hypocrisy (in the veillance sense)—as the "official" veillance of a governing, ruling, regnant, sovereign, leading, commanding, or controlling entity. Implicit here is that this authority manifests itself in ways that include the capacity to allow or prohibit sensing.

Surveillance is thus the veillance of the state or other institutions, syndicates, or cartels that can (but do not necessarily or do not always) exert the prohibition of other veillances.

We also must acknowledge that the boundary between state and non-state organizations is becoming blurred, and that the boundary between environment (surroundings) and the existential "invironmnet" (e.g., one's own personal wearables) (Mann et al. 2014: 9) is also being blurred. For example, police body cameras

problematize the otherwise clear boundary between one's own personal space and the surrounding space of other authorities.

Particularly, the simple fact that a technology is wearable does not necessarily make it an entirely sousveillant technology. For example, we can imagine edge-cases such as a new police recruit being monitored by a corrupt police chief who forces the new recruit to wear a camera system or an employee forced to wear a camera system that helps a boss keep the worker obedient and subservient or deters the worker from union or whistleblowing activities.

Even in situations where a police officer chooses to wear a camera system, there is still a potential conflict of interest in the curation of recordings both at the officer level and at the organizational level. At the officer level, the officer might cover the camera, aim it advantageously, or ensure it is not running while police misconduct ensues. At the organizational level, the organization may let an individual officer "fall" as a result of video that shows the individual officer committing an act of wrongdoing, but the organization may be willing to destroy evidence to protect itself as a whole.

Therefore, "wearables" and "sousvellance," although closely related, are not synonymous.

Let us thus define one kind of sousveillance in the ANT sense (Munro 2009):

> *Hierarchical sousveillance is the veillance that does not have the capacity to forbid or allow itself or other veillances.*

In this way, sousveillance may be (but is not necessarily) an act of civil disobedience against surveillance (or its purveyors), i.e., sousveillance does not necessarily seek permission for its conduct. It is still useful to define participatory sousveillance as follows:

> *(Participatory) Sousveillance is the recording of an activity by a participant in the activity.*

This is usually done by personal technologies or "bringing cameras from the lamp posts and ceilings, down to eye-level" (Mann, Nolan, and Wellman 2003: 620), which may then give us coveillance.

Sousveillance Disclaimer

Those of us who study sousveillance also acknowledge that veillances can shift, that the sousveillance of self-sensing can be turned into a tool for surveillance (Hulsey and Reeves 2014; Ritsema van Eck 2019) and that the lines can be further blurred when citizen sousveillance also serves law enforcement (Reeves 2012). Joseph Brandim Howson (2018) also introduces concepts like supra-veillance, peer-veillance, and sur-sousveillance. We make no claims that sousveillance is guaranteed to help the vulnerable or that it will be sure to stop or mitigate the oppressive nature of surveillance. In fact, we don't even claim that it is always part of the solution. It might sometimes even become part of the problem. But we do believe that the plurality of veillances will facilitate more diversity in the discussions surrounding the otherwise one-sided discussions on veillance.

Surveillance and "Big Data" are Half-Truths

Surveillance tells only one side of a multi-sided story, and thus surveillance is a half-truth without other veillances (Mann et al. 2015). Likewise, "big data" is a half-truth without "little-data" (e.g., distributed blockchain), and, in some sense, technologies like blockchain allow for the creation of sousveillant systems in which auditability can come from below, not just from above (i.e., the vulnerable can audit the powerful without getting the permission, consent, or "buy-in" of the powerful) (Catalini and Gans 2016).

Equiveillance, the Balance between Sur and Sous-veillance

Equiveillance is the balance or equilibrium between surveillance and sousveillance. Equivalent systems are systems that give rise to equity, diversity, inclusion, fairness, and justice (Weber 2012a, 2012b; Mann 2005;

Kerr and Mann 2006; Mann and Ferenbok 2013). Thus, the veillances are nuanced and politicized in many ways, but the core concepts are useful and necessary to help us understand the complex political landscape in which we live.

Metaveillance, Sensing Sensors, and Sensing their Capacity to Sense
Perhaps the most pure and simple-to-define veillance is metaveillance— the sensing of sensors and the sensing of their capacity to sense—as we can regard this as a simple problem of pure mathematics and physics (Mann 2016).

Wearables, Health, and Well-Being through Sousveillance: Bringing Integrity to Health Care

Not long ago, it was difficult or impossible for us, as patients, to access our own health records. Many of us can remember being told that we were not allowed to see or get a copy of our own X-rays (today's proprietary systems don't make things any easier).

We were expected to strip completely naked and reveal everything about ourselves for examination, yet we were often not allowed to access any of the data about ourselves.

This was at a time when it was standard practice to require first-year students to take off all of their clothes and be photographed completely naked from front, rear, and side views in front of a giant sheet of graph paper, allegedly to check for scoliosis or other spinal or posture defects, but there was a secret agenda with a secret purpose—surveillance (Rosenbaum 1995).

Professor Beth Linker wrote: "These photos served as big data…. Body discipline used to happen because other people were monitoring your posture. There is far more self-monitoring in the 21st century" (qtd. in Unger Baillie 2018: para. 17).

There is an inherent hypocrisy in a healthcare system that wants to know everything about us but reveal nothing—to see but not be seen. The opposite of hypocrisy is integrity. Those of us interested in health sousveillance seek to bring integrity to healthcare, such as by putting data into the hands of the individuals that the data came from.

Wearables as Sousveillant Systems: QSS
In response to the one-sided watching (surveillance) built into most healthcare systems of the time, I decided during my childhood in the 1970s to invent a machine that would collect health information like electrocardiograms and electroencephalograms and provide real-time biofeedback (e.g., to see one's own heart's waveform while jogging). I named this system "Quantimetric Self-Sensing" (QSS) and presented it to Kevin Kelly in July 1996. Subsequently, Kelly called it "Quantified Self" (QS) (Kelly 1996, 2017: 336) (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: *My Quantimetric Self-Sensing (QSS) system. Left: A 1996 sensing vest and eyewear measured and processed respiration, ECG (electrocardiogram), EEG (electroencephalogram), EMG (electromyogram), GSR (galvanic skin response), audio and video of the surroundings, and many other signals. This system was presented to Kevin Kelly at the WiReD offices in San Francisco, where he called it "Quantified Self." Right: miniaturization of the apparatus resulted in the world's first smartwatch in 1998, featured in Linux Journal, July 2000.*

The idea of QSS is that the most up-to-date medical record is on one's own body. We own our own data (hopefully, notwithstanding some very unfair "terms of service" agreements with large powerful organizations) and may grant permission to our physicians to obtain our data, not the other way around!

We call this principle subjectright (Mann 2001a, 2001b), denoted as Ⓢ akin to copyright denoted as Ⓒ.

Health Sousveillance: Wearables and Systems for Taking Health into our Own Hands
Health sousveillance is a bold new engineering, medicine, law, and business initiative aimed at empowering individuals with technologies like wearables that let them access, understand, and use their own health data in new ways.

It is based on three key principles:

1. Subject rights: We have a right to access any information, such as medical images, recordings, etc., about ourselves. We have a right to share this information with others of our choosing, e.g., our doctor or others who might help advise us on our health (Mann 2001a, 2001b).
2. Auditability: We have a right to understand how our health data are captured, encoded, processed, transmitted, stored, etc. This requires free ("libre") open-source systems that are auditable by end-users or those that they choose to appoint. We have a right to designate others of our choosing to assist us in understanding our own health data.
3. Right to record: Wearables empower people to capture their own data about themselves and things that affect them and their health. Individuals shall always have the right to capture, process, record, and share their own data about their own health. We can record our brainwaves well enough that we can actually reconstruct pictures of people we meet, causing the eye itself to function as a camera (Mann et al. 2019) and helping people suffering from prosopagnosia to remember names and faces (see Figure 5) (Mann 1996). There must always be a fundamental right to sousveillance.

Hippocratic Oath 3.0: "Primum non nocere" ("Do no harm"):

1. Denying subject access does harm (e.g., the inability to get the best healthcare);
2. Closed-source does harm (the inability to audit, etc.);
3. Preventing a person from recording their own health data does harm.

Conclusions

"Wearables" (wearable computers) have the ability to empower all of us, including the vulnerable, to capture ourselves and the world around us in a way that can bring a new kind of integrity to healthcare, business, law, and engineering. Accordingly, I, along with others who study sousveillance, propose "sousveillant systems" as systems that contain the seeds of their own essence and eliminate the silos between disciplines and the false boundary between developer and user. Sousveillant systems are auditable by end users without requiring the end users to ask special permission or apply to be a special class of person (e.g., "developer," "auditor," "scientist," or "doctor," etc.). In particular, we propose the idea that individuals can and should be able to be keepers of their own medical history on a miniature, low-cost, blockchain-based wearable computer system that contains the "seeds" of all the algorithms and encoding necessary to understand the data.

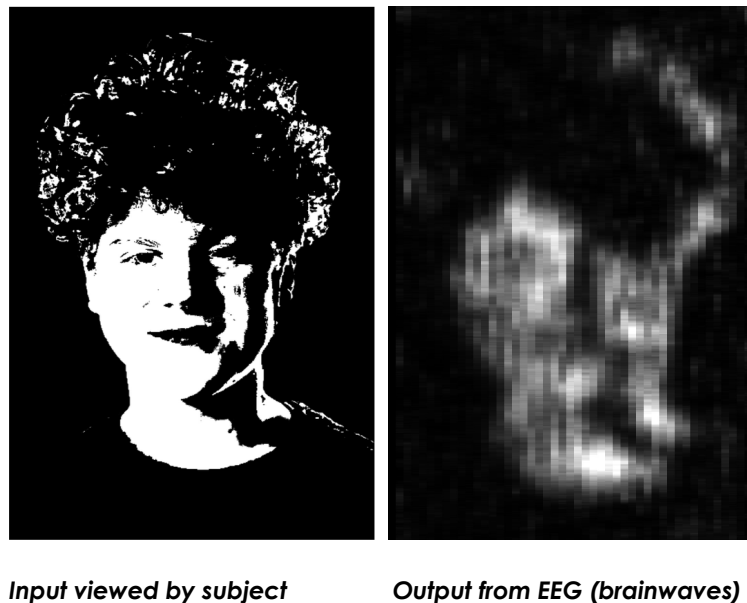**Input viewed by subject**   **Output from EEG (brainwaves)**

Figure 5: ElectroVisuoGram (EVG) is an image recorded from the human brain, causing the human eye itself to function as a camera (Mann et al. 2019).

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Glencora Borradaile

Oregon State University, USA
glencora@eecs.oregonstate.edu

Joshua Reeves

Oregon State University, USA
reevejos@oregonstate.edu

Abstract

The striking commercial success of Shoshana Zuboff's 2019 book, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, provides us with an excellent opportunity to reflect on how the present convergence of surveillance/capitalism coincides with popular critical and theoretical themes in surveillance studies, particularly that of sousveillance. Accordingly, this piece will first analyze how surveillance capitalism has molded the political behaviors and imaginations of activists. After acknowledging the theoretically and politically fraught implications of fighting surveillance with even more surveillance—especially given the complexities of digital capitalism's endless desire to produce data—we conclude by exploring some of the political possibilities that lie at the margins of sousveillance capitalism (in particular, the extra-epistemological political value of sousveillance).

Introduction

The relationship between surveillance and capitalism hardly needs any introduction. Since the birth of *Surveillance & Society* in 2002, that relationship has been one of the most common topics explored in this journal. Yet the striking commercial success of Shoshana Zuboff's 2019 book, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, has provided us with further opportunities to reflect on how the present convergence of surveillance/capitalism coincides with popular critical and theoretical themes in surveillance studies,[1] particularly that of sousveillance. Sousveillance, of course, has provided an important point of reflection for scholars since the publication of Mann, Nolan, and Wellman's landmark 2003 essay. Its uptake as "inverse surveillance," in particular, has been especially generative: a number of scholars have given historical and theoretical breadth to this kind of sousveillance and, in doing so, they have often offered it as a potential political response to problems like discrimination and police brutality (see, e.g., Mann and Ferenbok 2013; Reeves 2017; Wood and Thompson 2018). Indeed, several of the pieces in this dialogue focus on sousveillance as a response to police interventions (Brandim Howson in this issue; Harju in this issue; Houwing and van Eck in this issue). To explore how and where the themes of sousveillance and surveillance capitalism converge, this short piece will first analyze how surveillance capitalism has molded the political behaviors and imaginations of activists. While acknowledging the theoretically and politically fraught implications of fighting surveillance with even more surveillance (see Monahan 2018)—especially given the complexities of digital capitalism's endless desire to produce data—we conclude by exploring some of the political possibilities that lie at the margins of sousveillance capitalism (in particular, the extra-epistemological political value of sousveillance).

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[1] See Ball (2017) as well as the rest of the *Surveillance & Society* review forum published in 2019.

Sousveillance and Capitalism: Some Complications

At one point, Zuboff (2019: 15) echoes the work of earlier surveillance scholars by averring that what we now call "social connection" is more or less a side effect of surveillance capitalism: "Digital connection is now a means to others' commercial ends…. [S]urveillance capitalism feeds on every aspect of every human's experience." For Zuboff (2019: 460), the cute, addictive social practices we've all come to know and love are simply the by-products of a particular economic arrangement: "[Google's] Page and [Facebook's] Zuckerberg understand the transformation of society as a means to their commercial ends." The tastes and habits of consumers, therefore, have been (and will continue to be) transformed in accord with the commercial ends of Google, Facebook, and other companies that thrive on software, clicks, and cookies.

Key to this transformational project, of course, is developing technologies and methods to monitor and influence as many social, financial, and biological processes as possible. Naturally, this also includes the "transformation" of those activities that we currently classify as *political*—even those political activities commonly regarded as essential ingredients in the fight against injustice and state violence. Sousveillance, particularly under the guise of cop-watching, has become one of the latest arenas of political activism slated for this kind of "transformative" makeover. While activists still encounter various methods of "strategic incapacitation" and other police-driven strategies for squelching citizen-to-police sousveillance (Wilson and Serisier 2010: 69), there is now a competing impulse that ostensibly pits police interests against surveillance/capitalist interests. Surveillance capitalism—like capitalism in general—thrives by cultivating and stimulating any kind of activity on which it can capitalize, including activities that in some ways might be disadvantageous or ideologically opposed to capitalism itself. This development is most interesting, perhaps, when viewed vis-à-vis police strategies to avoid scrutiny. As Torin Monahan (2006) points out, many sousveillance technologies and practices designed to create police accountability—cop-watching, for example, or police uniform cameras—have motivated officers to retreat into privileged spaces of privacy and illegibility. In Monahan's (2006: 527) words this creates something of a "complicated dance," with police constantly developing compensatory practices for countering this inverse surveillance. In some cases, this can create a skewed view of a situation from the perspective of the abuser (see Houwing and van Eck in this issue). Moreover, it can have the effect of amplifying brutality, as in the case of otherwise monitored officers retreating to police bathrooms or other private spaces to mete out especially horrific abuse to arrestees.

This retreat into illegibility is not only politically alarming; it also defies surveillance capitalism's peculiar constructions of privacy. If the *modus vivendi* of digital capitalism is to continuously develop new sites and methods of data creation, sousveillance—including cop-watching—can allow digital corporations to discover, capture, analyze, and potentially undermine yet another relatively esoteric activity. The very nature of the digital enclosure—which, now that it is released from any geographical grounding, refuses to recognize even conceptual limits—is to expand and permeate (see Andrejevic 2007). Hence, while calls for transparency vis-à-vis the police (and other authorities) generally make good political sense, we should be cautious about why, how, and to what ultimate effect sousveillance is carried out.

Sousveillance and the Value of Political Compromise

The ACLU's Mobile Justice app offers a good case in point. Mobile Justice follows in a long line of technologies usable or re-purposable as inverse surveillance technologies—including hand-held camcorders, wearable cameras, and related innovations. What is potentially unique about Mobile Justice and related apps is that they are designed specifically for responding to police brutality. According to Mobile Justice's California affiliate, the app has a few basic purposes: to "record, report, and witness" interactions between citizens and the police, as well as to inform nearby activists when these interactions are occurring (Mobile Justice CA 2019). The app does this by allowing users to capture live video footage that is then sent automatically to the ACLU, a method which ostensibly prevents cops from confiscating the user's

phone and deleting its contents. It also allows users to broadcast their locations to other app users in that geographic vicinity, allowing them to dispatch to the area and provide supervision and support.

While there are many theoretical and political critiques of cop-watching, it is easy to sympathize with the goals that motivate this kind of sousveillance. Using mobile technology to foster accountability is, in many ways, an appealing method of fighting police brutality and other injustices. Yet these apps also beg for another level of analysis. While it bears mentioning that Mobile Justice was developed by a Google.org grant, there is little point in singling out Mobile Justice. The more interesting matter, for us, centers on the escalating convergence of digital capitalism and media-centric political activism. As David Lyon (2019: 72) puts it, "Surveillance culture has an intimate and mutually-informing relationship with surveillance capitalism." Even protest-focused surveillance cultures are highly reliant on the bread-and-butter tools of digital capitalism: like many similar apps, Mobile Justice is only available to iOS (Apple) or Android (Google) users; and, with its use of GPS networking and data capture/production/dissemination, Mobile Justice relies for its very functionality on corporations whose signature technologies utilize surveillance-capitalist methods. When Mobile Justice users organize protests, gather with their comrades, discuss political strategy, and record the behaviors of cops (and, at the same time, the behaviors of themselves and their peers), they are now in the somewhat strange position of doing so in the ultimate service of a financial system that cultivates networked activity for its own enrichment. All this is to say, Mobile Justice illustrates how active complicity with digital capitalism has become a necessary condition of political participation (and really, of course, a necessary condition of contemporary social, political, and professional life).

Hence the "spiral of surveillance and counter-surveillance" (see Ullrich and Knopp 2018) imbricates Mobile Justice and similar sousveillance apps (or apps repurposed for sousveillance) into the fabric of surveillance capitalism's ongoing reconstruction of the activist political sphere—a reconstruction that finds politics increasingly articulated via the peculiar affordances of digital technology. And just as surveillance technology provides the beating heart of our emergent financial system, it has also burrowed itself into the resistance strategies and political imaginations of activists. Cop-watching and other sousveillance activities have been granted considerable momentum by mobile media technology, especially the now ubiquitous smartphone (with its cameras, microphones, GPS, social networking apps, and sensors). On one hand, it is impossible to separate this hardware and software from the digital corporations that rely on surveillance data to make money, decode human action, and carry out live behavioral experimentation on the rest of us; on the other hand, it is likewise impossible to separate the impulse to carry out sousveillance from these devices that now sketch the contours of the politically possible (Ingraham and Reeves 2016).

Conclusion

That being said, we should be careful not to discount sousveillance projects that thoughtfully aim to circumvent surveillance-capitalist methods, such as Cop Map. Instead of relying on mobile media for sousveillance of police, Cop Map has users anonymously post text reports to a website. Although not user friendly and "easily… manipulated with fake reports," Cop Map was "successful as a discursive intervention" and may help imagine ways in which sousveillance could be designed to skirt the problems we point out above (Harju in this issue). Indeed, Harju argues that sousveillance "can be understood as more than actual practices of technology-enhanced counter-surveillance, and becomes a subversive practice of re-imagining dominant narratives and hierarchies" (Harju in this issue). This is a reminder of the different goals and political potential that sousveillance can have—from verifiable video evidence that can "lead to formal sanctions against perpetrators of abuse" (Howson in this issue) to artivist pieces such as Cop Map to the many other ways in which sousveillance can both assist and counteract the state, corrupt authorities, and capital. Keeping these complexities in mind, while many scholars have pointed out the political ambiguities of cop-watching and other forms of sousveillance, we have joined this chorus of critique by claiming that sousveillance will fail to live up to its political promise if it relies on the technologies and methods of surveillance capitalism. This problem provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the non-epistemological, non-intelligence-based political significance of collective sousveillance. Instead of choosing to view cop-watching as participating in a spiral of surveillance and counter-surveillance, we could view it instead as an

opportunity to participate in the synergy of real-world collective political activity. This insistence on on-the-ground collective action could, in the end, be considerably more valuable than whatever surveillance/intelligence is produced by activists' phones (which echoes Harju's assertions in this issue about sousveillance serving as a "subversive practice of re-imagining dominant narratives and hierarchies"). Abiding by the increasingly popular mantra of "turn off all media" (see Packer 2013; Reeves 2016) could not only block the infiltration of surveillance capitalism into the contours of our political resistance—it could also foreground the more general political value of physical-space assembly (either coordinated or spontaneous), which can foster new relationships based in common activity, create stronger ties within social movements and organizations, and generate the intangible (yet potentially immense) value of collective physical synergy.

That being said, in closing we should return to one of this piece's recurrent themes: the political ambivalence of sousveillance practices like cop-watching. When reflecting on these issues, we are reminded of Jodi Dean's (2009: 47) wise insight into how we might approach the fact that digital and mobile technology have completely reconfigured our notions of political participation: "Valued as the key to political inclusion and democratic participation, new media technologies strengthen the hold of neoliberalism and the privilege of the top one percent of people on the planet. At the same time, globally networked communications remain the very tools and terrains of struggle, making political change more difficult—and more necessary—than ever before." Dean assures us that despite the obnoxious encroachments of surveillance capitalism, those tools will be necessary in the struggle for political change. And perhaps she's right. It's in this spirit that we offer our critique of sousveillance capitalism: so that we can continue to discuss how to ethically (and effectively) navigate the strange, compromising times that so clearly lie ahead.

Acknowledgments

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Dialogue | The Visuality of Professionalised Sousveillance

Joseph Brandim Howson

University of Cambridge, UK
jb2145@cam.ac.uk

Abstract

This contribution addresses the visuality deployed in the practice of professionalised sousveillance. I draw on research undertaken with sousveillance activists in Brazilian favelas. By recognising vision as a site of power and identifying the particular visuality central to the policing of favelas, I draw an uncomfortable link between professionalised sousveillance and this police visuality. In acknowledging this relationship, it can be argued that professionalised sousveillance practice unintentionally works to preserve the perceptual foundations of the favela's social order. I conclude that we should also seek forms of sousveillance practice that engage alternative visualities.

Whilst Mann and his collaborators draw attention to the equalising power visual recording devices can have, particularly when their visual data are networked through social media platforms, little attention is given to the visual practices deployed and the resulting visual data. By recognising vision as foundational to questions of power and social order, we open up an alternative perspective through which to assess sousveillance. I argue that the professionalised forms of sousveillance taking place in Brazil's favelas partake in the same visual practices as the state that they seek to denounce. From this perspective, it may indeed be argued that sousveillance has "serve[d] the ends of the existing dominant power structure" (Mann, Nolan, and Wellman, 2003: 347).

I draw on research conducted with sousveillance activists working in Brazil's favelas. These activists use visual technologies to record and disseminate police and military (henceforth, police) interventions in their communities, recording misconduct and violence committed against favela residents—most forcefully against black and poor residents (Santiago 2017). Their sousveillance draws attention to the abuses perpetrated by the police, performs a check on officers' daily behaviour, and has recently been incorporated into legal proceedings against individual officers (WITNESS 2017).

Activists themselves, the international organisations that support them, and previous academic publications have described these activities with the term sousveillance (de Guzman 2016; Prouse 2018; Ribeiro 2016). As also noted by Glencora Borradaile and Joshua Reeves and Bärbel Harju in this issue's Dialogue section, it is easy to sympathise with the goals that motivate this kind of sousveillance and anti-racist activism. However, this should not discourage us from investigating the wider repercussions of these sousveillance practices.

What is professionalised sousveillance? Over the last few years there has been a profusion of written field guides, video manuals, and training courses that seek to refine sousveillance. Alongside warnings, advice on keeping safe in protests, and guidance on how to store and share the resulting visual data, these materials give detailed guidance on how to actually capture moments of state abuse. This perceptual instruction even

offers novices to visual production definitions of different camera shots and when to use them. Direction in framing is accompanied by guidance on shot lengths and vantage points from which to record from. Camera movements such as pans, zooms, and tilts also receive consideration; they should be "slow, smooth and deliberate" (Matheson 2016: 97).

There is a growing field of international NGOs producing these training materials who seek to orientate sousveillance towards the production of video evidence. Evidence—data permissible in juridical contexts—can eventually lead to formal sanctions against perpetrators of abuse. For the activists I spoke with, distrust in national and international legal systems and a sense of exclusion from these formal legal spaces did not deter them from maintaining legal victories as a primary objective of their work. Juridical audiences are understood to be the primary arenas through which actors can push for change. These have distinct barriers to entry that obstruct the circulation of any and all data. Regardless of how graphic or emotive the contents of a video, a video needs to prove its provenance and veracity before entry. Organisations well-versed in these legal struggles dedicate resources to training activists on how to produce videos with a higher chance of meeting these conditions of entry.

In my conversations with experienced activists, they acknowledged that this training was central to their practice, and many actively disseminate these training materials to newer activists. Of course, situations arise when the rules have to be broken—maybe in the dense favela environment it is not possible to begin a recording with a landmark shot that captures the position of the sun, as some training advises. But activists recounted that it was reassuring to carry with them a mental check-list of instructions to follow when encountering these scenes. Considering the risk activists are taking to enter these situations, it makes sense to adopt this visuality. Unlike the sousveillance trope of a concerned citizen wearing a body-mounted camera in a shop fitted with CCTV—a seemingly low-risk activity—these activists are harmed, both collaterally and purposefully, by police forces. Such a risk is only worth taking if some tangible outcome may derive from the data captured.

The professionalisation of video activism has not proceeded without its critics. Most notably, Sandra Ristovska (2016) critiques this emerging form of "strategic witnessing" for disrupting longstanding modes of activism, now placing the expectations of institutionalised legal audiences at the centre of this practice. Yet the influence of international organisations that promote this approach, such as Amnesty International and WITNESS, is discernible in the resulting data.

My research focused on the visual practices and data produced by Coletivo Papo Reto, a collective working in the favelas of the north zone of Rio de Janeiro. Digging through their vast video archive capturing confrontations between police and favela residents, it was possible to detect the patterns of camera handling and shot selection advocated in the field guides. Slow rotations around scenes lead into precisely manoeuvred zooms back and forth. Shots rest carefully on identification plates and uniform insignias. Stillness becomes a noticeable feature despite the chaos recorded. The repetition of these practices produces distinctive visual data. Graphic content is captured through these formulaic practices, organising the visual field into something unexpectedly composed.

This focus on a correct form of capture and, by extension, the correct subject commanding the camera, speaks to a wider politics of perception that requires our attention. Critical thinking on vision has sought to unpick the ways that visuality is rendered as the sovereign sense. Whilst reflection on one's own sensory experience quickly reveals its interconnection with the other senses, the representation of vision as the sovereign sense has a long history tied to the development of scientific rationalism, imperialism, and capitalism (Crary 1988). Importantly, its positioning as the dominant sense has played a key role in the making of the rational subject. Through the prioritisation of vision, a sense that allows for a fictitious distancing between subjects and objects, subjects become controllers of a coherent visual field, able to manage and rationalise the messy outside world.

Professionalised sousveillance is contingent on this visuality. This process facilitates activists' capacity to construct and manage the production of their videos. The focus on *how* to see and record such encounters, so prevalent in the training materials, encapsulates this understanding of vision as a sense that can be divorced from experience, disassociated from stimulus in a way that the other senses cannot. By deploying these sousveillance practices, the activist is able to make visual order out of disorder. The adoption of this optic is useful not only for the international organizations they network with, but also for the activists themselves. Whereas once they may have been overwhelmed by a particular incident they encounter, emphasis on the production of visual evidence allows them to disengage from the immediate chaos. First-hand interaction with these gross scenes of abuse is a lot to handle. Activists on the ground have little access to emotional and psychological support beyond their immediate community, and so activists did inform me that the possibility of entering into a traumatic space and actively switching into this strategic visuality provides some comfort to them.

However, the consequences of this visuality are something we need to interrogate further. Not only is the visual reified as sovereign among the senses, it is also uniquely implicated in the production of social order in Brazil's favelas. As Jens Andermann (2007: 2) has noted in the context of nineteenth-century Brazil and Argentina, the state is "just as much a cultural form as a particular organization of the political. It is a specific correlation between politics and aesthetics, or rules of perception, in which the latter sustains the former as its own cause and end." Addressing the perceptual configurations that sustain violent state interactions with favela residents draws an uncomfortable link between this visuality and that of professionalised sousveillance. This is despite the end goal of this activism being the interruption of the violent and racist social order maintained by actors such as the police.

As explored in James Scott's *Seeing Like a State* (1998), the mid-twentieth century saw the Brazilian state's vision becomes a driving force in the "high modernist" evolution of Brasília (Brazil's capital). State interventions to implant order and legibility in the visual field have also persisted in contemporary dynamics, particularly in relation to the policing of favelas. A raft of federal and state-level initiatives aim to physically carve up favela spaces, attacking their density and remodelling the terrain to enable a state of hypervisiblity, where spaces and populations can be easily monitored. New (although not alternative) approaches to policing the favelas have focused on the forceful construction of watchtowers and vantage points within communities from which officers survey the terrain below. This constant monitoring is accompanied by helicopter flyovers and an increasing number of drones positioned in the airspace above favelas, allowing these fixed architectural positions to be accompanied by technologically enhanced mobile vistas that expand police capacity to scan the favela topography. During the presidential decree of 2018 that put the military in charge of security in Rio de Janeiro, favela communities in this city also endured the erection of checkpoints at key sites and transport points in favelas. Part of this intervention involved military personnel demanding identification from residents, making it easier to identify and target individual favela residents amongst these dense populations.

Through quilting together these visual interventions, the Brazilian state seeks to produce a master-view that renders these populations and territories comprehensible, thus producing the conditions for their direct control. Whilst this objective is also pushed via accompanying strategies, such as through welfare policies that collect information on favela residents, visual dominance over the favela is central to the state's strategy of domination of these populations.

Furthermore, there is a particular visuality work in these interventions: occupying watch towers, surveying favela residents through drone imagery, isolating the favela resident in the cross-hairs of a gun scope. For the police officer performing these visual manoeuvres, vision becomes manageable and the favela below becomes an organised visual field. This disentanglement of subject (security agent) and object (favela resident) suggests that through occupying these positions and adopting these techniques, officers can maintain a (supposedly) objective, rational visuality. The favela becomes a distanced, neat space through which these objects are easily controlled.

By drawing this activist practice into a juridical framework, professionalised sousveillance reiterates the same set of visual signs and structures that dominate police interactions with favela communities. If we engage the scholarship of Jacques Rancière (2004, 2010), we can recognise how this visual redeployment works to maintain the existing system of violent repression at work in favelas. In the transferal of this visuality from police officer to the favela activist, we can recognise the continuation of a particular perceptual arrangement. Crucially for Ranciére (2004, 2010), it is through perception, experience, and representation that social orders are preserved. Who or what can be recognised within what role in society are fundamentally questions of vision (alongside the other senses). Thus, participation in the police's visuality also works to maintain the social order that police themselves are active in constructing. From this perspective, whilst adopting this professionalised vision makes such visual data legible to institutionalised audiences, it also preserves the perceptual foundations of the favela's contemporary distribution of bodies, roles, and expectations. As Jamie Amparo Alves (2018) demonstrates, the existing social order has brutal consequences, primarily for the favela's black populations.

This visual synergy inhibits the vital task of challenging the perceptual foundation of the existing social order in Brazil's favelas. Yet, visual interventions also have the potential to rupture this order because the deployment of a visuality is never complete. Denise Ferreira Silva (2009) has poignantly demonstrated how the Brazilian police officer's gun-sight, contrary to being a neutral optic, is a site of racial violence. These activists' digital archive also holds traces of alternative visualities, particularly when their work is not directed towards the production of evidence. These moments require further investigation and their affects explored as the potential basis for a future sousveillance practice that seeks to interrupt and remake, rather than reiterate, the visual field and its attendant power dynamics.

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Surveillance & Society

Dialogue | "Stay Vigilant": Copwatching in Germany

Bärbel Harju

LMU Munich, Germany
baerbel.harju@lrz.uni-muenchen.de

Abstract

In the US, forms of sousveillance have been part of the repertoire of black liberation movements since the times of slavery. Opposing racialized surveillance by inverting the gaze of the oppressor can be an empowering practice for marginalized populations, yet it also raises important questions: Could sousveillance inadvertently support the ideology of surveillance? When does "dark sousveillance" (Browne 2015: 21) succeed in criticizing and subverting the status quo of racialized surveillance? How do activists negotiate the risk of providing even more data that can be de-contextualized, misinterpreted, and, ultimately, even used against practitioners of sousveillance? I will address these questions with regard to current copwatching practices in Germany. Using the project Cop Map as a case study, I will examine both the potentially liberating power and ambiguities of sousveillance as well as critical factors for success. Cop Map (https://www.cop-map.com), a German copwatching website designed by two artivist collectives, allows citizens to report police presence and racial profiling while ensuring data protection for users of the app. Cop Map is directed against increased state surveillance and police powers, but also reaches out to organizations that mainly address racial profiling. Building on intersectional alliances and networks of solidarity, sousveillance can create spaces to counter racist police practices and raise awareness—especially if embedded in broader efforts and organizational structures to combat (police) surveillance and protect data privacy. The subversive potential of forms of "surveillance from below" is complex, culturally and historically contingent, and predicated on their contextualization within broader movements.

In the US, forms of sousveillance have been part of the repertoire of black liberation movements from the times of slavery (cf. Browne 2015) to the Black Panthers' practice of "policing the police" to today, with activists using cell phone videos, live-streaming tools, and copwatch programs as powerful technologies to reveal racist practices. Undeniably, the mass circulation of videos that expose racial profiling and police violence has fueled social justice movements. Opposing racialized surveillance by inverting the gaze of the oppressor can be an empowering practice for marginalized groups, yet it also raises important questions: Could sousveillance inadvertently support the ideology of surveillance? When does "dark sousveillance" (Browne 2015: 21) succeed in criticizing and subverting the status quo of racialized surveillance? How do activists negotiate the risk of providing even more data that can be de-contextualized, misinterpreted, and, ultimately, even used against practitioners of sousveillance? I will address these questions with regard to current copwatching practices in Germany. Using the project Cop Map as a case study, I will examine both the potentially liberating power and ambiguities of sousveillance as well as critical factors for success.

Social justice movements around the world increasingly embrace forms of sousveillance, often influenced by US practices. In recent years, copwatching and other technologies of sousveillance have been gaining traction in Germany. People targeted by racialized surveillance in Germany increasingly take to social media to share their experiences, organize against racial profiling, and build resistance (Thompson 2018: 211). Current practices of copwatching in Germany are driven by activists from marginalized communities. Groups like Copwatch FFM and KOP (campaign for victims of police violence), projects like Ban! Racial Profiling, based in Berlin, and the national campaign Stop Racial Profiling, initiated by KOP and ISD (an organization of black people in Germany), successfully join forces with various organizations and

institutions to fight racist criminalization and surveillance. Organizations that employ and encourage tactics of sousveillance follow a diverse set of objectives. Apart from the important documentation of incidents of police violence, creating "statistics from below" (Thompson 2018: 211), they also often support victims of police violence through legal counsel. Another important goal involves fostering solidarity, especially through raising awareness among the white majority of society who is less aware of structural and internalized racism in present-day Germany.

Vigilance is a key aspect of the solidarity between victims and onlookers of excessive policing. Campaigns like Ban! Racial Profiling call on citizens to be alert and to critically observe police action. Solidarity and intervention can thrive only "when we are vigilant in public spaces, look out for each other, and document experiences with racial profiling" (Authors' Collective of the Berlin Campaign Ban! Racial Profiling 2018: 194; my translation). As activist Em Ge points out: "When you see someone being stopped by the police, don't just walk on. Stay and watch. If you have something on you that looks like a camera, pull it out.… The police should never feel comfortable when they check people in our neighborhood" (qtd. in Authors' Collective of the Berlin Campaign Ban! Racial Profiling 2018: 194–195; my translation). Calls for vigilance towards policing in Germany also come from anti-surveillance organizations often associated with white male activism, for example the hacker network Chaos Computer Club (CCC). Examining copwatching in the German context brings to light culturally specific suspicions about state surveillance. With their not-too-distant memories of the ubiquitous spying of the Third Reich and the German Democratic Republic's secret police, many Germans are wary of creating a police state and display a somewhat greater sensitivity towards excessive policing, surveillance, and data privacy than do US citizens (Devins 2017). At the same time, especially when compared to the US, there is still much less awareness of issues like racism and white privilege in German mainstream society. Intersectional alliances between anti-surveillance and anti-racist activism, I argue, benefit from the theoretical underpinnings and discursive frameworks of both anti-racist and anti-surveillance activism. Sousveillance projects that draw from the valuable insights generated by oppressed communities *and* tech-savvy anti-surveillance organizations can serve to empower both groups, especially when embedded in larger coalitional social justice movements.

A case in point is Cop Map, a German copwatching website launched in 2018 by two German artivist groups, *Polizeiklasse München* and Peng! Collective. Cop Map inverts the authorities' rhetoric of "imminent danger" meant to justify enhanced police powers and posits the police itself as the danger to individuals and democracy. The project was born out of opposition towards new legislation to increase police powers in Bavaria. Quickly, raising awareness for racial profiling was identified as another main objective of the project in order to stand with those marginalized communities who have always been victims of unjust monitoring by the police: "It's time to show solidarity!" (Polizeiklasse and Peng! Collective 2018). Cop Map allows citizens to report police presence live on an interactive map while ensuring strict data protection for its users. The cooperation with Surveillance under Surveillance, a global online project documenting CCTV surveillance, allows users to detect surveillance cameras in their vicinity. Copwatching activism in the United States, such as resistance to stop and frisk practices in New York City or sousveillance tactics employed as part of the Black Lives Matter movement, served as models and were discussed during the conceptualization of Cop Map (Pikazo 2019). While designing the platform, the collectives reached out to groups like ISD and organizations like CCC to include the voices and opinions of both anti-racist and anti-surveillance activists. The goal was to go beyond mere documentation to design a tool that might be of practical use for people seeking to evade policing and that would raise awareness of the detrimental impact of racial profiling and excessive policing on democracy.

The direction of individual citizens' vigilance and alertness is a cornerstone of Cop Map. Watching from below subverts police surveillance and disrupts internalized assumptions about who or what qualifies as "dangerous." In the face of increasingly problematic efforts of so-called securitization, Cop Map is an intervention that explicitly seeks to "de-securitize" the public. Cop Map aims to direct individuals' attention away from "pseudo-dangers like people of color and migrants" to "the real danger: the police" (Pikazo 2019). By asking individuals to be vigilant and alert in public, not despite but because of the police, the project creates a space for counter-imaginaries and subverts dominant hierarchies of attention.

Importantly, Cop Map is not just an interactive website and sousveillance tool. It is embedded in a larger campaign to raise awareness. Directly underneath the map, a video in the style of a public service announcement contains testimonies by several individuals who view the police not as "friend" and "helper," but as an "imminent threat." The video testifies to the project's attempt to build a broad social alliance around its cause. The six speakers—a student, a journalist, a filmmaker, a programmer, an activist, and a Holocaust survivor—reflect the diversity of those vulnerable to police powers with regard to gender, race, occupation, and age, implying that *all* members of society—and democracy at large—are threatened by excessive policing. The voices of marginalized people are amplified by contextualizing them alongside the voices of people who benefit from white privilege and are more readily heard in German society, particularly the words of Holocaust survivor Ernst Grube who warns that increased power almost always leads to abuse: "Haven't we learned from history?"

The designers of the platform are aware that sousveillance practices are highly ambiguous and run the risk of perpetuating the logic of the surveillance state. Peng! Collective member Ronny Sommer (2019) states that criticism from left-leaning anti-surveillance groups was anticipated since "[more sousveillance] in an urban space means more surveillance—and more surveillance is always a problem." Data privacy, he underlines, was front and center during the development of Cop Map. Earlier ideas for a campaign involving video sousveillance were dismissed. Pikazo (2019) seconds this: "There is no tracking, no data surveillance, no names—neither of our users nor of individual police officers. Our goal is not to expose individual transgressions and thereby perpetuate the 'bad-apple' theory of police misconduct, but to highlight the systemic nature of the problem."

Despite some lingering criticism of the potentially negative effects of sousveillance voiced by CCC, the project's originators contend that, in the case of Cop Map, the method of watching back is valid and effective. Cop Map's radical reframing of the police as a threat to democracy didn't miss the mark. The highly provocative and media-savvy publication of Cop Map elicited a nationwide storm of responses by media outlets, politicians, and police unions that ranged from amused and astounded to hysterical and vehement opposition. Much to the creators' delight, even critical newspaper reports oftentimes repeated the campaign's arguments word-for-word, thus exposing a wide audience to their ideas for the first time: the lack of democratic oversight of police practices, the problem of racial profiling, and the dangers to the German Constitution posited by new legislation designed to increase police powers. Cop Map inserts itself into existing analyses and critiques of the police by providing a list of links to websites by allies, thus establishing a connection with and amplifying grassroots organizations' long-standing efforts in the fight against racial profiling.

After six to eight weeks of intense public debate in 2018, both media attention and usage of the website decreased. Today, the website shows only stationary CCTV cameras. With more than one hundred newspaper reports including all major German dailies, Cop Map was mainly successful as a discursive intervention. The project generated attention for the main goals of both anti-racist and anti-surveillance movements even though the website didn't succeed in becoming a lasting sousveillance tool to report police presence. The facts that the website was not very user-friendly and could easily be manipulated with fake reports were cited as reasons for its failure to generate lasting activity (Pikazo 2019), and the question remains whether people affected by racial profiling should have been included more and earlier in the conceptualization of the project, as Sommer (2019) self-critically deliberates. Vanessa E. Thompson, scholar and Copwatch FFM co-founder, appreciates that Peng! reached out for feedback while designing the website, but adds that the media attention garnered by projects like Cop Map raises the question of whose expertise is taken seriously and how the media deals—or fails to deal—with the knowledge of marginalized communities (Thompson 2019).

The case of Cop Map illustrates the strengths and challenges of sousveillance projects. Building a platform for testimonies by victims of racialized surveillance makes their concerns visible in a society in which awareness of racism and police brutality is much less present than in the US. As Glencora Borradaile and Joshua Reeves (in this issue) point out in their contribution to this volume, the dependence of political

activism on tools of digital capitalism might diminish the chance of agency and political change unless these methods are embedded in collective political activity beyond the digital realm. Building on intersectional alliances and networks of solidarity, sousveillance can create spaces to counter racist police practices and raise awareness—especially if embedded in broader efforts and organizational structures to combat (police) surveillance and protect data privacy. Following Simone Browne's conceptualization of "dark sousveillance" as "an imaginative place from which to mobilize a critique of racializing surveillance" (Browne 2015: 21), projects like Cop Map successfully insert counter-narratives into mainstream discourse. Sousveillance, thus, can be understood as more than actual practices of technology-enhanced counter-surveillance, and becomes a subversive practice of re-imagining dominant narratives and hierarchies. In this sense, sousveillance actually does have a democratic impetus, "enhancing the ability of people to access… data about their surveillance" and, if not fully "neutralize surveillance" (Mann, Nolan, and Wellman 2003: 333), at least work towards creating opportunities for "freedom practices" (Browne 2015: 21) that build platforms for nuanced critique. The subversive potential of copwatching is both complex and culturally contingent. When situated within broader social justice movements that employ careful, intersectional analysis of both the police and surveillance technologies, tactics of sousveillance can facilitate a "plurality of veillances," as Mann argues (in this issue), and live up to their political potential.

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Dialogue | Police Bodycams as Equiveillance Tools?: Reflections on the Debate in the Netherlands

Lotte Houwing

Bits of Freedom, The Netherlands
rozemetglitters@systemausfall.org

Gerard Jan Ritsema van Eck

University of Groningen, The Netherlands
g.j.ritsema.van.eck@step-rug.nl

Abstract

In the United States of America, police body-worn cameras (bodycams) were introduced to protect civilians against violence by law enforcement authorities. In the Netherlands, however, the same technology has been introduced to record and discipline the behavior of the growing number of citizens using their smartphone cameras to film the (mis)conduct of police. In answer to these citizens sousveilling the police and publishing their images on social media, the bodycam was introduced as an objective referee that also includes the perspective of the police officer. According to this view, the bodycam is a tool of equiveillance: a situation with a diversity of perspectives in which surveillance and sousveillance are in balance (Mann 2005). Various factors, however, hamper the equiveillant usage of bodycams in the Netherlands. Firstly, the attachment of the bodycam to the uniform of the officer leads to an imbalanced representation of perspectives. The police perspective is emphasized by the footage that is literally taken from their perspective, in which others are filmed slightly from below, making them look bigger and more overwhelming. Also, the police officers' movements create shaky footage with deceptive intensity that invokes the image of a hectic situation that calls for police action. Secondly, it is the officer who decides when to wear a camera and when to start and stop recording. This leaves the potential to not record any misconduct. Thirdly, access to the recorded images, whilst in theory open to police and citizens alike, is in practice exclusively for the police. Within the current regulatory framework, bodycams are thus not neutral reporters of interactions between civilians and the police. We will end our contribution to this Dialogue section with suggestions for the improvement of those rules and reflect on the question of whether bodycams can ever be objective referees.

Introduction

In the United States of America, police body-worn cameras (bodycams) were introduced and promoted as a means of protecting civilians against violence by law enforcement authorities (e.g., ACLU n.d.). In the Netherlands, however, the same technology has been introduced for a very different, and quite opposite, reason: to record and discipline the behaviour of people interacting with the police. An important component of this behaviour is the sousveillant practices made possible by smartphone cameras that allow citizens to film interactions with law enforcement authorities (Mann, Nolan, and Wellman 2003). According to the Dutch police, such sousveillant imagery cannot show the whole story as it inevitably excludes the perspective of the police officer. The introduction of the bodycam would thus provide an answer to this by creating an "equal playing field" (Raat 2016; our translation). In our contribution, we will reflect on these arguments and the central role that sousveillance has played and continues to play in them. We conclude that although the police present the bodycam as just another neutral observer, the perspective of these cameras is inherently skewed. Currently, regulation to offset this skew is utterly lacking.

Bodycams and Violence Towards the Police

In the last decade, violence against emergency service personnel (including police officers but also EMT

and fire department staff) has become a hotly debated topic in the Netherlands. As institutional trust in the Netherlands is generally high, many saw this development as unacceptable. Thus, in response, politicians demanded new methods through which to combat this increase in violence such as, inter alia, tough new sentencing guidelines. In this context, bodycams were presented as a way to de-escalate potentially violent encounters and gather evidence if necessary. A recent evaluation of the effectiveness of this by Sander Flight (2019) showed mixed evidence in this regard.[1] In the areas where bodycams were introduced, violence was reduced and the feeling of safety of the police officers who were wearing the bodycams increased. According to Flight, however, it is hard to say whether the bodycams prevented citizens from being aggressive towards police officers or police officers acted more professionally and thus received a more respectful response. In this regard, it is notable that citizens often do not see the bodycam, and that, even when the camera is detected, it is difficult to see whether it is recording. Consequently, the citizen depends on the honesty and initiative of the police officer to know if a situation is being captured. As a tool to gather evidence, the results were decidedly disappointing: not a single recording was used as evidence in a criminal proceeding (Flight 2019: 56–57).

The Bodycam as a Tool of Equiveillance

The rise of sousveillant practices is the second major reason behind the introduction of bodycams in the Netherlands. Citizens use their smartphone cameras to film the police, including when misconduct is taking place, and publish these images on social media. There are several examples of such civilian-made images causing angry protests and negatively influencing the public opinion of the police. Recently, this includes the deadly strangulation of Mitch Henriquez (Omroep West 2017), and the case of a thirteen-year-old black arrestee who was cuffed to the motorcycle of an officer and made to jog alongside it the entire way to the police station (Almere Nieuws 2017). Both resulted in powerful images of police officers seemingly abusing their power. According to the police, however, such images cannot tell the whole story as they exclude the perspective of the police officer or miss the inducement behind their actions. According to Theo van der Plas, who is responsible for the introduction of bodycams at the Dutch national police, police bodycams were introduced with the express purpose of providing this perspective (qtd. in Andringa 2019). According to this view, the bodycam is a tool of equiveillance (Mann 2005).

Mann (2005) describes equiveillance as a situation with a diversity of perspectives in which surveillance and sousveillance are in balance. There are indeed a few aspects of Dutch police bodycams that might make them function as tools of equiveillance: Firstly, the Dutch national police wanted to introduce them in order to have imagery covering a larger timespan, for the purpose of complementing the often short videos that are shared on social media (e.g., Almere Nieuws 2017). Secondly, the police present themselves as a party with authority, and thus its imagery as neutral and trustworthy. Finally, any images recorded with a bodycam are (theoretically) available to the citizen as well as to the police. This makes it possible to use police bodycam footage in order to hold the wearer to account. However, various factors stand in the way of the proper functioning of the bodycam as a neutral observer and a tool of equiveillance.

First, the attachment of cameras to the bodies of police officers leads to an overrepresentation of the way that the police officers experience a situation (Brucato 2015: 466–69). This imbalance was clearly visible in the imagery produced with the bodycams of the police officers that shot Arlon Sterling in the US in 2016. This imagery gives a hectic physical impression, sometimes called "deceptive intensity," because of the jerkily moving images, the police screaming "Don't fucking move!" and "Get on the ground!," and the heavy breathing of the police officers. However, the same incident was filmed by a wall-mounted security camera. From this video it became clear that Sterling was not aggressive at all and that the shaky images were created because the police attacked him (NOS 2018).[2] The fact that the imagery is taken from the

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[1] There have been several pilots on the introduction of bodycams in the Netherlands. Researcher Sander Flight focused on the pilot in Amsterdam.

[2] More examples of deceptive intensity can be found in the video at: https://media.ccc.de/v/SHA2017-27-hands_up_don_t_shoot_unless_with_a_bodycam#t=2134, e.g., at 34:00 and at 35:58.

physical perspective of the police officer has another effect: you only see the face of the citizen and not that of the police officers. The viewer experiences the situation from the perspective of the police, which creates an emotional connection (McKay and Lee 2019). Finally, as bodycams are usually placed on the chest, others are filmed from slightly below. This makes them look bigger and more overwhelming than if the bodycam was placed for example on the head or shoulder of the police officer.

Second, the manner in which body-worn camera images are created further hampers the equiveillant use of bodycams. In the Netherlands (but also in Belgium; e.g., van den Panhuyzen 2019) there is currently no regulation for when a police bodycam should be recording, leaving this decision up to the wearer—if the officer even decides to wear a camera, as this is currently also voluntary. This results in a power imbalance as an officer could, for instance, turn on the bodycam after insulting a person and just film their reaction. Furthermore, *what* is viewed by the camera is decided by the police officers since the camera is attached to their bodies. By simply turning the other way or covering the lens, events and persons could be deliberately placed within or outside of the recorded area (see also Mann's contribution to this *Surveillance & Society* dialogue section).

Third, and just as important, is how images from bodycams can be used and for what purposes; power over the images means power over the story. The same imbalance that exists in relation to the recording of images also exists in relation to the storage of the images beyond a standard four-week period. Whether or not this happens is, again, left to the discretion of the police. Although any recorded citizen has a legal right to access bodycam images, as was pointed out above, it is not always clear for citizens whether there even is footage of their encounter with the police. If there is, the procedure for requesting the imagery is obscure, making it difficult to file a complaint. Thus, the legal right to access may be nigh impossible to exercise in practice. Finally, there exists an inherent tension with the right to privacy in this regard. While footage needs to be kept available in order for it to be used in a complaint procedure, it should not be retained any longer than strictly necessary in order to protect the right to privacy of all data subjects (including bystanders) filmed.

Looking again at Mann's concept of equiveillance, important aspects include ensuring documentation from a diversity of perspectives and finding the balance between surveillance and sousveillance. Both aspects put emphasis on an equal distribution of power, control, and representation. The usage of bodycams by the Dutch police fails to meet the basic demands of this concept. It does not provide for a diversity of perspectives since there is a clear and inherent overrepresentation of the perspective of the police officers wearing the bodycams on their bodies. Also, control over the creation of the images lies solely with the police since it is the police who decide whether to record an event and when to record. Finally, the ability to use the created images is not shared equally, since it is not always clear for citizens whether there are images, and, if so, how they can access them and what value is attached to the images in what procedures. Since none of the aspects are equally distributed, the deployment of the bodycam in the Netherlands cannot be qualified as a means of equiveillance.

Note that the police discretion to (not) record interactions also has implications for practices which involve creating "statistics from below" (Thompson 2018), such as those described in Harju's contribution on copwatching in Germany to this Dialogue section. However, for footage to be useful for such a purpose it needs to exist. Situations which do not seem noteworthy to the police officer involved will remain undocumented, as there seems to be no reason to turn on the camera. This means that any instances in which implicit biases influenced police behaviour, leading to, for example, racial profiling, have a very small chance of being recorded. If footage does not exist, it cannot be accessed and used to challenge the police on any implicit biases, nor in individual cases or to create statistics from below.

Conclusion: It's Not about Bodycams, It's about Regulating Bodycams

Worldwide, smartphones and social media are being used to record the conduct of police officers, functioning as a powerful form of sousveillance. In the Netherlands, the police reacted to these practices by introducing body-worn cameras under the guise of an attempt at equiveillance. However, nowadays cameras

can be found all throughout public and private spaces—attached to streetlights, on the bodies of police officers, and in the pockets of most people. Simply adding more cameras to this mix does not automatically create a surveillance/sousveillance equilibrium.

If bodycams are truly to function as "objective referees," then the Dutch police must consciously assign this role to them (Flight 2019). The police need to focus their attention not just on the technology itself, but also on the societal context and the technology users (see Wennekes 2019). The question remains as to whether the bodycam is suitable to function as an "objective referee" and achieve the stated goal of equiveillance. However, when bodycams are introduced, we suggest that comprehensive regulation is needed for at least the following three areas: first, the placement of the camera on the body of the officers must be regulated; second, we must regulate which situations will be filmed and when the camera should be on, rather than leaving this decision to individual police officers; and, most importantly, the citizens' access to recorded images must be made equal to that of the police by way of a simple procedure. If swiftly implemented, such regulations would form a welcome first step towards actual equiveillance.

Acknowledgments

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