INTRODUCTION

Journalism, citizenship and surveillance

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Contextualising Surveillance Society

We live in a "surveillance society"—a society organised around the collection, recording, storage, analysis and application of data on individuals and groups by state and corporate actors (Lyon 2001, 2007). As Edward Snowden's revelations about the extensive surveillance programmes of the National Security Agency (NSA) in the United States and the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) in the United King- dom revealed, intelligence agencies routinely gather vast amounts of data about our activities. The programmes revealed by Snowden ranged from the interception of data shared on the internet to practices of hacking into computer systems and compromising security levels. They encompassed the bulk collection of everyone's data as well as targeted surveillance of governments, companies and civil society organisations. Among other things, the revelations showed that the intelligence agencies had intercepted the metadata of billions of phone calls recorded by Verizon and other major phone companies. Through its PRISM programme, the NSA also accessed information gathered by Facebook, Google, Apple and other technology companies (e.g. Fidler 2015).

> The Snowden revelations thus put the spotlight on the forms of surveillance experienced by individuals in contemporary societies. These pervade every aspect of daily life, from our online shopping, browsing and social activities, to the ways we move through public spaces and transportation systems under the watchful eye of CCTV cameras. To Bauman and Lyon (2013), the nefarious nature of surveillance means that citizens increasingly come to accept its ubiquity and pervasiveness as part and parcel of everyday life. As they note,

> much of the personal information vacuumed so vigorously by organizations is actually made available by people using their cell phones, shopping in malls, travelling on vacation, being entertained or surfing the internet. We swipe our cards, repeat our post- codes and show our ID routinely, automatically, willingly. (Bauman and Lyon 2013, 13)

Surveillance becomes normalised and, because of its pervasiveness, we do not question it. We are, in that sense, living in a state of "surveillance realism" where we "accept it as an inevitability of our world" and do not question or contest it (Dencik 2015). Surveillance is, of course, nothing new. Nation states have always incorporated regimes of surveillance as a way of controlling and disciplining populations. Jeremy Bentham (1791)

famously thought up the "panopticon" model of prison architecture—a structure enabling the constant and pervasive monitoring of people. For Foucault (1975), the panopticon became a symbol for contemporary methods of social control that incorporate self-discipline and self-control under the watchful eye of an authority.

What *is* new is how, in our "datafied society" (van Dijck 2014), the gathering of extensive data about all of us is pervasive, opaque, yet central to the functioning of consumer capitalism. As van Dijck (2014) has observed, these "have become a regular *currency* for citizens to pay for their communication services and security" (197).

In tandem with these technological transformations, the political environment and discourses on surveillance have shifted profoundly over the past few decades, in the light of concerns about national security. These have only accelerated and grown since 9/11 and its aftermath. Along those lines, Giorgio Agamben (2005) has suggested that we are living in "states of exception", where the rule of law is in a permanent state of suspension due to the perception of threat. In such a perceived threat environment, we have moved, according to Massumi (2015), towards an "operative logic of preemption" as the dominant mode of state conduct, based partly on advancing apparatuses of surveillance.

This special issue of *Digital Journalism* explores how surveillance society shapes and interacts with journalistic practices and discourses. It takes an interest not only in how surveillance debates play out in and through mediated discourses, but also how practices of surveillance inform the accounts, everyday work and ethics of journal- ists. The emergence of a surveillance society raises important questions around new threats to journalistic freedom and political dissent; the responsibilities of media organisations and state actors; the nature of journalists' relationship to the state; journalists' ability to protect their sources and data; and the ways in which media coverage shape public perceptions of surveillance, to mention just a few areas of concern. To lay out a conceptual lens through which these questions are explored in this special issue, we here consider, first of all, the category of digital citizenship and, secondly, the role of journalism in negotiating digital citizenship in a surveillance society.

Digital Citizenship

Our everyday life and the forms of engagement and participation it entails increasingly take place through digital media (Hintz, Dencik, and Wahl-Jorgensen 2016; Mossberger, Tolbert, and McNeal 2007). The digital era has therefore profoundly trans- formed our political subjectivity (Isin and Ruppert 2015). Here, we draw on the idea of digital citizenship to

help make sense of the ways in which rights claims and agency of citizens have changed in the digital era. As Isin and Ruppert (2015) have observed, "our digital lives are configured, regulated, and organized by dispersed arrangements of numerous people and things such as corporations and states but also software and devices as well as people such as programmers and regulators" (4). Along those lines, subjects have been atomised and fragmented in the digital era (Hintz, Dencik, and Wahl-Jorgensen 2016; Papacharissi 2010). They can no longer be understood simply as the citizens of well-defined and manageable nation states, and have become more choice and difficult to control. At the same time, surveillance of citizens in a datafied society enables forms of classification that facilitate control and order (Foucault 1975). This, in turn, raises issues of political accountability, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the rights and forms of agency afforded to digital citizens. These issues are further complicated by the fact that practices of surveillance often lack transparency and therefore do not allow for informed consent or resistance.

Along those lines, the various forms of surveillance raise critical questions for citizens. Though they are often refracted through debates over privacy (see Mols' article in this issue) and related concerns about anonymity and confidentiality, they raise broader questions of justice and inequality. So, for example, scholars have begun to raise questions about how different groups and individuals—distinguished by factors including race, ethnicity, income and religion—may be differentially targeted and affected by big data surveillance in what might be considered a system of "social sorting" (e.g. Turow 2012). However, the digital era also provides new ways for citizens to resist and contest surveillance through their own monitoring and data collection. Bottom-up "sous- veillance" (Bakir 2010; Mann, Nolan, and Wellman 2003) can be used to document mal- practice and confront authorities. Citizens also organise resistance through political action, including movements such as the "Stop Watching Us" and "The Day We Fight Back" campaigns which have opened up new spaces for discussion of the consequences of surveillance (see Wäschel's article in this issue). More than anything, emerging work on digital citizenship demonstrates that we have some way to go in developing both the conceptual and practical tools to help us understand the implications of surveillance in the digital era. Here, journalism plays a key role.

The relationship between journalism, citizenship and practices of surveillance has, historically, been a complex one. On the one hand, we take it for granted that journal- ism acts as a watchdog on concentrations of power, ensuring the accountability of institutions in society. This includes paying attention to the actions of intelligence agencies and the governments facilitating and underwriting their actions. Doing so is

particularly challenging given the structural clash between the institutional secrecy of intelligence services and the key journalistic principles of transparency and accountability (Allen 2008; Thompson 2000). As Ruby, Goggin and Keane's contribution to this special issue demonstrates, journalistic institutions and the academy have paid scant attention to key surveillance practices, including the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing agreement between the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. On the other hand, if digital citizenship involves facilitating understanding, participation and the agency of citizens, it involves journalistic responsibility for informing citizens about key issues, including surveillance. However, as contributions to our special issue demonstrate, this is not always straightforward, and debates ultimately take place in and are shaped by "national settings and … domestic struggles of power and legitimacy" (Heikkila¨ and Kunelius, article in this special issue). Though the ways in which surveillance is contested or legitimated vary across national contexts, Heikkila¨ and Kunelius in their article find evidence for a profound social change reflected in what they refer to as a "structural transformation of privacy". Nonetheless, if national political con- texts shape journalists' engagement with surveillance, this also means that key issues are articulated and contested in distinctive and dynamic ways informed by political cultures and geopolitics. As Mols shows in her contribution to this special issue, Dutch media coverage of the Snowden revelations emphasised the importance of enabling those with positions on the Snowden revelations. As Johnson's article demonstrates, journalists see their own speech as deserving of unique protections, above and beyond those protections afforded to the general public.

> Ultimately, the emergence of a surveillance society raises larger questions around the place of transparency, which has long been a cornerstone of journalistic ethics. As Allen (2008) has argued, a rhetoric of transparency has become central to journalistic accounts of ethics—often as a defensive move against attacks. This leaves journalists in a paradoxical bind: as they commit themselves to goals of transparency, they are simultaneously "subjected to forces of discipline and surveillance that might, in the end, run counter to the very goals that they seek" (Allen 2008, 336).

What is apparent from the contributions to this special issue is that as surveil- lance is becoming increasingly all-encompassing and pervasive, journalism as an institution and a practice must develop the tools to shed light on and explain these practices. Articles published here highlight a variety of approaches by journalists—from justifying surveillance or downright neglecting it, to arguing for the need to attend to citizens' rights to privacy. At the same time, given the relatively limited understanding of surveillance, contributions to the special issue demonstrate how important it is for the media to shed light on the

complex regimes of monitoring to underpin emerging forms of digital citizenship.

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