

## **Call for Chapter Abstracts for the Book “The History of Surveillance”**

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The overall aim of this collected volume is to bring together contributions on the history of surveillance, in order to determine what its drivers are.

The publication and publishing process is part of the COST Action “Living in Surveillance Societies” (LiSS) that is funded by the EU Framework Programme (see [http://w3.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=233&action\\_number=IS0807](http://w3.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=233&action_number=IS0807) for further information and details) and is a project by the LiSS working group “Surveillance Technologies in Practice”. The editors are members of this working group.

### **Possible publication by:**

Routledge (our contact person: Thomas Sutton Commissioning Editor, Criminology).

### **Introduction to the edited volume**

Often we read in the newspapers that new technology causes ever-deeper central government penetration into our private lives (Ball and Webster 2003). The cause of this development is, reputedly, the worldwide stress on countering terrorism (Wood et al. 2003). Does such a mono-causal relationship indeed exist? Or are there other, more structural, roots for increasing surveillance? The political scientist Samuel Finer once wrote “government started only yesterday”. In the past central government could not directly penetrate into citizens’ private lives very deeply. It always needed intermediaries – with their own agendas – to do so. But at present central government can. According to Finer five technological parameters are responsible: information technology, movement, energy technology, bureaucracy, and wealth. Information technology is the most dynamic parameter. Central government received enormous penetration possibilities through its use. (Finer 1997:1610-1611).

Yet, technology in itself is not the driver of such developments. The question is whether fighting terrorism is. In this edited volume we look into the question of how central government came to penetrate citizens’ private lives ever deeper throughout history. The main thought behind this is that government penetration has been going on much longer than the period since 9/11, and that there have been many more drivers than fighting terrorism alone, historically (Lyon 2001; 2003a; 2003b).

### **Background**

Higgs, who is one of the very few to have devoted a monograph to the subject of the history of surveillance in England, finds that countering war and terrorism have indeed been drivers. Drivers of this kind, however, have only temporarily played a role in the past. More likely it has been the advance of the welfare state, which has spurred the intrusion into citizens’ private lives in England since 1870 (Higgs 2004).

Beniger, who writes about the US situation, finds that a ‘control revolution’ has taken place since 1870. The second industrial revolution led to the availability of ever-larger sources of inanimate energy, which were managed via ever more complex systems. To make

these systems manageable in their turn, changes in control mechanisms were necessary, which central government rapidly copied. That is how central government came to intrude on our private lives so fast (Beniger 1986). Other authors add that central government needed to do this to provide an answer to the social problems accompanying the industrial revolution, and to be able to tax the quickly expanding flow of commercial goods (Reindl 1997).

According to Headrick the turning point even occurred before the second industrial revolution: a cultural revolution took place in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, spurred by demographic, economic, and social transformations. This revolution led to an ever growing need for all kinds of information. During the ‘Age of Reason and Revolutions’ many new types of information systems were therefore called into being; a development that has not yet come to a halt. (Headrick 2000: 217-218; Lucassen 2001).

The afore-mentioned authors are of the opinion that the increased possibilities of penetration of central government were not caused by threats of terrorism, but suspect much deeper, structural, reasons behind this development, which they see as a much longer process. Higgs even writes that that is why such developments are inevitable. If we were to succeed in preventing government from acquiring such powers, private business would immediately fill the gap (Higgs 2004). If Higgs is right, obviously, the consequences for our ability to resist such intrusion are huge.

Opinions differ not only on the drivers behind increased government penetration, but also on the question of whether this development actually exists. As it happens, there is also a contrary discourse: IT empowers the citizens, enabling them to defend themselves against the authorities. This puts an end to society’s pyramidal structure, with central government in the cockpit. Nowadays the relation between government and society is better pictured as an ‘archipelago’, in which central government inhabits but one of the isles society consists of, and not necessarily the most important one (Castells 2000). IT also knows many constraints: what is technically possible, often turns out not to be viable once it is put in practice, because of legal and social barriers.

## Research Questions

Many grand narratives, but very little empirical research, that is what the short overview above has shown. Neither one of the two opposed narratives is ‘true’. Both describe part of the changes, which have occurred in the relation between government and society. The book we envisage looks into the question of whether central government actually has penetrated into the lives of private citizens ever-deeper, and whether citizens are protected against it, or defend themselves via the constraints mentioned above. How do the two discourses together relate to societal and administrative reality? In how far has government increasingly penetrated into our private lives? What have been the constraints it had to deal with, and how effective have these been? In how far have citizens gained autonomy? How has government as ‘big brother’ interfered with the ‘soft sister role’ it also plays? And, most importantly, what have been the drivers behind the phenomena under study? Only historical research can provide answers to such questions. We would like to suggest three perspectives:

- 1) Political-administrative: which information gathering initiatives have governments taken in the past to penetrate the private lives of their citizens, and how where these different from what is tried at current? How effective are citizens in defending themselves against these? What were their strategies? Have citizens also been empowered by new technology in the past? How has the political and societal debate on these issues evolved over time?

2) Sociology of technology: technology only becomes something, when it gets ‘enacted’ (Orlikowski et al. 2000). The degree to which the original intentions of technology are actually realized is dependent on the ‘practices’ in which technology functions. Many possibilities technology offers are never realized, because its social environment proves to be prohibitive. Yet, on the other hand, there is also ‘technological seduction’ and ‘function creep’: using technology to fulfill unintended functions because the technology just happens to be there. How has this influenced surveillance in the past?

3) Legal: Law constrains government (to a degree) in its use of information technology. The same goes for citizens’ defense against governmental information gathering. How have such laws developed in the past? To what degree have they been effective?

Overall: In the proposed book we try to combine the three perspectives mentioned above. In doing so we aim at answering our main questions: has central government indeed penetrated ever deeper into our private lives, and, if so, what have been the drivers behind this development? Is one of the perspectives leading? How did surveillance work before the advance of the centrally governed nation state? How much did government know then? Were there loosely coupled systems, reaching from the central to the local level, or did the central level send out special agents? How effective were these? Thanks to authors like Higgs (1997; 2004), Parenti (2003) and Beniger (1986), we are informed about surveillance history in the Anglo-Saxon world; in the modern period, that is. The rest of our knowledge is fragmentary at best. With the book we propose we aim to make a start at filling this gap in our knowledge, by providing a comparative overview of Europe’s surveillance history.

### **Submission of Structured Abstracts:**

Please submit structured abstracts for chapter proposals, short author biography/biographies, and your contact details (in a word document) before March 1, 2012 to the editors. The editors are interested in abstracts for original, unpublished contributions that have not been submitted for consideration in journals or other publications.

The abstracts should adhere to the following structured format and should be in between 650-900 words.

#### *(1) Purpose*

What are the reasons for writing this chapter? Why is the topic important? What are the main aims of the research? What are the research questions?

#### *(2) Approach/Theoretical framework/Design/Methodology*

How are the objectives achieved? Include the main method(s) used for the research. What is the approach to the topic and what is the theoretical or subject scope of the paper?

#### *(3) Findings*

What was found in the course of the work? What are the main results presented in the chapter? This will refer to analysis, discussion, or results.

#### *(4) Research limitations/implications (if applicable)*

Suggestions for future research and any identified limitations in the research process.

Implications for academic fields, disciplines, state of the art.

*(5) Practical and societal implications (if applicable)*

What outcomes and implications for policy, practice, applications and consequences are identified? How will the research impact upon society? How will it influence public attitudes? How could it inform civil society or public or industry policy? What changes to human practices should be made as a result of this research? How might it affect quality of life? Not all chapters must necessarily have practical and societal implications.

*(6) Originality/value*

What is new in the paper? How does it differ from and go beyond the state of the art in respective research fields? State the value of the paper and for whom it is relevant.

Author short biographies should be approximately 200-300 words and contain information on academic position, institutional affiliation, research interests and topics, major publications, projects, networks, affiliations, roles, etc.

### **Time Schedule (planned)**

- March 1, 2012: deadline for the submission of structured abstracts of chapter proposals
- End of April 2012: notification of authors on acceptance/decline of proposals; submission of the overall proposal, abstracts, author data to the commissioning editor of Routledge (and ‘mid term’ evaluation)
- End of September 2012: deadline for the submission of full chapters (further details will be announced)
- End of November 2012: feedback of review comments to the authors
- End of January 2013: submission of final versions of chapters
- End of March, 2013: submission of final manuscript to the publisher

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