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Adjusting Locally to a World under Ubiquitous Surveillance

Laura GRÜNBERG[1]

Abstract

Due to unprecedented technological developments in the field of science, communication, medicine, surveillance is part of our daily life experience. The risk society of today makes ubiquitous surveillance necessary, justified and consequently omnipresent. Institutionalized risk management is the foundation of contemporary society providing the governing root of social life. In this context, not only nation, state, citizenship, identity - important tropes of modernity -are called into quest but also 'what is local' becomes an important issue of critical and responsible reflection. The article will map the field of Surveillance Studies, address the perverse effects of living in a depersonalized "dataveillance world" for our own safety and security, and argue for the need of a reflexive study of ubiquitous surveillance, able to better reveal, in the context of contemporary risk society, the consequences of redefining our 'locals'.

Keywords: surveillance society; information society; risk society; modernity; panopticon; synopticon; omniopticon; social sorting; local; individualization.

The context of the ubiquitous surveillance society and the transformation of the local

Inescapably global and intensely local, the world we live in today is a world of ubiquitous surveillance. In the liquid society (Baumann, 2000), network society (Castells, 2000), global village (McLuhan, 1975) or in the complex connectivity environment of today (Tomlinson, 2002), however we want to label our times, risk avoidance and prevention are major issues for humankind. We live in a world structured more and more not only by natural risks but by humanly created ones. This new "risk profile" (Giddens, 1990: 110-111) requests considerate monitoring. Ulrich Beck, the one who really placed ides of 'risk society' in the intellectual

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space, was right - we do live today in a society obsessed by risk (Beck, 2003): risk of earthquakes but also of terrorist attacks and nuclear wars, risk of genetically inherited diseases, risk of looking and getting old (the whole beauty and anti-aging industry are build on these fears), risk of death (looking and death as a risk not as destiny-as in the case of cryogenie!), risk of being able to make you own gun with some basic internet instructions and the help of an intelligent 3D-printer already commercialized, etc. The more we know, due to progress in science and technologies, the more and faster we communicate due to new communication technologies, the more we are aware of the risks around us, the more we are confronted, at individual and collective level, with insecurity and uncertainty.

Trying to cope with risk by controlling it (i.e. risk avoidance management) is not entirely new but today "a pre-emptive as opposed to a preventive approach to risk emerged" (Wood, 2006: 11). Surveillance technologies and practices are shifting toward the screening of the actions and transactions of the general population (people considered at risk or that pose risk for others) in a more assertive type of preventing something that is immanently to happen instead of a vaguer, less justified prevention attitude towards an imagined future. From this perspective we may really call our society a 'risk-surveillance society' instead of surveillance society.

Since 9/11 events, monitoring of persons, groups and communities has increased significantly. The post 9/11 society is one that globally requires permanent protection, attentive monitoring, systematic profiling, and continuous care. With important help of adequate technologies, it is a society built much more than in the past on lack of trust. All surveillance processes and practices are living proofs of a world where we know we do not trust and are not trusted. Surveillance fosters suspicion. The employer installs keystroke monitors or GPS devices in service vehicles. Parents start to use webcams and GPS systems to check on their teenagers activities. Partners stole the parole from each other and read each other's emails. Social relationships, which depend on trust, are undermined by this abundance of technological surveillance options. Countries are spying one on each other more than ever. Advances in technology, an increasingly regulated and monitored digital network, and a general atmosphere of securitization have stimulated a world of ubiquitous surveillance. Sophisticated technologies allowed the birth of 'all seeing', 'a world of no strangers' (Giddens, 1990) in which the process of disassembly and re-assembly information about events and individuals and to recombine it is complex and screening and targeting those at risk and those posing risks for others is common place.

It is obvious that an unprecedented multitude of personal data is gathered today from all of us. Gary Marx talks about concentric circles of surveillance dividing information gathered into five zones. At the start, he locates the most public and then the most unique, thus identifying no less than fifty types of descriptive information clustering around ten main subsets covering information

needed for profiling, such as: demographics, locational information, temporal information, information related to network and social relationships, mobility and behavioural information extended to various technologies, economic behavior through monitoring consumption patterns and bank transactions, work monitoring and employment history and beliefs and attitudes of individuals through access to psychographic data, medical records, credit rankings, etc. (Marx, 1988). Today, with our own support, the smallest details of our lives are tracked and traced more closely than ever before. People are exposed to unprecedented daily surveillance. In almost every place inhabited by people one finds video cameras. Most businesses (in advanced countries) have various video equipment for monitoring both employees and customers. Public spaces are now recorded, and many of their cameras allow remote viewing by anyone with an internet connection. With the growth of smart phones many people now carry video cameras with them everywhere. With the quality of cameras increasing, and their price decreasing, the trend is likely to continue, and thus little of our daily lives are not being recorded by some video device.

And that is not all. Data mining is in (Parry, 2011). Our online activities are increasingly monitored, producing extensive data trails. Corporations look for monitoring every website visited in order to be more efficient in marketing and advertising their products and services. Governments are gaining more power to wiretap nearly all internet traffic. Search engines record the history of submissions, offering a detailed picture of a user's life, while social networking sites get users to record and publicize their offline lives. Most of this information is being recorded and stored in massive databases. While science has entered the era of 'big data', public policy researchers are also realizing the power (but also the powerless) of massive data collections. Demographic data of almost every part of our daily lives is recorded and stored for analysis and data is used not only to survey existing populations, but to support predictions of trends and future developments, to monitor the future before it even happens. This type of research has, with no doubts, its benefices - helping for example to control the spread of disease, but it also brings with it serious new social concerns. Our bodies are on the spot too. Genetic engineering, technological transplants, modern medical devices abolished the distinction between inside and outside our bodies. We can control our blood pressure or levels of insulin, we can change our moods with anti-depressive medication, we exchange organs among ourselves, we reproduce ourselves outside our bodies, we (and others!) can read our DNA and know our genetic predispositions. And that is not all. The way our bodies will look in the near future will depend on our choice (evolution by design- son much disputed nowadays!).

It is in this new reality that we live our lives as 'citizens of the world'. Back in time, Socrates was declaring himself not an Athenian or a Greek but a 'citizen of the world'. Later on, Immanuel Kant was saying that individuals and states, co-

existing in an external relationship of mutual influences, may be regarded as citizens of a universal state of mankind. Cosmopolitanism in thinking and acting is very much linked with the process of globalization, and globalization is very much linked with the increased awareness of a "world where there are no others" (Giddens, 1991: 27), where nothing is not to be seen, heard, recorded, stored. The tensions between the need for managing uncertainty, and preventing risks and privacy issues, between proximity and distance, between attachment to local and commitment to global, etc. are at the core of all cosmopolitanisms. These tensions are so visible within surveillance processes. Today we are indeed 'citizens of the world' but this global identity is closely linked to the ubiquitous surveillance society we live in. Today, more than ever, we do not belong to ourselves any more- we belong to the world as almost everything about us is public available. We contribute to this by ordinary gestures- using the credit cards, talking on the phones, using GPS in our cars, giving our ID number for various things, doing some medical tests. Just by eating, driving, travelling, shopping, consuming we contribute, on a daily basis, to feeding the big data gathered, to the disembodied global information about 'citizens of the world'.

We, that is our bodies, our minds, our feelings, and our actions, are public by default. Surveillance, as it is manifesting today, is redefining drastically the ways we think about 'local', the way we live in our 'local bodies', 'local spaces', 'local cultures'. Nothing is local any more. We are witnessing an invasion of watching, being watched, monitorized, sorted, and classified. The global spread of 'real time' technologies has increased the possibility of a new phase of totalitarism by putting us under constant forms of surveillance (Stevenson, 2002, 205). In addition, our new "viewer/voyeur" society is overall more open to the public gaze and may result in context-free narratives and objectification, which then further legitimizes watching (Lyon, 2006). *Social spaces* are reconfigured. Every space becomes one of purposeful observation. There is a colonization of the *outside space* (due, for example, to military surveillance satellites) of our *private space* (our mobiles indicates at all time where we are and; on sophisticated Google maps one may actually see inside our houses!) and of the *cyberspace* (by internet). Our '*consumers places' (*Urry, 1995*) are* also transformed in sites of customed demographic solicitations (Elmer, 2004). Every (local) community is/could be under permanent surveillance for security reasons, for research purposes, etc. Uses of surveillance technology for mapping our political behavior make us aggregate of individuals instead of public citizens. The spread of new technologies of surveillance from mobile phones to the orbital surveillance of enemy territories has thus invaded the public space and has the ability to redefine anything that was 'local' and maybe intended to remain local. In pre modern time our '*local knowledge*', to coin a term of Clifford Geertz, was rich enough and for sure more manageable. Now, when switching a light we have no idea wherefrom electricity comes or what electricity is (Giddens, 1990). When sending, by a click, an e-mail

to far away locations, we have no idea how it gets there instantly. We can no more handle the knowledge around us. Our local (individual) knowledge is now richer than ever but also unmanageable, depersonalized, than ever.

To think in terms of surveillance society means to choose a specific way of seeing our contemporary world that is relevant for making sense of many of social, economic and political problems of today (power relations, social sorting, technology, production of knowledge, ethics). It also means to reflect about the redefinitions of our 'locals'. Connection between risk and surveillance is obvious. Surveillance is the means whereby knowledge is produced for administering populations in relation to risk. "In a quest for security, all institutions, in whatever sector, seek to minimize risk by finding our as much as possible about as many factors as possible" (Lyon, 2001, 6). Institutionalized risk communication systems form the foundation of contemporary society and provide the governing basis of social life (Haggerty & Ericson, 1997). Information societies, network societies, liquid societies, global societies are surveillance societies too. Consequently surveillance is a key issue in contemporary society and sociology, together with other fields, should carefully deal with it. "While terms such as 'postmodern', 'globalized' or 'information society' are invented to try and highlight major social transformation of the present, surveillance society points up some singularly significant social processes caused by and contributing to such transformations" (Lyon, 2001: 4). It is in this context that the status of surveillance as an academic enterprise has grown and changed over recent years and a sociology of surveillance has emerged - a sociology that makes efforts to conceptualize and understand the new reality we live in and to critically discuss the responsibilities, the perverse effects and strategies of resistance. It is from this perspective that I consider necessary to introduce, mainly for the Romanian academic audience, the domain of Surveillance Studies-its history, core theoretical metaphors and dilemmas. It is in my opinion a huge theoretical and practical potential for research yet unexploited.

Mapping the field of Surveillance Studies

Many definitions of surveillance coexist. From neutral, benign ones (e.g. surveillance as a fundamental aspect of society) to negative ones pointing mainly to the repressive character of surveillance processes, invoking something sinister, making reference to dictators and totalitarisms or to more positive ones, talking about surveillance as progress, democratization of information, accessibility in terms of healing, protecting, taking care and in depth researching. From a more political and normative approach in everyday life usage we may identify also a more analytical treatment in the academic area. Basically surveillance means any collecting and systematic processing of personal information in view of

influencing and/or managering those surveilled. David Lyon, considered the 'father' of the domain, defines surveillance as any collection and processing of personal data, whether identifiable or not, for the purposes of influencing or managing those whose data have been gathered (Lyon, 2006). More recently surveillance is approached in terms of knowledge, information and protection against threats (Ball, 2002). As it is operationalized nowadays, it is more concerned with activities that are possible due to computer power. When we define surveillance we usually have in mind a kind of attention that is purposeful, it is routine, systematic and focused (Wood, 2006: 4).

A brief tour in history can easily map various mechanisms (discourses, institutions, technologies) that lead to various forms of surveillance. Some forms of technological and non technological surveillance have existed for a long time. Ancient act of eavesdropping, spying through the key hole, simple observation, listening, use of human detectives and under covered activities, "voyeurism" have been for a long time part of human behavior. Jesus, Allah or Mahomet are all major "surveillors" of human behavior. Looking in the mirror, chastity bells, identity cards, fingerprints, the science of craniology or phrenology but also the more recent manifestations of surveillance such as esthetic surgeries, pills industry, cryogenie, demographic politics, monitoring movements through satellites or the new modern means of surveillance such as biometrics, voice recognition, DNA analysis, genetic testing-all these (and many others not mentioned) constitute a taxonomy of surveillance that is continuously enriching. New surveillance technologies have transcended natural barriers (distances, time, and darkness) or build obstacles (walls). We have now scanning of data replacing patrolling the frontiers - so from material forms of surveillance we moved to immaterial forms of monitoring. Nowadays neuromarketing, social media networks (e.g. Facebook, Foursquare), Tattoo ID system, True Media Technologies (system for facial recognition used in advertising), Next Generation Identification (among the biggest data bank for corporal features), Server in the Sky (global exchange of biometrics information about terrorists) EURODAC (a program for comparing fingerprints of refugees) are realities of the world we live in.

Surveillance Studies is the offspring of a multidisciplinary venture. It is also a recent area of transdisciplinary research. For many years experts from all over the world- anthropology, criminology, cultural studies, geography, organization studies, philosophy, social psychology, sociology, criminology, cultural studies, geography, organization studies, philosophy, urban studies, etc. have worked more or less in isolation. Now they are all more and more aware of something called Surveillance Studies- a field dealing with major problems such as: privacy, ethics and human rights, social exclusion and discrimination, choice, power and empowerment, transparency and accountability or what we call governance (because it refers to how society is ordered and regulated in many fold ways).

The beginnings of the discussions around surveillance problems could be tracked back to Marx and Weber as well as to Kafka and Orwell but interest in analyzing surveillance processes is quite recent[2]. As any other field of reflection, Surveillance Studies has developed rapidly especially in times of multiple crisis and changes. The domain started to be of interest in the 70s, times of complex changes: final collapse of colonialism, the Cold War and Vietnam War, the totalitarian communist regimes, emergency of new social movements, democratic states using the wiretapping activities of FBI. The debates started after the first wave of computerization in the 1970s. The key metaphor was at that time "Big Brother"- from G. Orwell famous novel "Nineteen Eighty Four". The "bureaucracy metaphor" referring to Max Weber work on bureaucratic social control- was another image linked with the idea of surveillance. Novels such as Kafka's The Trial (1914) could be also considered as symbolical initial images for how surveillance was perceived. The digital times movies (e.g. Minority Report -2002, The Net-1995, Erasing David-2000) incited also the imagination with respect to the consequences of surveillance.

In that period, Foucault's work was also much appreciated. After a period of decrease in interest (the 80s) when "social control" become an unfashionable concept in social sciences and Baudrillard asked us to 'forget Foucault' (Baudrillard, 1987), the field of Surveillance Studies really took off. There were times when the computers get such smaller size that they fit a desktop, meaning a real revolution in financial fields, in consumer management and in entertainment. Theoreticians such as Anthony Giddens (1990), Christopher Dandeker (1990) or Gary Marx (1988), to name just a few, saw the increased importance of the surveillance impact.

The field continued to develop in the 90s. During that period a larger team of analysts coming from various fields (historian Mark Poster, philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, information specialist Oscar Gandy and computer scientist Roger Clarke) started intensive interdisciplinary debate on the issue. The end of Soviet Union and the falling of the Eastern block have proved the extend of surveillance state that had operated in the region. The 90s are seen as times when surveillance technologies invade public spaces (country such as UK being famous for the new type of emerging surveillance society due to the extension of CCTV in urban areas). It is also a period when more interdisciplinary reflections have been produced, including this time important urbanist theoreticians (e.g. Philip Dick, Mike Davis or Graham and Marvin).

Today the obsession of technologies of surveillance continues, mainly due to 9/11 shocking events. From a surveillance centripetal society (with a focus on individual) we moved to a security centrifugal society (with a focus on population). The interest has also moved from public surveillance to private sur-

[2] The following brief historical summary takes as reference point Wood's article (Wood, 2009).

veillance, to surveillance in everyday life, to self surveillance. Today is also a time of contestation over the cultural meanings of surveillance: is it control, repression, empowerment and/or pleasure? It is also a time of an increased interest in the biometric forms of surveillance and their consequences on the redefinitions of the human –nonhuman relations in term of body, identity, and action.

Theoretical Metaphors for surveillance society

Many labels cover the field of investigation dealing with surveillance. There are studies on *ideological surveillance* (e.g. the islamic veil, Holocaust, pronatalist policies in totalitarian Romania, demographic policies in China, internet control, etc.) and *medical surveillance* (transplants of STEM cells and organs, DNA analysis, etc.), military or political surveillance. In the new personal information economies of today, surveillance is conducted not only by the sate but by ordinary people, thus many studies focuss more recently on *self surveillance*- individual unprecedent preoccupation with age, looks (investment in looking younger and beautiful) or health (e.g. the type of self protection through precautious consumption, and *souveillance/reverse surveillance*[3] - a sort of watchful vigilance from underneath, a vigilance that involves community based recording as it refers to recording of an activity by the participant in the activity (e.g. making a photo to a policemen watching you).

But at the heart of the field there are a series of theoretical metaphors that guided the reflections and critical thinking on the theme and much of the theoretical energy has been consumed around engagement with, modification or rejection of its most famous concept- the *panopticon*. The metaphor refers to the image of the prison where *few could see all* others, the conscious and permanent state of being watched (seeing the tour!). It all started with Tommaso Campanella's City of the Sun-an ideal city as a prison, where peace and love are sovereign, place made of multiple circles and directed by three chiefs: Power, Knowledge and Love, where nobody can be owner of anything, only women can listen to music, young people are obliged to serve the older ones, sex is only permitted to women older than 19 and to men older than 21, names of newborn are determined by the general director (Campanella, 1981). Three hundred years after the book of Jeremy Bentham, in 1787, establishes, based on the ideal city of Campanella, the ideal building – the Panopticon (from "panoptes"-who see everything), the Inspection House, an architectural concept applicable to penitentiaries but also to social housing industries, hospitals, schools. It was a "new mode of obtaining power over mind" by seeing without being seen, by the omnipresence of the supervisor, by solitude under continuous surveillance (Bentham, 2001).

[3] Sousveillance is a term coined by Steve Mann in "Souveillance. Wearable Computing and Citixen "Undersight", hplus Magazine, published on July 10, 2009.

Bentham's system was never put into practice and ended up almost forgotten for two hundred years. It was revived by Foucault in 1975, at the beginning of the global digital revolution where awareness about the ubiquitous surveillance mechanisms started to grow. Foucault's analysis of Bentham's panopticon is offering the metaphor of the prison that makes its inhabitants feel as if they are always being monitored, to the extent that they begin to self-monitor and remove the need for intense discipline and punishment. Foucault argues that discipline and punishment becomes internalized when surveillance is a constant possibility, and that the ever-present citizen surveillance of our current age is producing this kind of internalization of close watching (Foucault, 2005).

In much of the theorization of modern-day surveillance, Panopticon is a dominant presence and Foucault is the beginning and end point of discussions. Foucault's panopticon is for sure correct about one aspect of our contemporary lives. It is in the conception that the real power is not with Big Brother, but rather distributed throughout the social space. In Foucault's terms, the state observes people and produces altered behavior. A common sense of correct behavior develops, and individuals alter their behavior in the name of social conformity. In this sense, Big Brother is not the government—rather, Big Brother is us! The ease with which we can monitor each other and self-monitor our behavior accordingly resembles this particular aspect of Foucault's panopticon that continues to be viable.

Nevertheless there is a post-foucauldian, post-panopticon world too, as the panopticon is a theory that is not so easily applied to the current state of affairs. While the panopticon works precisely on the condition that you know you are being watched and thus alter your behavior, contemporary surveillance often operates on the condition that you do not know you are being watched. It is our lack of awareness of the extent to which we are surveilled that often serves as one of the strengths of the system. Web monitoring, cameras and data collection all work by recording and analyzing 'natural' behavior. The more one acts as if one is not being monitored, the more useful the data is. Of course, people generally know that information that they post online is observable by a wide range of individuals, but few are aware of the extent to which their lives are monitored, observed, and subsequently controlled outside of the arena of social networking. In this sense researchers are busy constructing (often consciously) a ubiquitous surveillance system, one which operates far beyond any awareness of the individuals being monitored (Vaidhyanthan, 2008).

Complementing the panopticon model or even paralleling it in importance is the *synopticon model*, a reversed model whereby *few watch the many*. Synopticon is a concept elaborated in 1987 by Thomas Mathiensen, a Norwegian sociologist (Mathiensen, 1997). It indicates a *Big Brother society* with media playing a vital role in fostering the *"viewer society"* by broadcasting crime episodes on TV, in

rise to a culture of control and making surveillance a highly visible, shared public cultural phenomenon (Doyle, pg 221). It is a society where various kinds of reality shows are fashionable, a society where one is asked to report suspect bags on airports or to send pictures taken with individual cameras in view of helping police solve terrorist case (e.g. the latest Boston attacks).

Another concept proposed, as a challenge to the panopticon view, is that of *omniopticon*. Discussing the processes of state-led mapping/cartographic mapping/collaborative mapping, authors such as Joyce take over Foucauldian notion of governmentality and challenges his notion of Panopticism, considering that neoliberal governmentality is more adequately conceptualized by an omniopticon - *'the many surveilling the many'* (Joyce, 2005). By reversing the panopticon gaze, omniopticon refers to the situations when monitoring becomes articulated inside a framework operating by coordination and incorporating both the panopticon and the synopticon effects but also the control of everybody by everybody. It is what we observe in the global networks of communication where government's agents capture constantly messages and millions of people seek information about their idols, seeing them live through Google Earth, Google Maps, Facebook or Myspace. With the emerge of the omniopticon we witness the incorporation of a panopticon process through multiple systems of espionage on people and of a synopticon phenomenon with a generalized voyeurism that is responsible for most designs of TV programs (Pimenta, 2010: 287). Millions of web cams are broadcasting in real time the most intimate images of various people lives and they do this no more strictly for espionage purposes. Commercialization of video cameras and digital cameras installed in mobiles means one may take picture without people consent and without their prior knowledge. Anonymity is seriously challenged. No doubt, beyond benefices, there are serious moral and ethic issues at stake and even human rights violations.

The inspirational dimension of the post panopticon era does not stop here. David Lyon talks of *post-panopticon***,** a label he attributes to Boyne (Boyne, 2000). The basic idea is in line with writing of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) that post panopticon signals a shift from the Foucaldian society of discipline to a society of control where production of social life is governed by global relations in which surveillance practices spread through geographic mobility, economic production and consumption.

Modern and evolving technology has given rise to new forms of surveillance that are looking also for suitable labeling. Mark Poster sees for example our wired world as a world that uses its databases to organize panoptic information as a *'superpanopticon'***-** a system of surveillance without walls, windows, towers, or guards, where people with camera phones respond to events by photographing and texting live information across communication networks (Poster, 1990). It is a world where the *public is now under scrutiny by the public*, where no longer CCTV cameras are the only form of surveillance and control, where one may

speak in terms of democratization of the gaze. Also called the *"participatory panopticon"*[4] this type of surveillance, due to development in technology, is considered as a whole new form of surveillance.

Other researchers have proposed the concept of *ban-opticon* (Bigo, 2006) to describe mainly the police practices, the situations where profiling technologies are used especially to determine who to place under surveillance, who to ban. Another interesting, more subtle theoretical proposal, is the concept of the *oligo-pticon*- with reference to the situation in which the observer has only a limited view. The author, Latour, discussing Foucault's prison idea writes: "as every reader of Michel Foucault knows, the 'panopticon', an ideal prison allowing for a total surveillance of inmates imagined at the beginning of the 19th century by Jeremy Bentham, has remained a utopia, that is, a world of nowhere to feed the double disease of total paranoia and total megalomania. We, however, are not looking for a utopia, but for places on earth that are fully assignable. Oligoptica are just those sites since they do exactly the opposite of panoptica: they see much *too little* to feed the megalomania of the inspector or the paranoia of the inspected, but what they see, they *see it well*. From the oligoptica, sturdy but extremely narrow views of the (connected) whole are made possible–as long as connections hold." (Latour, 2005: 181). The absolute gaze from the panoptica is replaced with a more democratic and vulnerable gaze within the oligoptica. Latour stresses the importance of localizing and connecting things in view of flattening the landscape. He makes an appeal for humility. Instead of omniscience, he says, we have the ability to see a little bit of a lot of things. Oligopticon is a fragile construction that allows detailed observation within a narrow framework (as an illustration we may consider for example the use of maps and computer programmes. If the program or map change so does the vision!) (Latour, 2005)

Surveillance within the oligopticon vision is seen as an event that only succeeds if a plethora of specific devices act together. It is a perspective linked closely with the ideas of localizing the global, of *situated surveillance* (Gad & Lauritsen, 2009) - one that combines the 'situated knowledge' concept of the feminist theoretician Donna Haraway (1991) and Latour's oligopticon. "Surveillance is so ubiquitous and ambiguous that it is difficult to say anything about it that is generally true across all instances" (Haggerty, 2005: 39). From this point of view although surveillance is about global scrutiny it cannot be conceived global but local.

Beyond these complementary or contrasting concepts inspired and provoked by the panopticon construction another two theoretical metaphors need to be mentioned as they are also widely used in the field. First it is Solone's alternative *bureaucratic metaphor* (Solone, 2004) that draws inspiration from Kafka's The

[4] Term attributed to Casco James. See Haw, Alex. "CCTV London: Internment, Entertainment and Other Optical Fortifications." AA Files 52 52 (2005): 55-61.

Trial and resonates with Max Weber's writings on bureaucracy. A central feature of this metaphor is the dehumanizing effects of bureaucracy, the impersonal rule centered practices, the indifference to the lives of people as they lose control over their personal information. "We are more that the bits of data we give off as we go about our lives" (Solove, 2004: 45-46). Computerized data is not nuanced enough to convey the true texture of the individual persona is the message that comes along this vision.

The second one is the *rizomatic surveillance* – pointing to the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felis Guattari (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980), a metaphor that takes as visual reference the notion of "rhizome"-plants which grow on horizontal interconnected root system with bulbs as nodal points (opposite to arborescent systems which have roots deep in ground and grow at the end of branches of the trunk). The rhizomic metaphor accentuate two important attributes of surveillance: its rapid growth through expansion and its leveling effects on hierarchies (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000: 11). It is perspective that highlights the active transmitted arrangements of people, technologies and organizations that become connected to make 'surveillance assemblages" in contrast to the static, unidirectional panopticon metaphor. Haggerty and Errisson talk about 'surveillant assemblage', referring to ways in which many information systems to which people are exposed translate in fact bodies into abstract data which are then re-assembled as decontextualized 'data doubles' upon which respective organizations act. They consider modern practices of knowledge and surveillance as being both rhizomatics and body-centered (Haggerty & Ericson, 2005). Within this paradigm, the distinction between society of discipline *vs.* society of control is essential. If a society of discipline is Pavlovian in nature, being oriented towards manipulating pleasure and pain, a society of control operates through and against desire (Guattari, 1987). It is a society where similarities and differences are reduced to code. In such a frame of analysis there is a need for an attention to the "diagrammatic power" in which consu mers are not exclusively disciplined: they are both rewarded with a preset common world of images and commodities and punished if they attempt to opt out" (Palmer, 1994).

Beyond the notions and concepts mentioned briefly above, one may find many others: *Mcveillance* (with reference to the monopole on surveillance), *dataveillance*[5]*, lateral surveillance* (with reference to the seduction of the market, to advertisements manipulation), *coutersurveillance, deductive surveillance,* etc. Even from this brief tour of pre and post panopticon concepts proposed by various theoreticians in an effort to adequately describe the dynamics of the surveillance realities, itt is obvious that Surveillance Studies is a vivid terrain for sociological in depth reflection.

[5] Term introduced in Roger Clarke in 1998 in "International Technologies and Dataveillance, *Communications of the ACM*, vol 31,498-512.

Towards a reflexive sociology of surveillance

Given the circumstances that there is an increased debate about surveillance and surveillance society, it is important for sociology to clarify the means of these terms and to analyze its multilayer dimensions. As mentioned in the first part of the article, surveillance is a central feature of the global world. We need to understand surveillance as a *product of modernity*. We need to reflect on surveillance aspects in the context of the *liquid society* where paths of daily life are mobile and flexible, crossing borders is a common activity, immersion in social media more ubiquitous. Surveillance spreads in previously unimaginable ways, responding and reproducing the slippery nature of modern life, going into areas we have never expected. Intermediated by new computerized technologies surveillance appears to operate by a logic of its own- you gave consent on the data gather about you by computers and you never know where the data will really travel. Although data was given with a precise scope, it often migrates to other ones that extend and intensify surveillance and invasions of privacy beyond what was originally considered acceptable (Baumann, 2000).

It is a *"liquid surveillance"* society we live in. Surveillance is no longer a merely regional matter. As social relationships are more liquid (Bauman & Lyon, 2010), surveillance data are more networked and could be seen in terms of flows (Urry, 1995). It is a ubiquitous fluid reality inside which it is no more about where people are when they use mobiles but it is about with whom they are connected, how their interaction may be logged, monitored, interpreted. It is a ubiquitous fluid environment where we are no more under the 'power' of a single all-seeing eye of Big Brother. Today a multitude of agencies trace and track ordinary activities for a plethora of purposes. Abstract data (video, biometric and genetic as well as administrative files) are manipulated to produce profiles and risk categories in a liquid, networked system. The aim is to plan, predict, prevent by classifying and assessing those profiles and risks.

Information societies are in fact surveillance societies as surveillance is a specific kind of information gathering, storage, processing, assessment and we are just starting to understand how individual profiles, population data and biometric information are emerging as dynamic sources of power in the global environment, how surveillance processes involve potential harm, coercion, violence, asymmetric power based on income, gender ethnicity, etc. Many of the unintended consequences of the ubiquitous surveillance have been already documented and made us really understand some of the dangers involved: the collection, retention and use of personally identifiable information by search engines that raise a lot of privacy problems; the aggregation, possible distortion and/or exclusion of data that may also produce perverse effects on those knowing they are searched; the census data that could be illegally used; the real situations where distinctions of class, race, gender, geography and citizenship are

exacerbated and institutionalized; the fact that surveillance associated with high technology and antiterrorism distracts us (sometimes on purpose) from alternatives and from larger and more urgent questions or the fact that procuring new technologies surveillance supports in fact the economy, etc. We are aware today that sometimes, as errors are human, the Big Brother could become the "Big Bungler"- a Big Brother driven mad by too much power and too much speed! (Brodeur & Leman-Langlais, 2011).

The above listing of some of the dangers and perverse effects of surveillance turn the discussion back to the *risk surveillance society*. We do live in a society based on risk, risk and security issues are on the top of public policies, risk management is axial principle of social organization and surveillance is a key component of living with risk! Surveillance needs risk, is feeded by lack of trust and uncertainty. Surveillance is not about technology as such but about monitoring behavior, influencing persons and populations, anticipates, and, as already mentioned, pre-empt risks! (Lyon, 2010: 14). All technological innovations have social impact and they are developed because they respond to specific political, economic and/or commercial pressures. Surveillance is growing because we have more and more devices available, but the devices are sought because more number of the perceived an actual risks and the growing desire to manage and control populations (citizens, employees, consumers). How certain territories are mapped socially becomes central for the police work and depends on information infrastructures. But the mapping processes themselves depend on humans' stereotypes. The observed categories (race, class, gender, etc.) cannot be impartial because they are produced by *risk institutions* that already put different value on young and old, rich and poor, black and white, men and women (Haggerty and Ericson, 1997, 256).

In this ubiquitous, liquid, risk-surveillance society nothing is local any more, at least in the way we used to know. Our private and public lives are no more only ours. Our bodies as "flesh made information" (van de Ploeg, 2003) are central source of surveillance: DNA traces, thumbprints and voice scans can be extracted from the body to verify our identities and determine eligibilities, urine or a DNA test could be enough for a job position, etc. Street facial recognition systems, use of digital security cameras, Global Positioning Satellites (GPS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), wireless telephony- there is an unprecedented powerful surveillance potential. Information technologies enable today many things to be done at a distance. Relations no more depends of embodied persons, being co present with each other and abstract data and images stand in for the live population of many exchanges and communications today. Social ties are redefining as we keep track of invisible persons (e.g. our facebook friends!) who are in an immense web of connections. The disappearing body is made to reappear for management and administrative purposes by more or less the same technologies that helped it to vanish in the first place (Lyon, 2001). And last but not least

important-these new types of technologies produce classifications that divide population between the acceptable, normal, desired members of society and "others"! So-we need to turn to a new environment-one in which our bodies and minds are under public scrutiny, our relations and wealth is (or could be) known an judged by anyone, the 'proper distance' between us and others is no more what we used to know, and major aspects such as intimacy, privacy, security, safety of our local and public spaces are redefined.

Turning back again to Beck (2003) and his risk and individualization thesis, we may also reflect on his notion of 'relations of definitions'- the ways in which risks are socially constructed within public discourses (rules, institutions and capacities) that structures the identifications and assessment of risks. Socially constructed risks are intrinsically connected with various forms of surveillance designed as alternatives to these society's risks. The way risks are created and uncertainty infused in our individual and collective minds will be reflected in the way society will expand and intensify its surveillance processes and mechanisms. As individualization is concerned, as Becker noticed, in order to counterbalance the weakening of ties among individuals, it fosters a strong desire for intimacy, privacy, closeness, secrecy. Surveillance society is not offering much in this sense as individualization of risk cultivates ever increasing levels of surveillance, implying that automated categorization occurs with increasing frequency (Lyon, 2003). On the other hand cultivation of individualism means emphasis on decision making –a process so necessary also in surveillance society. Thus the whole complex processes of individualization (of risks) are strongly and sophisticated connected with processes of ubiquitous surveillance.

Conclusion: the way forward is focusing on the local from a global perspective

Why is all this discussion relevant for sociology? One cannot consider (social) life without also considering the data that life produces! This could be the main argument pleading for the need of sociology to reflect thoroughly on surveillance realities, if sociology it is still aiming at understanding what social life in fact is. In a reflexive way, sociology should be aware that in many respects research is a form of ubiquitous surveillance**.** Researchers systematically collect, organize, analyze, interpret and disseminate data in view of influencing others, including those they study (Ball & Haggerty, 2005). Modern science aspires toward placeless knowledge, universal facts that do not require an explanations of their origins and that resist inquiry into the value laden process of their construction (Latour, 2005); Harraway, 1991). Reflexive science does not eliminate partiality and the messy particularities of knowledge construction, but articulate them and subject them to further scrutiny (Woodhouse, 2002). The option for a 'reflexive social

science' is the one that keeps its research embodied and grounded in its full context, interrogating the values and constraints of the systems of knowledge production, being suspicious of true claims that float above particularities (Monaham, 2011, 502). So I argue for a reflexive study of surveillance in our societies (Grünberg, 2010). I also argue for a more committed interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research in the area of Surveillance Studies in Romania, as surveillance is more and more part of everyday life in Romania too. With its totalitarian past, the country has an ubiquitous situation. Controlled and shriveled for more than 40 years in perverse ways, population has (or should have) a strong intolerance to surveillance, or at least a different type of historical motivated aversion towards any kind of state/political intrusion in the private lives. On the other hand in conformity with Hofstede' typology, Romania is a country with high levels of uncertainty avoidance[6]. We are not risk fans. We mostly avoid taking risks. We favor to preserve our zone of comfort. We prefer safety environments and thus, from this perspective, one may assume we may accept (or even need) much easier surveillance intrusion in the name of safety and security, keeping uncertainty under control. A country like Romania, with a historical specific and justified intolerance to institutionalized surveillance, but at the same time with high level of uncertainty avoidance-so a potential quest for security and control, could be an interesting 'location' for 'watching' closer, as researchers, how ubiquitous surveillance is affecting the ways we experience 'our locals', that is our bodies, our spaces, our communities, our nations, our world!

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