Book Review

Review of Heynen, Robert, and Emily van der Meulen (eds). 2019. *Making Surveillance States: Transnational Histories*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

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Vida Bajc

Yale University, USA
vida.bajc@yale.edu

What is the relationship between the state, its bureaucracy, and surveillance? As far as we know, any state formation relies on some form of bureaucracy. It seems that the very essence of what could be considered bureaucracy is the collection, accumulation, and analysis of information about collective life for the purposes of social ordering. Given that surveillance may well be integral to any bureaucratically organized political formations, understanding the relationships between surveillance, bureaucracy, and the state is central to the study of surveillance. This research agenda calls for a deeper historical and comparative understanding of, on one hand, what constitutes bureaucratic structuring and processes and their many variations and, on the other hand, how such bureaucratic forms help constitute the wide varieties of state formations. Such knowledge provides a necessary foundation for a theoretically meaningful understanding of surveillance.

Making Surveillance States: Transnational Histories is an important step in this direction. The editors' introduction is focused on theories of the state while the chapters that follow cover three general areas in the study of surveillance: health, colonial rule, and intelligence services. The contributing authors situate their case studies in broader histories of globalization, imperialism, colonialism, and other types of transnational processes comprising the period of roughly the last three centuries. Read together, the chapters highlight a number of important dynamics that are central to surveillance in bureaucratically structured political entities. These dynamics relate to culture, structure, and remembering.

Surveillance classifications and procedures are grounded in the worldviews, beliefs, and ideologies of their practitioners. In my terms, surveillance as an ordering practice has a cultural logic, a way of understanding what constitutes orderly social activity and what is understood to be disruptive to such conceptions of social life. Disinfecting procedures, such as dipping the colonized indigenous people of India into tanks filled with caustic chemicals and burning their dwellings, were grounded in a particular understanding of health and disease that the British imperial operatives brought with them to the colonies (Steere-Williams, chapter 2). Strategies of molding the natives of Manchuria into obedient laborers were based on a newly invented ideology of imperial Japan, which combined its bloodline ethnic identity with the worldview of Western capitalist exploitation (Ogasawara, chapter 7). State enemies of the communist Romania were subjected to re-education efforts under the assumption that every person could be emancipated from false ideologies and

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remade in a new image (Plamadeala, chapter 9). Religious groups committed to pacifism, anti-militarism, and conscientious objection to war were targeted by a secretive program of the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation because their activities were understood by the state to be incompatible with American values (Montalbano, chapter 10). Such worldviews not only have ways to survive internal political transformations, as we see from legislation against gender-transgressive populations in South Africa (Camma, chapter 4), but also have a capacity to spread across state boundaries, as was the case with medical surveillance adopted by the governing elites of late-nineteenth-century Mexico in an effort to cure its poor population of backwardness (Caldwell, chapter 3).

At the core of any bureaucracy is its Weberian structure, networks of hierarchies of actors whose collective efforts make the practice of surveillance possible and their strategies acceptable and legitimate. The book lays bare the urgency to study what constitutes such networks, to what extent do they actually vary between different types of state formations, and how such surveillance networks interconnect with each other. While the archives left behind by the communist era in Romania (Plamadeala, chapter 9), or, perhaps more stereotypically, the former German Democratic Republic, may give an impression that this network is a kind of an espionage network of spies, collaborators, and informers, other cases in the book also help us to see that this includes all kinds of cheerleaders, public opinion influencers, researchers, political commentators, politicians, collective memory and public relations specialists, bystanders, and various other kinds of support persons. Following the establishment of the Israeli state, control over the distressed and segmented indigenous Palestinian population was put in place through local Palestinian religious and community leaders (Sa'di, chapter 8). Suppression of the anti-colonial movement of the Indian expatriates in the United States was a collective effort on the part of not only American and Indian but also British and Canadian officials (van der Meulen and Heynen, chapter 1). The disinfection procedures practiced on the indigenous populations in India and the southern tip of Africa were shared with the British public at home through photography and journalism, making it possible for the British public to be actively involved in the surveillance strategies in the colonies (Steere-Williams, chapter 2). No less instructive is the case of American citizens writing letters to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, demanding that the Bureau investigate communist infiltration of American religious groups (Montalbano, chapter 10). The Bureau, on its part, was sending anonymous letters regarding student and faculty activism to parents and university administrations (Ferrari and Remensperger, chapter 11).

The third surveillance dynamic highlighted in the book has to do with a tendency on the part of bureaucracy to treat accumulated information as knowledge, a kind of best practice that informs its surveillance procedures. In my terms, this is a part of institutional memory, a self-understanding on the part of a bureaucratic entity. The case studies raise an interesting question of how it is that some such institutional memories are publicly available while others are actively hidden from public access and even erased from memory. Some bureaucracies are well aware that their institutional memory can endow them with legitimacy in the eyes of the public, so they invent ways of making their own remembering publicly accessible. Such is the case with dozens of museums across Canada where law enforcement agencies exhibit their own surveillance past at historic forts, museums, and even active police stations (Ferguson, Piché, and Walby, chapter 12). Other bureaucracies obstruct public access to this past by creating obstacles, from heavily redacting documents to simply imposing prolonged archive closure periods. Most interesting, however, are cases where the continuity of a surveillance apparatus was abruptly disrupted. When the Japanese were retreating from Manchuria, they completely destroyed the secret military research facility Unit 731, killed all of its prisoners, and burned all of the documentation of their activity (Ogasawara, chapter 7). In contrast, the files documenting the surveillance activities of Securitate in Romania are available for anyone to study (Plamadeala, chapter 9). Conversely, revolutionaries of the Paris Commune of 1870 burned much of the city records in the spirit of liberation, while the Archives Nationales in 1790 revolutionary France were designed to be publicly and freely accessible to demonstrate accountability (van der Meulen and Heynen, chapter 1). At least in modern bureaucracies, there appears to be an obsession not only with file-keeping but also with file destroying. Moreover, whatever empirical evidence is made available gives few clues about how much of this note-taking on the part of the apparatus is routine and to what extent documentation may be created so that it can be found, be it by historians or operatives, at some future time.

Cultural-comparative historical inquiry into the relationship between surveillance, bureaucracy, and the state is indispensable for our understanding of contemporary contexts of state surveillance. This book helps to lay the groundwork for this kind of research and serves as inspiration for future work in this direction. Yet, if such efforts are to yield maximum empirical insight and theoretical benefit, historically informed methodological approaches should strive to not simply be empirically broad but rather much more systematic in their comparison. So, too, we should never lose sight that historical research should also contribute toward building theoretical knowledge of surveillance. A robust theory of surveillance in relation to the state should strive to offer a sound explanation for how it came to be that journalists, publishers, and whistleblowers, the preeminent and indispensable elements of any contemporary state functioning in accordance with public expectations, are persecuted by democracies for publicly displaying cultural logics of their surveillance practices, mapping out extensive networks of their apparatuses, and sharing their secretive institutional memories.