



Midwest Institute for International-Intercultural Education

Interactive Virtual Workshop
Surveillance, Privacy, and Dissent in a Globalizing
World

Friday, March 26, 2021 (10am-3:50pm, EASTERN TIME)

Co-Sponsoring & Supporting Universities

University of Michigan, Center for Latin American & C.
Studies

University of Michigan, Center for Middle East & N.A. Studies

University of Illinois, Center for Russian, EE, & Eurasian Studies

University of Wisconsin, Institute for Regional & International
Studies

Zoom Link:

<https://zoom.us/j/95041469254?pwd=bDNqeU13L3lhZFpjTXA4VDdxZ2tXZz09>

Meeting ID: 950 4146 9254

Passcode: 922630



10:00-11:10 **Interactive presentation: Surveillance, Privacy, and Dissent in a Globalizing World (Part 1)**

Badri Rao, Kettering University

11:10-11:20 Break

11:20-12:30 **Interactive presentation: Surveillance, Privacy, and Dissent in a Globalizing World (Part 2)**

Badri Rao, Kettering University

**What knowledge and skills are worthwhile for students to learn?
What ideas and issues would you like to infuse in your teaching?**

12:30-1:30 Lunch break

1:30-3:00 **Break-out Groups on Articles (Choose one group - To be assigned)**

Group Facilitators: Nathan Crook, Fran Kubicek, Anna Maheshwari,
Shaun Marsh, Tracy Murphy, Ivette Trentini

Group A-F

Articles:

1. "How Dictators Control the Internet" by Eda Keremoğlu and Nils B. Weidmann.
2. "Privacy Under Surveillance Capitalism" by Jacob Silverman.

Based on the "How Dictators Control the Internet" article:

- The authors state that "Governments control where and when modern communication technology is introduced in the first place, who gets access to it, and what information is communicated." Is this true of the current political climate too? Is media responsible for feeding us biased information? How do we get our students to disseminate fact from fiction?
- How do we keep our classroom discussions real and "political correct" while making sure we are not called out by administration?

Summary statement:

The article focuses on how autocratic regimes interfere with and control internet communication to hold on to power. The article delves into solutions to combat this "authoritarian interference."

Based on the "Privacy Under Surveillance Capitalism" article:

- The "invasive other" might be best characterized as those forces of power and authority that collect information about us and exert influences over us. They might be a boss, parent, or distant government. The means of surveillance and control are mostly embodied in new digital technologies and data-collection schemes. Name a few means of surveillance. List their pros and cons. How does this make for a meaningful classroom discussion? Is it possible to have students see both sides when electronic convenience surrounds them?
- Digital systems incorporate errors and bias - like racism. Responsibility gets abstracted away as quirks in the system, human misunderstanding, code that cannot be changed.



Provide examples that can be shared in the classroom to help students see that there may be flaws in their electronic media.

Summary statement:

Objectification of a human being into a data source allows surveillance capitalism to serve advertisers. The bottom line is most important.

Context collapse allows the dissolution of borders between formerly separate social spaces and can create a homogenization of style. This shows that one "fits in". Overexposure can lead to job loss, verbal abuse, threats, a sense of vulnerability, a permanent data trail, and a feeling that anyone could be watching.

Group I-N

Article:

1. **"COVID-19—Extending Surveillance and the Panopticon"** by D. Couch, P. Robinson, and P. Komesaroff.

Based on the "COVID-19—Extending Surveillance and the Panopticon" article:

- As educators, should we caution our learners about accepting surveillance readily? Please consider the types of surveillance we readily accept. (Zoom, cell phone trackers, cameras in schools, fitbit/iWatch, and of course, now with COVID).
- What are the long-term impacts of extended surveillance? (Positive and negative) For example, curtailing the pandemic, disciplinary actions, misuse from governments, abuse to perpetuate criminal behaviors, and so forth.
- How will this influence behavior/thinking in our role in society... in our classrooms?
- How will this influence behavior/thinking for our learners in the classroom?
- As digital surveillance is increasingly omnipresent, what concerns do we have about the intersection of privacy and future surveillance technologies and practices?
- What value do we place on privacy?
- What are the implications for the academy?

Group S-T

Articles:

1. **"Beyond Surveillance Capitalism "** by B. Aho and R. Duffield
2. **"Big Brother's Bigger Brother"** by B. Snyder

Based on the "Beyond Surveillance Capitalism" article:

- Is it possible that a more repressive and fully surveilled state will be better able to unify, push forward, and make greater progress in the future?
- Is protection of individual privacy and autonomy short-sighted, and a cause for a lagging social order, as the authors suggest?
- Do you think that here in the United States we will be better off with a stronger, unregulated tech industry that has the power to control narratives and create its own form of surveillance capitalism?

Summary points:

- The article focuses on the ever-expanding digital surveillance systems established in recent years in China and in Europe.



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- The surveillance in Europe's General Data Protection Regulation is designed for oversight and protection of privacy. China's Social Credit System (SCS), however, is designed to revive the planned economy through full control and exploitation of data.
- Europe's GDPR is seen as protecting individuality and autonomous agency, whereas SCS in China is seen as modifying behavior and protecting social harmony through complete surveillance and a reward and punishment system.
- The authors suggest that China is making a "proactive march into the future," regardless of the moral implications, whereas Europe is protecting human rights at the expense of corporate power and progress

Based on the "Big Brother's Bigger Brother" article:

- People who participated in the focus groups (responding to the use of WAMI) commonly prioritized safety of their neighborhoods and having a means of holding police accountable for their behaviors, **not** the right to privacy. (privacy at one point was equated to a privilege of the whites). Should you have to choose between safety and privacy? Would other cultures feel so strongly about preserving privacy when safety is an issue? How might Maslow's Hierarchy be useful in understanding oppression?
- If Minneapolis had used WAMI synced to on-the-ground security before, at the time, or after George Floyd's death, do you think it would have made a difference in police or citizen behavior and ultimately the outcome? What evidence might they be able to use *right now* as the trial is taking place?
- Would you personally trust a private company to hold extensive surveillance data for your city as a neutral third party? Would the benefits of neutrality outweigh potential costs?

Summary points:

- The article explores the intersection between multiple issues pertaining to criminal justice reform, but namely, using surveillance to even the field between the police and the public.
- Baltimore, Maryland has a reputation for being a one of the most violent cities in the US and for having a very contentious relationship between the city's citizens and police. This intensified in 2015 with the police-involved death of Freddy Gray that was recorded and shared on social media.
- Following the citizen uprising that ensued, the police department used WAMI (Wide Area Motion Imagery), an aerial surveillance technology developed initially for use in the military. The police used the tool for 6 months without the public or city government knowing. Obviously, this caused a controversy that shut down the program.
- Yet, since that time, organizers from the low-income Black neighborhoods have pushed for the return of WAMI, but this time for citizens to use for watching the police. The evidence from WAMI is more acceptable in the courts than videos taken from phones or police body cams (both of which could be used strategically to manipulate the events they were taping). WAMI could very well be a more objective tool for both surveillance of the public and "sousveillance" of the police. The tool is considered a possible equalizer.
- The people of Baltimore naturally have reservations using WAMI for this dual role. Surveillance is surveillance and is an invasion of privacy; the tool could be used to both help or hurt citizens; while the current technology could scan large areas of the city and not the details of someone's face, technology will certainly advance to enable this feature. Not to



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mention, WAMI is a powerful tool that when synced with other security used by the city, police and public defenders can follow a person from above, but see the details of the person/car on the street.

- Even if the tool was adopted widely, an imbalance of power would continue to exist. The ground security (that syncs with WAMI to provided detail) exists mostly in low-income Black neighborhoods. While WAMI cannot determine a person's skin color, ground security can once they are synced. The tool is also not technically "in the public's hands." The power of the tool resides in the hands of the private company operating WAMI (CSP—Community Support Program). The shear amount of data the company has control over is a powerful possession.

3:00-3:10 Break

3:10-3:50 **Group Reporting and Debriefing on Improving Teaching**