



Surveillance Studies: An Overview

David Lyon

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The study of surveillance is more relevant than ever before. The fast growth of the field of surveillance studies reflects both the urgency of civil liberties and privacy questions in the war on terror era and the classical social science debates over the power of watching and classification, from Bentham to Foucault and beyond. In this overview, David Lyon, one of the pioneers of surveillance studies, fuses with aplomb classical debates and contemporary examples to provide the most accessible and up-to-date introduction to surveillance available.

The book takes in surveillance studies in all its breadth, from local face-to-face oversight through technical developments in closed-circuit TV, radio frequency identification and biometrics to global trends that integrate surveillance systems internationally. Surveillance is understood in its ambiguity, from caring to controlling, and the role of visibility of the surveilled is taken as seriously as the powers of observing, classifying and judging. The book draws on international examples and on the insights of several disciplines; sociologists, political scientists and geographers will recognize key issues from their work here, but so will people from media, culture, organization, technology and policy studies. This illustrates the diverse strands of thought and critique available, while at the same time the book makes its own distinct contribution and offers tools for evaluating both surveillance trends and the theories that explain them.

This book is the perfect introduction for anyone wanting to understand surveillance as a phenomenon and the tools for analysing it further, and will be essential reading for students and scholars alike.

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