Review

Social control and surveillance in the society of consumers

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The new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) introduced a highly automated and much cheaper systematic observation of personal data. ICTs advance the intensification and the extension of surveillance, such that an expanding quantity of data can now be collected, tabulated and cross-referenced more rapidly and more accurately than old paper files. This process contributes to the building a "new electronic cage" constraining the individual, on the basis of his e-profile and data-matching. Especially two agents of surveillance are interested in collecting and using such data: government authorities and private corporations. Massive stores of personal data held on ordinary people are now vital to both public services and private business purposes. The new electronic cage is more all-encompassing and complete, being able to produce a complete profile of citizens and consumers in real time. Both public and private information agencies rely on one another for creating and modelling the profiles of good citizens/consumers who, by definition, are well integrated into social life, exhibiting predictable behaviour that conforms to the general needs of contemporary consumer/ oriented social relations. The underlying assumption under girding the public/private exchange of personal data, the idea is that a good consumer is also a good citizen, and vice versa.

Key words: Panopticon, surveillance, ICTs, social control, society of consumers.

INTRODUCTION

This article examine how the surveillance and social control is at the same time more and less invasive because it is at the same time omnipresent but apparently normal. Surveillance has become an integral part of everyday life, work and consumption. Surveillance runs throughout society in schools, workplaces, government, healthcare, and consumerism. As Giddens pointed out surveillance is 'the collection and organization of information that can be stored by agencies or collectivities and can be used to "monitor" the activities of an administered population' (1987: 174) and one of four components of high modernity (Giddens, 1990: 162). The growth of surveillance is linked to enhanced possibilities for large-scale storage and processing of personal data as a result of the "voluntarily" given consumer data, or, as Davies noted, an 'illusion of voluntariness' (1997: 143), carefully constructed by marketers to hide the imposition of corporate surveillance. Indeed the personal data are systematically and scientifically assessed, marketed, permitting the construction of an e-profile more and more accurate.

Especially two actors of surveillance are interested in collecting and using those data and e-profile: government authorities (police, secret service, local government etc.) on the one hand and private corporations on the other hand. The state institutions for better controlling citizens prevent and punish crimes and imposing social norms and also for the correct functioning of Welfare State and corporations for targeting customers with personalized advertising.

The new digitalized surveillance allowed a new form of social control that tries to direct and influence the behaviour of people. Indeed reconstructing the past and the present by using this information the new controller can, in some way, address and influence future behaviour. For the sake of clarity, since always the governance entails control and its aims is to steer and direct individuals, encouraging them to embrace particular behaviours. As Haggerty suggested 'while governance inevitably involves efforts to persuade, entice, coerce or cajole subjects to modify their behaviour in a particular direction the targets of governance are understood to be a locus of freedom, although this freedom is inevitably bounded by various constraints' (Haggerty, 2006: 40).

All the forms of punishment were always future-oriented, because they involved forms of specific deterrence that sought to stop an individual offender from committing comparable acts again in the future, or a form of general deterrence that sought to deter others from doing so. Thus, in some way, both 'previous' and 'contemporary' forms of social control are future-oriented. They differ in the assumption on the strategies and forms of knowledge that can be used to govern future behaviour. Above all, and this is the main difference today, different agents are using different strategies and forms of knowledge to govern future behaviour for different reasons and purposes.

The particularity of the society of consumers (Bauman, 2005) is that private corporations, what here I call the economic elite, are trying to steer and direct individuals using private surveillance and them media's empire and cultural industry. More strongly: if it is normal and inevitable that governance 'efforts to persuade, entice, coerce or cajole subjects to modify their behaviour in a particular directions', it is not normal that to do it is not a democratic and public institution but the economic elite: in other words, a private organization. Furthermore the market and the economic elite try to control directly the citizens/consumers, reconstructing the 'biographies of consumption' through the combination of transactional and personal data (Evans, 1998).

What this article is suggesting is that, the monopoly of violence and coercion is still in the State hand, but who is persuading and seducing individuals to modify their behaviour embracing new values, social norms and principles, is the market through the corporations. This separation between monopoly of violence or use of coercion from one hand and the capacity to steer and to seduce individuals on the other hand is one of the particularities of the society of consumers.

The first part of this article will examine the development of the Panopticon model as a utopian project consisting of controlling spaces through the 'gaze'. The Panopticon is not a deterrent project instead it tries to modify the behaviour of the inmates, creating a soul, through Foucault calls 'disciplinary strategies'. The aim of seeing if the 'soul' and the new 'disciplinary strategies' created by the panopticon is now referable to the mass media and cultural industry and to the marketers strategies.

The second part of the article will explain how the famous concept of the iron cage, formulated by Weber, should be accompanied and integrated by the new electronic cage. Indeed in a Post-panopticon[1] society the

new surveillance, is also based on an electronic collection of data-imaging, requiring a new cage, no longer iron but electronic.

Both types of surveillance rely on one another for the right functioning of a consumer-oriented society: on this point is developed the third part of the article. A good citizens/consumers are, by definition, well integrated into social life, exhibiting predictable behaviour that conforms to the general needs of contemporary consumer-oriented social relations. The underlying assumption under girding the public/private exchange of personal data is the idea is that a good consumer is also a good citizen, and vice versa.

THE PANOPTICON

First, the model of Panopticon is addressed briefly and the way it is evolved and argued is obsolete. Many scholars address the researches and studies on surveillance, reformulating the concept of Panopticon (Foucault, 1977) because of the panopticon model is a strong framework for discussing surveillance theoretically. Concept as electronic panopticon (Gordon, 1987), omnicon (Goombridg, 2003), global panopticon (Gill, 1995), panspectron (De Landa, 1991), myoptic panopticon (Leman-Langois, 2003), fractal panopticon (De Angelis, 2001), pedagopticon (Sweeny, 2004), polyopticon (Allen 1994), panopticon discourse (Berdayes, 2002), social panopticism (Wacquant 2001), neo-panopticon (Mann et al., 2003) or the synopticon (Mathiesen, 1997), cybernetic panopticon (Bousquet, 1998), the superpanopticon (Poster, 1990), electronic surveillance (Lyon 1992), the panoptic sort (Oscar, 1993), social Taylorism of surveillance (Frank and Kevin, 1999) or postpanopticon society (Ragnedda, 2008), are a clear evidence of the impact of this metaphor on our culture. All this excellent theoretical, conceptual and methodological approaches are useful and necessary points of departure for any studies on surveillance issues. However, to understand surveillance-consumer we should move beyond the panopticon and at the same times taking some important characteristics from it, as the unverifiable/visibility of the tower of control, the control of the space through the gaze and the tentative to create a docile-body of the surveilled.

The architectural astuteness of the design ensures that with the play of light there are no shadowed zones in which to hide - all occupants are constantly exposed. This utopian plan devised by Bentham consisted of controlling spaces through the 'gaze' because, as Foucault remind us 'there is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze' (1980, 155). The

[1] I am referring to a Postpanopticon society and not Postmodern society, because here, trying to explain the new form of social control, I assume that this concept is more precious and permit me to refer to a particular aspect of the society: surveillance. Furthermore I want, here, avoid the discussion on the problematic concept of Postmodernity/Modernity. However, even if I know the passage from an era to another one is not so clear and brutal, I assume that we are already entered in a new era. This not means that the Postmodern era is absolutely different and some modern's values and principles are still valid, but

the grand narratives of modernity is passed, as well as well as the lines between traditional sociological dichotomies. The new era and the intellectual approach postulate new relationship between subject/object, author/text and reject all the objectifying methodology.

Panopticon model is more than a simple deterrent: its objective is to modify the behaviour of the inmates, by means of what Foucault calls 'disciplinary strategies'. These 'disciplinary strategies' replace the instrument of 'physical compulsion' that was often used. Continuous surveillance known to the inmates creates a 'spirit' which forces them to internalize detailed lists of behavioural norms. In some way, the inmates watch themselves, by internalizing the gaze of the controller: in others words inmates modify themselves by internalizing values and model proposed by controllers.

The guarantee of dominance by the keepers is due to their facility of movement, contrary to the 'inhabitants' of the Panopticon who are confined within cells without any possibility of moving. The crucial characteristic of the Panopticon is the unverifiable/visibility that the power comes to assume. 'Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so' (Foucault, 1977: 201).

The insecurity of the inmate comes from his knowledge of being controlled without knowing exactly when this is happening, and this leads to the individual complying with the norms, the rules. It is the randomness of screening that creates the self-disciplining docile body. The real or fictitious presence of the overseer is almost insignificant, since the prisoner does not know whether he is being observed at any particular moment. What is important is the development of the self-discipline mechanism (but not its birth, as some authors suggest. Indeed, historically the fear of hell has always operated as a mechanism of discipline). The 'inmates' state of awareness of continued visibility is a guarantee of their submission to power. 'An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by internalizing to the point that there is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself. A superb formula: power exercised continuously and for what turns out to be a minimal cost' (Foucault, 1980: 155). Bentham emphasised that power has to possess the characteristics of visibility and non-verifiability: both of this characteristics seems to be reduced in many contemporary forms of surveillance.

In the new scenario offered by ICT, and in particular by Internet, this principle comes to have great value and importance as the this new medium operates, in some way, like a new electronic Panopticon with a central (virtual) tower which is, at the same time both visible and non-verifiable. Whilst passwords, encryption and plus codes enable hidden communication, in actual fact, the average internet user is by and large ignorant of their existence and indeed, is ignorant of the fact that information provided from his use of email, for example, is being used to construct a profile of him/her. Currently, however, increasing numbers of people are learning that

their online and consumer behaviour is being monitored by unseen keepers, but without knowing when and exactly by whom: the users/consumers just know that them behaviour is monitored by the 'unknown figure of power'. Thus, the principle of Panopticon is incorporated in a new tools and technology of surveillance. In this way it is possible to say that a new form of Panopticon is emerging: cyber-Panopticon. Even if the Internet cannot be reduced as a technology of surveillance, some princeples of panopticon is still operating in this new medium, as the impossibility for the 'surfers' to know if they were being watched that induced in them a state of conscious and permanent visibility that, could, assured the 'automatic functioning of power' (Foucault 1978: 201).

In this virtual tower, at every moment the operations of every single consumer can potentially be observed, recorded and reconstructed. Indeed in a virtual world is possible to capture, store, and analyze the entire information history of users' activities. This possibility makes the ICT superior by comparison to the simpler Benthamian project. From the centre the outskirts check the suburb, above checks below, and the profile of the individual is reconstructed, leaving whole images of every individual consumer. We should ask if as well as *reconstructing*, reading and cataloguing present and past actions, it can also *build*, creating inputs for the future, or lead and influence the consumer toward norms and default values. What this means for observation and social control seems to be that in order to prevent deviant actions, the power will seek to modify actions before they happen using the recorded 'data-information'. This is the aim of the State surveillance.

This will be achieved, preferably, through persuasion and similarly 'soft' coercion, in contrast to the panopticon model in the prison context. Importantly, the engendered social control goes far beyond watching to dictating and creating channels where only permitted behaviour flows in one direction. It is possible to postulate that new surveillance cannot be based only on the process of watching (opticon) but also operates in many other different ways.

Furthermore, it is also 'smart' and permits distinct responses based on feedback. On the other hand, it is very complex and there are always counter-trends.

The objective is to understand if the 'soul', which, according to Bentham, is created in the prisoners under continual observation, is also reproduced in the consumers. The differences are manifold: first of all, the consumers are free individuals in the sense that they are not physically confined as in the prison panopticon; the ICT and mass media does not have an unique and centralizing tower which holds all the consumers under pressure as in the Panopticon model; it is not clear which behaviour is imposed and who the overseers are.

Therefore, one can conceptualize the Panopticon as a model that is transposed to the Internet, but I am wary of this. Indeed, it is not fruitful to think about the Internet in

terms of the panopticon. In fact, the types of surveillance characteristic of the internet are just so qualitatively different that the analogy with the panopticon simply breaks down. Furthermore, it will be a mistake to develop a model of surveillance that can usefully be generalized to all surveillance contexts. This seems be particularly true with the ICT. Thus, the panopticon requires the integration and improvement of the model. In fact, this model has progressively been replaced by a more refined technical manipulation of the bodies which is more complex and effective in terms of, according to Foucault's conception, producing disciplined subjects. It is also through discipline that the model achieves social control in democratic societies. The discipline, as Foucault intended, is the mechanism by which we may succeed in controlling the thinner elements of the social body, in capturing the same social atoms that is, the individuals. Techniques of individualization of power: like watching someone, like controlling conduct, behaviour, attitudes, like intensifying its performance, multiplying its abilities, in order to position it in the place in which it will be more useful (Foucault, 1977).

Discipline is not synonymous with the Panopticon. These two concepts can be easily misinterpreted or confused with other analogies, such as the individualization of control and space management. In fact, these two concepts point out a crucial difference: the identification of the controller. The Panopticon model produces the illusion in the inmate that the overseer is in some way identifiable and that his figure is quite clear despite his invisibility. It is not his face which is visible but his figure: the figure of the controller. By contrast, in disciplinary institutions where neither the face nor the figure of the overseer is identifiable, power gets lost in the web of hierarchies and shattered in a plurality of strategies that go beyond simple surveillance. A society of consumers seems to embrace more a disciplinary strategy, more than the panopticon strategies. Indeed the Panopticon model, as initially conceived, could be considered somewhat obsolete now and must be integrated and not completed disregarded.

It has been argued here that the advent of the postpanoptic society doesn't imply that the panopticon model and principles are invalid, but that these concepts must be revisited and adapted to the new social context, shaped by consumerism.

THE ELECTRONIC CAGE

Modern States, according to Foucault, present the most perfect combination of techniques of individualization and procedures of totalitarianism than has ever existed in history. They have become more stable thanks to a long process of educating and disciplining the population. The time in which this process has been completed is what we call "Modernity". After the sunset of (first) Modernity

new forms of discipline and control have followed that differ, from earlier times and ways. These new forms have also been shaped by the mediation of ICT and are much quicker and more immediate. The iron cage is 'the result of the combined tendencies of modern bureaucracies and modern individuals' (Hoogenboom and Ossewaarde, 2005: 601) and are 'the great institutional structures of modern society - the bureaucracies of the market and state in which we are destined to live but over which we, as ordinary citizens, have little control' (Maley, 2004: 69).

At the same time, the iron cage, in the modernity, was also a guarantee of keeping society peaceful against raging revolutionary upheavals. This became possible thanks to the rise of militarization of social institutions and enterprises, where the rigidity of duty and workplaces was at the same time an element of social integration. The culture of new Capitalism, in Sennet's words, loosens these iron cages, destroying with it also the consequent and very specific notions of time. It is a structured, rationalized, expectable time inside which social relations are constructed. The price that individuals paid for this organized time could be their freedom or their originality. The iron cage was at the same time a prison and a house (Sennet, 2006).

Today, this house-cage is accompanied by the new cages, much more flexible in time and space, operating in the virtual world and in the electronic bureaucracy. ICT are a fundamental infrastructures for the State and the Corporation and by both could be used for surveillance the citizens/consumers, that more and more tend to use ICT, not only as essentials of life, but also as mean for expression themselves and their intentions. More and more 'live' are now moving on the cyberworld and this space or world is an important vital space to control the population. For the State it is important 'in order to integrate people into national order and national interests […] Management of the population has been extending from urban space to cyberspace' (Ogura 2006: 287). For the Corporations the cyberspace is a vital space because they can watch, observe and build the profile of each user/consumer, using the data that the consumers give voluntary. To involve a 'voluntary' component has the effect of neutralizing public concern rendering privacy into a commodity. Thus the 'traditional rights have been put on a commercial footing, thus converting privacy rights into consumer issues' (Davies, 1997: 144).

The ICT introduced a highly automated and much cheaper systematic observation of data about people (Clarke, 1988) advancing the intensification and the extension of surveillance. Indeed a huge amount of data can now be collected, tabulated and cross-referenced far faster and more accurately than old paper files, enabling previously unimaginable levels. All those data and the capacity to aggregation, interconnectivity and real-time analysis of a large range of personal information, build a 'new electronic cages' that are more all-encompassing

and complete. The new iron cages are able to produce in real time a complete photograph of the consumers/citizens and could be used by corporate surveillance agents to transform data into intelligence, where the former is a raw resource, and the latter are data elaborated and used by the marketers in their labour to predict, influence and direct consumer behaviour (Gandy, 1993). With the forthcoming technologies and them marriage with the consumers surveillance it is possible to postulate a scenario – as imagined by Philip Dick in The Minority Report – in which the consumer behaviour are directly and indirectly influenced and manipulated by the marketers. The consumer privacy has become a larger concern due to the growth of direct and database marketing, the Internet and others data capture techniques (Horne and Horne, 1997; O'Malley et al., 1999; Christy and Mitchell, 1999).

The 'iron cages' of which Weber spoke, have today been integrated by 'electronic cages' as the administration of the State, restructured by new technology, becomes increasingly facile. The electronic cage is not the replacement of the existing modern iron cage, but the over-determination of the existing one.

We can also borrow the metaphor of the cloak by Weber in order to cast a glance over the course of our increasingly technology-dependent society. For Weber, the accumulation of wealth by the Protestants was a means to achieve eternal salvation. As he points out in 'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism', success in one's job was an indicative of being appreciated by God. In other words, the accumulation of wealth, at the base of the birth of Capitalism, was a 'cloak' that at first was used like an instrument to warm people up, slowly becoming refined and imprisoning man inside an iron cage. In his words 'In Baxter's view tile care for external goods should only lie on the shoulders of the 'saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment'. But fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage' (Weber, 1930 [1904/05]: 181).

The computerization of bureaucracy - first used as a tool and then slowly became an end in itself - which allows for a more detailed and greater volume of information to be collected on each individual, was initially used as a 'cloak' in order to 'warm up', but it is now wrapping up and imprisoning the individual inside an electronic cage. The 'value-rationality' loses meaning and importance leaving space for the 'goal oriented-rationality'. The pigeonholing of the individual with electronic labels that initially served to slim down and expedite bureaucracy are now at an end in themselves: it follows that there is a loss of identity, the number or label dominates the individual rendering him/her superfluous.

For Weber, rationalization plays a key role inside modernity and expresses itself in all aspects of social life: in the economic field with the affirmation of Capitalism; in the political field with the preeminence of the rational legal power until bureaucracy arrives as the main form of administration. The central points of our discourses according to Weber are that rationalization coincides more and more with an invading control of man in the natural atmosphere. In a consumer society human behaviour becomes more predictable. In other words, the process of rationalization typical of modernity, on one hand allows an uncontested dominion of man over nature, but on the other hand, mobilized standardized criteria which render human behaviour more predictable. It is his ominous prediction which stems from his pessimistic vision of the unstoppable advancement of the bureaucratic system, that a day will come when we will find ourselves as only small cogs in a gear. His fear was that of living in an increasingly specialized society, where the work of everyone would be a cog in a gear serving a bigger objective. The fear that we can express a century later is that we feel ourselves not like cogs in a gear but like bits inside a binary system of 0 1 codes of information. The risk is one of a dehumanization of individuals, submitting to the dominance not of bureaucracy, but of numbers and passwords. Indeed we are constantly transformed into bits and flows of information, which are processed into our multiple data doubles. Then the human body is 'reassembled in different settings through a series of data flows. The result is a decorporealized body, a 'data double' of pure virtuality' (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000: 611). Furthermore, another risk is that surveillance also reinforces divisions by sorting people into social categories, implementing social divisions and social discriminations.

DOUBLE SURVEILLANCES: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SURVEILLANCES

One of the key conditions of the contemporary surveillance is that it is conducted and directed for a different aims and purposes by different agents. Even if multiple agents who operate in local and global context exist, as both public and private. In this section, I'll try to address the discussion postulating the existence of two macro-agent of surveillance: State (public) and Corporate (private).

Let me explain this concept. Each different society has its own characteristics for surveillance of the population, but now, and this seems to be a particularity of our society, there exist two different and parallels ways to conduct surveillance of citizens: public-surveillance and private-surveillance, or if we prefer, State-surveillance and Corporate-surveillance. However, at the same time, it is necessary to extract the fundamental common characteristics among this two different surveillance way, in order to make a theoretical framework for postpanoptic society.

It should be specified that surveillance is neither good nor bad. The particular governmental ambitions are a consumer-oriented society, based on the ICT as a medium of exchange and a tool for social control. The

role of ICT within infrastructures of surveillance and control cannot be understated. Not only fidelity card shopping or intelligent transportation systems connect purchasing patterns to customer databases, but also biometric technologies and, above all, Internet are used for monitoring and collection of personal and identifiable information about millions of users/citizens/customers. In an analysis of Giddens's work (1987), Webster (2006) portrays the use of surveillance tools to capture *transactional information*, information which 'contributes towards an individuated portrait of that person's spending habits, clothing and food tastes, even preferred shopping locations' (225).

The new technologies of surveillance may not always prevent of the actions but tend to prevent the decisions. One can argue that the surveillance systems are ineffectual at preventing violent crimes. This sometimes is true; however this does not imply that they are without effects on human behaviour.

Let me now explain some characteristics of the postpanoptic society, moving from the assumption of "two different agents of surveillance". What I am suggesting is that there exists a separation between the State monopoly of violence or use of coercion from one hand and the capacity to steer and to seduce individuals on the others hands. In others words, the monopoly of violence and coercion is still in the State's hand, but the corporations are the agents doing the persuading and seducing of individuals to modify their behaviour. Under the pressure of neo-liberal globalization, the nation-state, once one of the distinguishing feature of modernity, has been induced to truncate its supreme political power within its national borders. Further, the neoliberal ideology has forced the nation-state to retreat from social programs in societies. The State, in the last decades, grows slim, reducing it to what Bauman calls a 'local state of police', which assures that minimum order is maintained to move transactions forward (Bauman, 1998: 77). The State is just the guarantor of order and does not have to restrain the market or to wield sticks to unbridled consumerism. Neo-liberalism dictates the rules of a more and more consumerist society that has a need of social order in a society in which the 'consumption has increasingly assumed a central systemic role in the reproduction of capitalist society' (Clarke, 2003: 2).

The mass media, spreading the values of neoliberalism in a consumer oriented society, tend to create or cultivate a new docile-body that more easily tends to assume the values and behaviour promoted by the new economic elite. Through mass media the freedom is equated (and often reduced) to market choice. Children, before they are able to read and write and before possessing a well-defined sense of self, have already received millions of messages from mass media, including images of market values, gender stereotypes, reproducing in the new consumers-citizen the 'soul', which, according to Bentham, is created in the prisoners under continual observation.

As Monahan argued the 'surveillance systems operate as extensions of the neoliberal state carving out new markets for high-tech companies and integrating police into the social worlds of public education' (Monahan, 2006: 110). And it is from consumption that one of the more interesting and effective means of social control arises. The 'device' of social control is consumption. As Lyon, rightly, argues 'for the majority, though, consumption has become the all-absorbing, morally-guiding, and socially-integrating feature of contemporary life in the affluent societies. Social order – and thus a soft form of social control – is maintained through stimulating and channelling consumption, which is where consumer surveillance comes in, but this is achieved in the name of individuality, wideness of choice and consumer freedom' (Lyon, 1994: 137).

More reliable and specific profiles of the consumer are drawn up to fit the products in more precise ways and to push the consumer towards them. It is quite clear that the vast majority of the publicity produced for the general public does not hit its target. The message does not arrive. With a more and more accurate profile, the system address the information collected in even more precise ways. The data will be for the consumer to supply and more consumption companies will discover more information about their customers. The more who consume, the more vulnerable they become and the easier is to conquer them. This kind of information could be used in profiling, social sorting and risk assessment (Lyon, 2002).

Moreover, the collection elaboration of all the data and information that we leave behind when we purchase products with credit or debit cards and loyalty cards, on the basis of which the commercial history of every single consumer can be reconstructed. The collected data forms several devices of control and surveillance that allow for a more faithful reconstruction of the profile of every individual. This is true for corporate surveillance as well as for State surveillance. Indeed, the State still uses some features of the panoptic model to achieve its goal to surveillance the citizens and guaranties the orders. Indeed, the so-called "War on Terror", began under the Bush administration and extended all over the world, used the National Security Agencies, as well others Security agencies, as a method of data gathering on all US citizens, including monitoring of phone calls, websites visit, credit card payments and so on. This State surveillance is extended to everyone and not only to 'the suspicious' and operates in conjunction with telecommunications corporations.

There is a dangerous future maybe of Orwellian scenarios of a kind which are pertinent to the social and historical contexts in which we live. In an article of 1985, Gary T. Marx, introduced a fundamental concept that has been resumed and elaborated on since: *the society of surveillance* (1985). He outlined the difference between the surveillance typical of Modernity, and one that he

defines as 'new surveillance', that is here considered typical of Postmodernity. While in modernity surveillance was an instrument of rationalization of the bureaucratic activity of the State, and served to run a nation, the new surveillance emerging tends collects data that do not only serve to run the State, it is also increasingly useful to large economic institutions, banks, insurance companies, for controlling and potentially to manipulating the social opinions, preferences and interactions of people.

For the sake of clarity, some distinctions would be made. This study does not want to introduce a false dichotomy, in which modern surveillance was used only for the bureaucratic activity of the State and in contrast the postmodern surveillance is used only for commercial reasons. In fact, this ignores that surveillance in modernity was always a tool of commerce (think about double-entry bookkeeping, surveillance on the factory floor just to cite two examples), as well ignore the Postmodern surveillance is used, in different way, to help the State to run better. In definitive, the new surveillance is used by both agents in different way but with the same final aim: to control the citizens/consumers.

The new surveillance is also used by the corporation to reinforce the status quo and its privileged position in society. As Ogura underlined 'the fundamental characteristics of surveillance are to forecast and remove the elements that may constitute barriers to fundamental preconditions of the capitalist regime' (2006: 288). This new surveillance and the more and more sophisticated technologies are affecting choice, and there is an increasing risk of total control (Marx, 1985).

However, it must be mentioned that we are in front at the proliferation of surveillance in different contexts and for different purposes, and not only to increase the total control. Indeed, surveillance could be seen also in enjoyable aspect and not only a fruits of the rational project. The SNS, blog or the reality show suggest that for some people to be watched is a pleasure, as well to be the viewers (not the controller). This implies that more and more people are constituted as viewers and viewed and the experience to observe each other is common in everyday life, creating a peer-to-peer monitoring practices 'characterized as a displacement of "Big Brother" by proliferating "little brothers" who engage in distributed forms of monitoring and information gathering' (Andrejevic, 2006 :405).

What here is important is that surveillance has a function of rationalization in a regulatory project that moves from the panoptic model but must also go beyond. Indeed an ulterior differentiation of the Panopticon model is emerging that is its meaningful evolution. The inmate of the Panopticon was known as being under control, as constantly being watched (even if he did not know when). He knew well the rules of control. Pain was adapted to punishment. Is it possible that citizens are now unaware of being under control and neither understands the reason for being under control nor the norms which have

been adapted for this purpose. The problem is not the lack of knowledge of being under control, but not being worried about it. It is at this point that a perceptual and cognitive revolution begins that invests the role of surveillance. Before it was limited to very identifiable persons, it was confined to a determined physical area and it was considered an element of repression. Paradoxically, today, the surveillance can be also considered as a twofold guarantee: of social inclusion and freedom. In fact, surveillance is 'a technique of redefinition and making clear the boundaries between exclusion and inclusion, separation and integration, absence and presence, disregard and consideration' (Ogura, 2006: 277).

Let me briefly explain these two points. Firstly, not to be under control means to be marginalized. Indeed there are categories that are marginalized and not controlled. The monopoly of the 'legitimate means of movement' (Torpey, 2000) is still in the hand of the (modern) State, that can use tools such as ID cards to include/exclude citizens distinguishing between nationals and foreign citizens. Furthermore it can distinguish between regular and irregular, including or excluding, separating or integrating. An example could be the clandestine individual who is outside control and for this reason is excluded. Here, often, the two kind of surveillance could be in contrast. Indeed the State, inside its national border, must identify, through surveillance, all citizens giving them right and duty. At the same time the private companies need only workers without any kind of social right. Thus, in the Western societies, the authorities turn a blind eye (giving up at its prerogative to give and identity to everybody) toward the millions of illegal workers: invisible for the surveillance operated by the State, but under surveillance by the private companies, where the use of new communication technologies to monitor employee behaviour is increased in the last years (Alge, 2001; D'Urso, 2006; King, 2003; Lane, 2003).

So, there is informal recognition of this status, even though they are not formally recognized/controlled. Moreover they are crucial for the economy, because they accept a work's condition without subsequent rights. These include undocumented workers and black market workers (e.g., sex trades and drug trades). This category of person is on the margins of society and symbolizes danger. Ironically in this context, control/surveillance becomes the guarantee of inclusion.

Secondly, in a society where the *hyperreality* is much more important than the reality, it is fundamental, to participate in social life and not being marginalized, to live in this virtual reality made by the mass media. And it is also for this reason than more and more people wish to participate in the reality show or having an electronic alter ego on the *cyberworld*.

CONCLUSION

Social control also means the ability to push individuals to

adapt themselves to the expectations of the group. The mass media has the ability, at various levels, to condition and influence the perception of their expectations and, consequently, their expectations. Indeed, if an individual or customer perceives that its group of reference expects from him a determined behaviour he or she will stretch to adapt to this in order to avoid the pain of deviance and exclusion from the group. It does not matter what the group actually expects, but what the individual believes that the group expects. It does not count therefore what 'reality' is, but its representation, its simulacrum. The mass media seems to move in this field: influencing expectations and perceptions and thus acting like a formidable instrument of social control. Although mass media plays a key role in this, it is not enough to guarantee the homogeneity and the coherence in a post-modern society. Indeed in our society, where all the classic institutions that were deputies to 'social control' are in crisis (family, school, religious institutions and so on), it is also a new form of surveillance that is both intrusive and invisible, more invasive but perceived as normal. The mass media plays a crucial role in creating the conditions for surveillance that are perceived as being natural and unavoidable in spreading and reinforcing the neo-liberal values, influencing the citizen-consumers' behaviour.

Also the panopticon, as Foucault underlined (1977: 198), is at the same time a system of light and language. In other words the panopticon is a system of optic (gaze) surveillance that is not only predicated on the documentation and circulation of personal information (language), but it is reinforced by that information. Some aspects of panoptic diagram of power are still valid but need supplementing. In regard to this double aspect of panopticon (gaze and language), some clarifications are needed: first is to change the gaze to include a bi-directional and some times peer-to-peer aspect of monitoring, that could create what Whitaker (1999) called a model of a 'participatory Panopticon' in which the watched is also doing the watching, because it represents a form of consensual submission to surveillance. Second, the language is directed to everybody all over the society, flowing into our everyday life throughout the mass media.

Contemporary surveillance, in a society of consumers, is double because is used by State and by Corporation and requires gaze (for collecting and elaborate personal data) and language (for steer and seduce citizens/consumers).

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