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Surveillance Studies: An Overview

By David Lyon

Publisher: Polity Press

Introduction Getting Started Understanding Concepts Care and Handling Further Exploration Specifications

1. Introduction

The study of surveillance is more relevant than ever before. This book provides an accessible and up-to-date introduction to surveillance, fusing classical debates with contemporary examples. It explores the urgency of civil liberties and privacy questions in the modern era, alongside classical social science debates on the power of observation and classification, from Bentham to Foucault and beyond.

The scope of this overview covers surveillance studies in its full breadth, ranging from local face-to-face oversight to technical advancements in closed-circuit television (CCTV), radio frequency identification (RFID), and biometrics. It also addresses global trends that integrate surveillance systems internationally. Surveillance is examined in its inherent ambiguity, encompassing aspects from caring to controlling. The visibility of the surveilled is given as much importance as the powers of observing, classifying, and judging.

Drawing on international examples and insights from various disciplines, this book offers a comprehensive understanding. Sociologists, political scientists, geographers, and those in media, culture, organization, technology, and policy studies will find key issues relevant to their work. It illustrates diverse strands of thought and critique, contributing distinctively to the field and providing tools for evaluating both surveillance trends and the theories that explain them.



Image 1.1: Front cover of "Surveillance Studies: An Overview" by David Lyon. The cover features a minimalist design with the title prominently displayed, indicating the book's subject matter.

2. Getting Started

To gain the most from this book, consider the following approach:

1. **Initial Read-Through:** Begin by reading the introduction and conclusion of each chapter to grasp the main arguments and scope.
2. **Sequential Reading:** For a foundational understanding, read the chapters in the order presented. Each chapter builds upon previous concepts.
3. **Note-Taking:** Engage actively with the text by highlighting key terms, concepts, and arguments. Consider summarizing sections in your own words.
4. **Contextualization:** Reflect on how the historical and theoretical discussions relate to current events and personal experiences with surveillance.

3. Understanding the Concepts

This book introduces complex ideas related to surveillance. To facilitate comprehension:

- **Key Thinkers:** Pay attention to the discussions of influential figures like Jeremy Bentham and Michel Foucault, understanding their contributions to surveillance theory.
- **Terminology:** Familiarize yourself with specific terms such as*panopticon*, *dataveillance*, *biometrics*, and *radio frequency identification (RFID)*. The book explains these concepts in detail.
- **Case Studies:** The book uses various international examples. Analyze these case studies to see how theoretical concepts manifest in real-world scenarios.
- **Interdisciplinary Nature:** Recognize that surveillance studies draw from sociology, political science, geography, media studies, and more. An interdisciplinary perspective enhances understanding.

4. Care and Handling

To ensure the longevity of your paperback copy:

- **Storage:** Store the book in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight to prevent fading and warping of the cover

and pages.

- **Handling:** Turn pages carefully to avoid tearing. Avoid folding pages to mark your place; use a bookmark instead.
- **Protection:** Keep the book away from liquids and food to prevent stains and damage.
- **Cleaning:** If the cover becomes dusty, gently wipe it with a dry, soft cloth.

5. Further Exploration

For those interested in delving deeper into related topics, consider exploring works that expand on the themes presented in this overview. Topics such as the ethics of data collection, the impact of digital technologies on privacy, and the historical evolution of surveillance practices offer rich avenues for continued study.
Consult academic journals specializing in sociology, media studies, and technology policy for the latest research and debates in surveillance studies.

6. Specifications

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