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The Affective Atmospheres of Surveillance

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Abstract

The spaces that surveillance produces can be thought of as ambiguous, entailing elements that are ethereal yet material, geographical yet trans-geographical. Contemporary surveillance systems form numerous connections that involve multiple times, spaces, and bodies. Due to their ubiquity, normalisation, and yet clandestine characteristics, they seem to produce an *almost* unnoticed aspect of everyday life. The impacts then, of contemporary surveillance systems, appear to be particularly experienced on the margins of consciousness. Thus we find that an empirical analysis of this realm of experience is possible but requires one to look for such things as disruption, disfluency, and hesitation in the text of speech acts rather than clear representation. Through empirical analysis of narratives concerning everyday experiences of living with contemporary surveillance systems, this paper focuses on their possible affective impacts. In turn, we find it more fitting to think about the so called "surveillance society" in terms of producing "atmospheres" rather than "cultures or assemblages," and "affects" rather than "emotions."

Keywords

Affect, Atmosphere, Assemblage, Emotion, Surveillance

Affecting Atmospheres through Surveillance

There is an overarching perception between academics, politicians, media, and the general public that surveillance systems are now almost ubiquitous in the UK (particularly in the cities). A report by the Surveillance Studies Network for the Information Commissioner (Wood, Ball, Lyon, Norris, & Raab, 2006) begins by stating "We live in a surveillance society" (p. 1). This refers not just to the

multitude of CCTV cameras that are visible in public spaces, but a much wider set of complex infrastructure which processes personal data, such as: biometrics, communications records, and transaction details, among many other things. Lyon (2007) argues that to put all of these types of systems under the banner of the term "surveillance" is "potentially misleading" because it suggests a homogenisation of multifarious systems (p. 25). He then goes on to make the counterpoint, which, along with Haggerty and Ericson (2000) we agree with, that "contemporary surveillance is very much influenced by the apparent imperative to be joined-up. . . . The desire to create assemblages" (Lyon, 2007, p. 25). In other words, the digitisation of surveillance systems allows for its expansion through communications networks; thus not only are the forms of surveillance increasing but also their capacity to form new and complex links and networks which increases the flow of surveillance data. These complex surveillance infrastructure have been coined "surveillance assemblages" (Haggerty & Ericson, 2000).

The surveillance assemblage concept is positioned as superseding Foucault's conceptualisation of surveillance. Foucault's famous use of Bentham's model of the panoticon, "fails," Haggerty and Ericson state, "to directly engage contemporary developments in surveillance technology, focusing instead on transformations to eighteenth and nineteenth century total institutions" (2000, p. 607). They invoke Delueze and Guattari's concept of "assemblage" to denote "a convergence of what were once discrete surveillance systems" (p. 606) into what they term the "surveillance assemblage." The surveillance assemblage is understood as a multiplicity of heterogeneous objects which work functionally together; comprising of "discrete flows of an essentially limitless range of other phenomena such as people, signs, chemicals, knowledge and institutions" (p. 608). It is tasked with producing records of particular times and spaces of human activity and simultaneously forms links through networks to multiple other times, spaces and bodies.

However a number of critiques have been put forward positioned against the conceptual term "assemblage" generally (Brown & Stenner, 2009; Stenner, 2008; Wetherell, 2012) and the "surveillance assemblage" particularly (Hier, 2003). Brown and Stenner (2009) question the translation of Deleuze and Guattari's term "assemblage," suggesting that it does not quite capture the meaning of the original French term: "*agencement*." Adding voice to this argument, Wetherell claims that the term assemblage "is a bit too static," misses the agency implied by the French term and incurs a flattening of power relations (2012, p. 15 and p. 126). For example, Stenner's (2008) reading of A. N. Whitehead suggests there is a danger in mis-reading process philosophies through which concepts such as assemblage derive in that there is a tendency to "flatten out" distinctions between human and non-human entities.

> Humans offer a kind of high grade complexity as coordinated systems, or as sites
> combining what Whitehead described as 'societies of actual occasions'. Other forms

> of life (e.g. trees, frogs and cats) are also coordinated systems too, of course, but each
> form of life presents a distinctive kind of continuity and creativity. (Wetherell, 2012,
> p. 126)

A related criticism applies to one of the central conclusions that Haggerty and Ericson (2000) derive at through the concept of the surveillance assemblage: it has ensued a partial democratization of surveillance hierarchies. Following Deleuze and Guattari, they use the metaphor of the rhizome plant's root to illustrate the surveillance assemblage. The surveillance assemblage, like the rhizome plant, "grow in surface extensions through interconnected vertical root systems" (p. 614). The rhizome, like the surveillance assemblage, does not have one centralised structure (stem or trunk) which coordinates branches (of surveillance), but rather operates and expands horizontally by variation and disjunction. They suggest therefore that like the horizontal criss-crossing of the rhizome's root, the surveillance assemblage has transformed pre-existing hierarchies and to some extent flattened the power relations: "no major population groups stand irrefutably above or outside the surveillance assemblage" (p. 618). The many are able to scrutinise the few in ways that have never been possible before. Additionally, the surveillance assemblage shifts the conceptualisation of people from *individuals* to *dividuals*, known through codes, data, and passwords etc., rather than organic singularities; arguably writing out, to some extent, human subjectivity from the assemblage. Hier (2003) argues against this form of flattening or what is termed "a partial levelling of surveillance hierarchies" (p. 410), instead he suggests that the increased sophistication of the surveillance apparatus have increased forms of state surveillance. For example, after 9/11 in New York and Washington,

> [a] variety of surveillance mechanisms were put in place, including internet tracking
> devices, advances in airport security, CCTV monitoring, biometric measurements,
> smartcards, and email and telephone surveillance systems, all of which served to
> augment the control of those who are in positions to administer social life. (Hier,
> 2003, p. 410)

The spaces that surveillance produce can be thought of as complex and ambiguous, entailing elements that are both: ever-present and yet absent (unnoticed), material (embodied through the CCTV camera) and yet ethereal (the watcher of the camera is invisible), geographical (located in a particular time and space) yet trans-geographical (transmitted to other times and spaces through the internet), and facilitating a safe and secure environment and yet facilitating distrust (invading privacy). Thus, to further think through the ontological parameters of the surveillance assemblage in relation to its affective capacities, we prefer to use the term "atmosphere" to denote, among other things, a form of space which Schmitz describes as "without borders, disseminated and yet without place that is, not localizable" (as cited in Böhme, 1993, p. 119). As the term atmosphere suggests in

everyday use, it can induce for example: moods, emotions, feelings, thoughts, judgments, perceptions, sensations, and all manner of social relations and associated practices. The phenomenologist Böhme concludes that "The primary 'object' of perception is atmosphere"; it is the "affective impact" of the perception and precedes any other associated phenomena (1993, p. 125). Indeed, recent theorisations of "atmosphere" have been explored in relation to "affect theory" in terms of "affective atmospheres" (Anderson, 2009; Bissell, 2010; McCormack, 2008). Following Conradson and Latham's (2007) understanding of "affective fields," Bissell suggests that atmospheres, like affective fields, emerge "through the transmission of affect" (2010, p. 272).

Arguably, surveilled space alters human experience (e.g., Koskela, 2000), yet very little empirical work within psychology has been conducted in this area (see Harper, Tucker, & Ellis, in press) and as argued above, the concept of the surveillance assemblage does not fully appreciate the specificity of human experiences in relation to surveillance systems. Coming generally from social psychology backgrounds, this is something that we are particularly interested in. Thus of particular significance to this paper is what Anderson (2009) points to as one of the principal characteristics of affect: its intrinsic ambiguity and multiple characteristics which often leave us with only a vague sense of associated meaning. It is this "vague sense" that we find important and worthy of investigation. Anderson suggests one of the key points of similarity between conceptualisations of affect and atmosphere is that concepts of atmosphere "are equal to the ambiguity of affective and emotive life" that have derived from an "array of explanations and descriptions" (p. 78). To attend to affective atmospheres he concludes "is to learn to be affected by the ambiguities of affect/emotion, by that which is determinate and indeterminate, present and absent, singular and vague" (p. 80). To illustrate this point, Anderson suggests that we look at the everyday speech through which multiple meanings are applied to the word atmosphere; for example, collective affects are seen as atmospheres, such as auras, moods, feelings, and ambiences; and there are a multitude of things that are said to contain atmospheres; such as epochs, societies, rooms, landscapes, cities, couples, and artworks, in fact all things can be said to exist within an atmosphere. He states that affect and atmosphere both express "an ill-defined indefinite something, that exceeds rational explanation and clear figuration. Something that hesitates at the edge of the unsayable" (p. 78).

It is here that critical social psychologists may be able to more fully engage with the form of affect theory that is being advocated in the field of cultural geography. Social scientists have generally been frustrated by the turn to affect because of its proposed non-representational quality. Suggesting that something does not have any form of representation poses radical problems in relation to empirical analysis (see Wetherell, 2012 for detailed arguments). The same argument rehearsed above concerning the flattening out of human and non-human bodies is also applicable to cultural geography understandings of affect. Wetherell states that affect for the cultural geographer is

understood "as unspecific force, unmediated by consciousness, discourse, representation and interpretation of any kind" thus "subjectivity becomes a no-place or waiting room, through which affects as autonomous lines of force pass on their way to somewhere else" (2012, p. 123). We argue in this paper that affects, in relation to the affective atmospheres of surveillance, are palpable as they can dynamically infuse the space between the conscious and non-conscious aspects human experience. Following the emerging "turn to affect," we are using the term "affect" to differentiate it from "the emotions." Emotions are often denoted as representing a particular type of physiological and cognitive state that is felt consciously and named (represented); for example, anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, and surprise. Affect here is understood as being very much linked to such states, but is more like an inducer of them which is as yet relatively unnoticed and so is yet to undergo as much representation through such linguistic grids of meaning. The argument that Wetherell puts forward against cultural geographers' notions of affect have been well rehearsed elsewhere, for example, Hallward (2006) has questioned the utility of Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, from which notions of the non-representational quality of affect derive. However, Wetherell misses some key points in relation to various notions of affect in this general tradition. For example, in Massumi's (2002) account, affect is understood to, to some extent, exist outside of consciousness (and so is, to some extent, not representable). Importantly, it also is understood to impinge upon human experience in less conscious (but not wholly impalpable) ways and thus can, we argue, be detected, as Anderson above suggests, through that which "hesitates on the edge of the unsayable" or what Ernst Bloch would consider "not yet conscious" (see Ellis & Tucker, 2011).

To begin this investigation we look at two of the prevailing dominant discourses associated with surveillance which are both culturally prominent and were prominent in our data set. These are often presented as being split between giving prevalence to issues either concerned with security or privacy (Solove, 2007). Of particular interest is how these discourses are publicly attuned to, understood, and negotiated. Through interview data we found that although on the surface there appeared to be a relative indifference towards the forms of contradiction that were presented (for example, needs for privacy and security), the affective underpinnings seemed to be suggesting something else. Thus the atmospheres which surveillance produces are then often unlikely to induce recognisable (or qualified) cognitions or even emotional states, but rather particular forms of affectivity. We describe how these affective forms emanate through atmospheres of surveillance and are likely to be registered in what may be distinguished as extra-discursive embodied activity. As will be discussed, it seems that the ubiquity and complexity of surveillance have facilitated: its normalisation and its incomprehensibility, its discursive formulation and its inexpressibility, its somatic registration and its dissociation.

To explore experiences of surveillance we developed a qualitative study by conducting interviews with 31 adults in London and the South East of England in the Spring of 2010. Although the sample was relatively small we managed to interview a range of participants which was reasonably balanced in terms of age, ethnicity, and gender as we attempted not to focus on any particular group. The interview format consisted of a semi-structured schedule administered by two research assistants (one female and one male). Later in the interview participants were asked to read a short information sheet on surveillance which included examples of: the kind of information that is held, who holds it, and what it may be used for. Participants were then asked about their responses to this material. So, the interviews consisted of three general parts: knowledge of surveillance, experiences of surveillance, and responses to the surveillance information sheet. The interview schedule and the information sheet that we devised were made publicly available and can be obtained from the following web address: http://coresearch.wordpress.com/2011/06/12/talking-about-surveillance/ The interview recordings underwent a detailed transcription and were then coded and themed.

Dominant Discourses and their Discontents

Dominant discourses concerning the politics of surveillance tend to be split between giving precedence to either concern for security or for privacy. In the study presented in this paper we were interested in the ways that individuals presented as orientating their views between these two positions and more particularly the kinds of trade-offs that were made between them. For a number of the participants, perceptions of surveillance were relatively polarised at either the need for security spectrum or the need for privacy spectrum. In the first part of the interview, after participants had discussed their knowledge of surveillance, they were asked about their general opinion concerning the value of surveillance. At this point, they were likely to either position themselves as either *for* surveillance, as it increased their security, or they stated they were *against* it, as it infringed upon their privacy and civil liberties. For example, a typical refrain that we got from ten of the participants who initially positioned themselves as pro-surveillance was "if you're not doing nothing wrong you've got nothing to worry about" (Sharon, line 6). Solove (2007) names this popular refrain the "I've got nothing to hide" discourse which he locates in a number of government campaigns and slogans in the US and UK. In opposition to this discourse was the popular discursive metaphor of "*Big Brother*" that was used to identify surveillance as an invasion of privacy. For example, "Well yeah, because it's sort of becoming like erm a Big Brother thing" (Tracy, line 9), is a metaphor which has been popularised through the cultural representation of "*Big Brother"* encapsulated by Endemol's reality television series. This cultural representation has led to, McGrath (2004) argues, notions of the sinister Orwellian "*Big Brother"* portrayals of surveillance entering more widely into public consciousness.

However, these initial positions often shifted as the interview unfolded. As more probing questions were asked and as suggested, towards the end of the interview, an information sheet outlining some of the various forms of surveillance was presented, the positions became more contradictory, ambivalent, fluid, and ambiguous. For example the three extracts below illustrate the initial positioning in relation to later comments.

> Tracy - Line 26: "you know I'm not being watched 24-7 that's how I feel [*right*] even my boss has CCTV [*sure*] again it's invasion I just don't like it"
>
> Tracy - Line 260: "It's not acceptable but if I was a terrorist then [*then it would be acceptable?*] See what I mean? [*yeah*] this is where I get conflicts you see erm (3) but then it's only used if they think you're a criminal anyway right?"

Tracy begins her interview by clearly positioning herself on a number of occasions as describing surveillance as an invasion of privacy being likened to *Big Brother*. She portrays herself as feeling that she is permanently being watched and "just doesn't like it." In the second extract above (just after she has read the "surveillance information sheet") she recognises that she is also conflicted and that it is necessary in some circumstances. Unlike a number of our other participants, Tracy portrays an awareness of this conflict, but does not distinguish between the two forms of surveillance systems that she mentions here (CCTV at work and border security). Between the two extracts below, Margaret changes her position, but she does not portray the same awareness of the ambivalence as Tracy does.

> Margaret - Line 5: "I quite like them cause I feel safe [*ok*] you know I don't feel like its infringement on me because I'm not dishonest I don't mind it"
>
> Margaret – Line 207: "I mean it is big daddy they know exactly really what you buy and how much you spend you know if they wanted to track you they could say they know about your bank accounts they know exactly what you spend what you spend it on"

Margaret draws on both the security and privacy discourses by firstly stating that because she is not dishonest, she therefore doesn't mind it, which is a derivative of the "nothing to hide" discourse. Secondly she uses the term "big daddy" mistakenly for "Big Brother" which she portrays as omnipotent and omnipresent. The change in position for Margaret occurs throughout the interview. After her initial response, wherein she stated that she likes the CCTV on busses as they make her feel safe, she then tells the interviewer a story of how she was once a victim of identity theft through which somebody ordered just under £1000 worth of goods from a catalogue in her name. Her position then begins to change and she reiterates her concerns, however, the ambiguity between the two statements remains and she does not appear to do any repair work between the two. Although it must be pointed out, in the former extract Margaret is discussing CCTV on busses in the latter

extract she is discussing her "Nectar" loyalty shopping card, there is equally some recognition (through the notion of "Big Daddy") that these disparate systems may be conjoined. A similar contradiction occurs in Susan's interview.

> Susan - Line 12: "I do prefer them, the idea it makes me feel a little bit more safe [*ok*] and usually they are on trouble spots or security ones ATM machines and stuff like that and I actually think they are very good idea very good idea"
>
> Susan - Line 29: "I did hear that in certain areas laughter CC CCTV cameras were aimed at people's bedrooms and you could actually see right into someone's bedroom [*ow*] laughter it was in High Street or something yeah and I think to myself that must be extremely frustrating"

Susan portrays a contradiction between the two discourses of security and privacy. Although she starts by suggesting that CCTV is "usually they are on trouble spots" she soon after recounts a story that she had heard that "cameras were aimed at people's bedrooms." There is here a juxtaposition between portrayals of it making her "feel a little bit more safe" and a portrayal of how it must be "extremely frustrating" for individuals when it is misused. So generally, although there was evidence that people held various shifting and contrasting beliefs and related practices, at times in relation to different surveillance systems (e.g., CCTV and loyalty card dataveillance) and at times to the same system, the awareness of this dissonance and incongruity was minimal and at times did not appear to concern them. Indeed, this could be related to their lack of concern about surveillance in general. Even though clearly some of these issues appeared to be quite significant; for example, many of the participants had either been victims of identity theft and/or credit card fraud either themselves or knew somebody who had been. Even in the face of being a victim of multiple forms of theft through, for example, credit card fraud, participants presented as relatively indifferent and continued to shop on-line. Arguably in most cases, the lack of concern is not really surprising given that we attempted to interview people who were not a particularly highly surveilled group but rather a cross section of individuals in the South East of England.

The Normalizing Affect

One other possible reason for this lack of concern and indifference, which was evident from some of the participants, was that surveillance in the South East of England has become so widespread that it is now ingrained into society to such an extent that it has become a normal everyday part of life. Arguably surveillance is so present and familiar that it is hardly considered and thus becomes an almost unqualified (a relatively unconsidered) cultural norm. Webster and Murakami Wood (2009) argue that the normalisation of surveillance occurs when it has colonised the emotional, symbolic, and cultural domains of a society. It occurs not just through the proliferation of surveillance systems and the development of their technologies, but "it is about how these are embedded in the norms and

institutions of society and how they are reflective of other aspects of modern society" (p. 265). Expressions of the experience of surveillance in this way were rife throughout our data set. The below extracts point to expressions of how they have become so familiar in the emotional, symbolic, and cultural domains, that they tend to slip through consciousness, particularly in relation to CCTV:

> Michelle - Line 293: "in terms of erm knowing that if I'm in a place where I know there's I spot a camera that doesn't have an impact on me at all because it doesn't make me feel anything actually I don't feel (2) erm actually interestingly I don't feel safer because there's a camera there [*mmm*] I think I've just become a bit blasé to things like that because they've been around for so long (2) I suppose it's one of those things that again I just become used to like when you see surveillance cameras around just become used to the fact that they're there and that's how the world is going"
>
> Margaret – Line 349: "as for surveillance I think I don't notice it anymore [*ok*] I really I have to think about it [*sure*] I've forgotten it's there basically unless when I'm in the train its says this train is covered by CCTV cameras and or you see the signs if I'm on a bus I forget it's there unless the telly things there that you can see it flashes"
>
> Laura - Line 148: "constantly seeing CCTVs everywhere and now for me it's like the norm"

The above extracts convey a sense of surveillance as forming a relatively unnoticed part of everyday life. Terms like: "I just become used to," "they're there and that's how the world is going," "I don't notice it anymore," "I've forgotten it's there," and "now for me it's like the norm," all point to surveillance as something which is paradoxically both simultaneously present and yet absent. But does this normalisation process actually lead to the surveillance systems having no impact upon individuals? It would seem that there is a genuine indifference towards them. However, just because there appears to be a lack of explicit cognizance in terms of thinking through the various positions concerning surveillance and a recognisable lack of reflection of it on a day to day basis, does not necessarily mean that it does not impact individuals at some level. For example, the following extract is interesting as it can be read in a number of ways.

> Samantha - Line 24: "Erm so I know there are things going on in the background but how all of this information gets to be processed that I don't know but I'm sure that my my rights are being exploited somewhere on the way"

Samantha's extract is rather ambiguous in that she seems to be conflating two things. Firstly, she recognises the "things in the background" and the "*how* all of this information gets processed" as the external surveillance systems. Equally this could be talk about her inner not so conscious awareness and nonconscious processing of the outer surveillance systems. Yet there is something that comes out of all of this for Samantha, although she cannot pinpoint exactly how, but she has a

sense which she is sure about, that her "rights are being exploited." It is in this domain, or intertwines, between deep embodied (less conscious) processes and the outer surveillance systems, or what we refer to as "the affective atmospheres of surveillance," that produce various forms of "knowing," that we now turn to.

From Emotion to Affect

Studies looking at the relationships between space, emotion, and surveillance are few and far between. Although there has been much work recently in the area of cultural and human geography looking at emotion in relation to space, for example "emotional geography" (Davidson, Smith, & Bondi, 2007), surveillance studies has yet to configure significantly in this mix. Surveillance, however, has widely been theorised to induce emotions or "cultures of emotion"; for example, producing cultures of anxiety, fear (Minton, 2009) and suspicion (Chan, 2008; Lyon, 2003a). Although these are of interest, their portrayals of emotion tend to be relatively one-dimensional in that they are seen to produce a specific form of emotion. An exception to this is Koskela's (2000) paper entitled "'The gaze without eyes': Video-surveillance and the changing nature of urban space," which discusses how forms of ambivalence, ambiguity, and contradiction are aroused in relation to video surveillance. By attending to the spaces in which video-surveillance are instituted she claims that it "changes the ways in which power is exercised, modifies emotional experiences in urban space and affects the ways in which 'reality' is conceptualized and understood" (p. 243). With her focus on the kinds of feelings and emotions that these spaces produce, she claims "[T]he variety of feelings surveillance evokes is enormous: those being watched may feel guilty for no reason, embarrassed or uneasy, irritated or angry, or fearful; they may also feel secure and safe" (p. 257). The institution of video surveillance is seen as producing "emotional space" and following feminist geographers "paradoxical space" (Rose, 1993). Hence video surveillance is described as evoking both positive and negative emotions simultaneously to the extent that one may feel both threat and security. Koskela illustrates an example of a woman waiting in an underground station who notices she is being surveilled by a CCTV camera. The camera can represent for the woman the male gaze, thus the object reminds her of male power, but at the same time it is supposed to protect her from male power. The internal feelings that this ambivalence brings, she suggests, can be difficult to negotiate. Additionally she suggests that emotional space should not be understood in static terms but rather as "elastic" and "liquid" as its feel changes depending on the context; for example: day and night, who one is with, where one is, and who is in the vicinity, etc. Moreover, emotional space, as the term suggests, is often not logical and can be internally inconsistent, but not necessarily irrational. The kinds of *spaces* that Koskela refers to are "contained spaces" or rather what she terms "space as a container"; these are generally demarcated *places* punctuated by CCTV. Given that we are interested not just in CCTV forms of surveillance but the kinds of affective atmospheres that may

have occurred due to the ubiquity of surveillance systems and processes of normalisation, the "space as a container" metaphor, although relevant for particular affective experiences of surveillance, does not sufficiently address more of, what is argued here as, its subtle and thinned-out backdrops. Additionally, Koskela's study uses the term "emotion" which is described as conscious qualified feelings. What are of equal, if not more, interest to us are the kinds of not so qualified and conscious impacts that the atmospheres of surveillance may produce. Therefore we turn from a focus on "emotion" to a focus on "affect."

The affect theory that we adhere to in this paper follows a line of theorists from Spinoza through to Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and Massumi (2002) among others (see for example the edited book by Gregg & Seigworth, 2010). The affects that flow within the atmospheres of surveillance are thought of as forces for becoming that which has not yet actualised or become conscious and thus discursively symbolised, for example, as inducers for particular emotions. At times affect may impinge upon the human sensing body and thereafter coagulate as qualified intensities: (named) feelings and emotions and particular kinds of (named) atmospheres, such as specific moods and ambiences. However, affect theory, as put forward for example by Massumi (2002), attempts to think through the more non-conscious aspects of affect, that which is not explicitly registered through linguistic representations. Thus affect and its registered effects are couched for Massumi within an overarching conceptual distinction between two realms of existence, that of the virtual and the actual. The former is a dynamic realm providing the conditions of potentiality. It is that which may be experienced but is yet to be identified and configured. The latter is concerned with that which is expressed in socio-culturally recognised matrices of linguistic representation. Theories of affect in this tradition tend to draw attention to its nonrepresentational quality. This creates a bit of an epistemological impasse for empirical investigations. For example, it can be viewed as ostensibly problematic when working with interview data as it essentially entails the analysis of discursive matter: that which *is represented* through language.

However, coming from a more critical discursive social psychological perspective Cromby argues that "affective phenomena consists of textures, intensities, directions, desires and valences that are known corporally before they are identified linguistically" (2011, p. 83). What Cromby seems to be pointing to here is what elsewhere has been identified as a "third realm" of affective activity (McCormack, 2008) constituting less-qualified, what Massumi terms, "intensities" that are partially registered in a sensing body. This third realm is galvanised between the actual and the virtual realms. For example, Massumi illustrates how intensities can be deeply registered in the physiology of a human body, indexed for example, through fluctuated heart rate and respiratory system activity (Massumi, 2002) without yet a formal representation, but one which may or may not emerge in consciousness. This third realm of affective activity can be allied to a number of theories;

for example the highly conceptualised unconscious of psychoanalytic literature; non-conscious processes identified in the affective neurosciences; subsymbolic processes modelled through cybernetics and artificial intelligence. This form of phenomena is often denoted in everyday speech, for example through the following terms: gut feelings, hunches, suspicions, premonitions, intuitions, and a sixth sense.

Although Cromby (2011) argues that a linguistic epistemology is insufficient to analyse such phenomena, the third realm, unlike the pure realm of virtuality, offers a way in. Affective activity within this realm, we argue, can be traced through its partial emergence in speech acts. This has been conceptualised by Wilma Bucci through her understanding of "referential activity" (1997). She describes how talk about affective experiences often moves through a referential cycle, from subsymbolic processes towards symbolisation. Affective experiences that have yet to be fully symbolised by the individual figuratively or linguistically entail speech which tends to be vague, imprecise, and incoherent, but nonetheless distinguish a certain something.

For example, the following three extracts all point to the atmospheres of surveillance as having less than conscious affective impacts which are difficult to explicitly configure linguistically. Michelle describes the affective atmosphere of surveillance (in relation to internet pop-ups) as forming a deep agitation and irritation which is less than conscious but omnipresent.

> Michelle – Line 413: "Yeah. I think so not being aware [*right*] that they could do that but actually (3) actually deep down actually I don't like it I don't like that sort of thing where you feel like you're when you're doing something like that in my own home I feel like somebody somewhere's watching me"

Thus the affective atmosphere is denoted as "actual," but a "deep down" form of registration of "dislike," but there is equally a lack of awareness portrayed. It is both actual, in that it is registered, and virtual, in that there is a lack of awareness of it; yet the registration is not given any particular qualification but attributed to "some-body, some-where, watching." This "not-that-consciousness" is also reflected in Katja's extract below. Katja describes fleeting moments of when the self is caught, by the self, noticing the self, becoming regulated by surveillance.

> Katja - Line 27: "[*M-hm so you feel it has an impact on you, on how you go about or your behaviour when you feel the cameras?*] Yeah I think sometimes even not that consciously I m-hm because erm as I'm saying sometimes I just catch myself you know spotting a camera and then I realise how (2) I mm you know suddenly it's almost like you have to sort of watch what you're doing? I m-hm and that's sort of (.) you know it's another thing and you know if you go to the fact that you know we do things because somebody is watching us is you know is another big issue (.) erm of (.) you know (.)"

Katja describes momentary spots of realisation, almost captured as a "big issue" and yet "not-that-conscious." It is ambiguously portrayed as a "known-fact" and yet not that known. The struggle with the ambiguity of the almost conscious countenances of the affective atmospheres of surveillance is also drawn out by Arthur. Interestingly, Arthur suggests that there is a form of deep processing that is dealing or engaging with it, but this level of engagement, is both active and yet passive; agentic and yet deterministic.

> Arthur - Line 69: "the fact that I've probably conditioned myself to erm you know that subconsciously I'm aware of it so I might not think I'm aware of it every day but somewhere in my subconscious I am sort of dealing with it (2) erm I don't know how it affects my behaviour"

Thus by looking at speech about affective atmospheres of surveillance we see a raft of ambiguities. Anderson suggests that rather than attempt to disentangle the tensions between these ambiguities the concept of affective atmospheres calls one to hold the tensions and "learn to be affected by the ambiguities of affect" (2009, p. 80). These forms of speech acts often lack coherence and other formal linguistic structural features and so can be missed as irrelevant and incomprehensible. Yet it is here that we are most likely to discover the affective impacts of surveillance. For example, the below extract from Fatima is a good illustration of the struggle for clear figuration of this third realm.

> Fatima – Line 46: "Erm (6) I'm not sure erm (3) I think sometimes people are a bit wary of giving too much information like can't think of how to word it (3) erm (3) no [laughter] just like erm people are bit (.) concerned about say things like when you fill out a form you have to give your race or ethnicity or whatever people are a bit reluctant that maybe it will affect (2) maybe say employment or something erm in that way it is always like giving too much information could mean (4) I don't know I don't know how to put it into words err but yeah something like that"

The numerous pauses, disfluencies, and general lack of clarification, (which of course may point to a form of interviewee anxiety) can be understood as a struggle for qualification. Although Fatima alludes to the concern of passing on of personal information as producing a "wariness," the meaning of which is difficult, or not known "how to put into words," it is *almost* ineffable. There is, however, some awareness of how one can be "socially sorted" (Lyon, 2003b) through categories such as "race or ethnicity" as she suggests, disclosing such details may affect employability. It is interesting that Fatima talks about being "wary of giving too much information" she equally struggles to give over information to the interviewer. One wonders if that affective "wariness" was also present within the interview context. Hence various affective atmospheres of surveillance were also likely to be induced within the interview context; for example, being wary of the information about the self that is passed on. This constant form of affectivity can, because of the normalising effect of surveillance, also

become a normalised way of being for individuals. Because it is so normal to be constantly affected by surveillance (and indeed to affect surveillance, for example through counter-surveillance measures, such as withholding information concerned with race and ethnicity categories when filling in a form), it is not always re-cognised but simply forms a part and parcel of everyday life.

Banishing Feelings and Meanings

The ambiguities of the known and yet not known, material and yet immaterial ambiguities of affective atmospheres are also attended to in McCormack's notion of affective atmospheres which draws on two overarching senses. The first derives from the more materialist and meteorological sense of the term atmosphere allied to its Greek derivative *atmos* meaning steam and vapours. He describes it "as a turbulent zone of gaseous matter surrounding the earth and through the lower reaches of which human and non-human life moves" (2008, p. 413). The second sense can be related to the third realm of affect discussed above, "something distributed yet palpable, a quality of environmental immersion that registers in and through sensing bodies while also remaining diffuse, in the air, ethereal" (2008, p. 413). This material meteorological sense is also put forward by Anderson (2009). He takes a quote from Marx as a starting point for his musings,

> The so called revolutions of 1848 were but poor incidents – small fractures and fissures in the dry crust of European society. However, they denounced the abyss. Beneath the apparently solid surface, they betrayed oceans of liquid matter, only needing expansion to rend into fragments continents of hard rock. Noisily and confusedly they proclaimed the emancipation of the Proletarian, i.e. the secret of the 19th century, and of the revolution of that century . . . the atmosphere in which we live weighs upon every one with a 20,000-pound force, but do you feel it? No more than European society before 1848 felt the revolutionary atmosphere enveloping and pressing it from all sides. (Marx, 1978, p. 577)

The answer to the rhetorical question Anderson (2009, p. 77) suggests is a firm "no" even though it so forcefully envelopes and presses upon life. The reason for this lack of recognition of the atmosphere is implicit in the notion of affective atmosphere. As we have seen above, many of the participants struggle with recognition, even though the atmosphere of surveillance may weigh upon them like a 20, 000 pound force. What has been argued above is that it is the normalisation of surveillance which leads to a lack of reflection. This lack of recognition could appear to be based on simple passive processes. However, there were also a number of accounts where participants portray a wilful lack of attention.

> Denise – Line 124: "[*and about your data and things in online shopping*] Sorry?
> [*Does it affect your life?*] I try not to think about it"

> Tracy - Line 36: "you learn to block it even though we can see on the cameras what is going on [*mmm*] you know"

In the above extracts, Denise and Tracy portray explicit attempts to suppress thoughts and feelings concerned with surveillance. They both speak about two primary forms of surveillance (CCTV and dataveillance) in much the same way. They portray a sense that "nothing can be done about it" so thoughts and feelings related to it appear to be suppressed. Perhaps the alternative is to develop extreme forms of counter-surveillance measures, but this would be very difficult. For example, avoiding leaving any details on the internet or avoiding CCTV all requires a lot of thought and quite drastic measures.

Emergencies

The impact of the increasing emergence of surveillance is culturally registered through a binary of politicised discourse. Under this hard surface we noted that there often resides much more fluidity, ambiguity, and complexity. Similarly Koskela (2000) discusses that within this deeper residue can be found the simultaneous ambivalent and ambiguous emotional experiences produced through particular surveilled contained spaces. The concepts of affective atmospheres help to illustrate the impacts of wider less-contained, less-than-conscious, ambiguous intensities produced through the surveillance systems. These tend to signify the surveillance systems as at times producing "atmospheres" rather than "cultures" or "assemblages" and "affect" rather than "emotions" or "cognitions." The process of being surveilled through the recent acceleration of surveillance systems may be viewed as producing new affective atmospheres that many of our participants struggled to articulate, relate to, and feel. Thus, the affective atmospheres of a surveillance society are difficult to decipher and analyse. Perhaps attempts to analyse them will always be insufficient, as even if we think about the surveillance systems in a homogenous way as we have here, their affects are bound to be idiosyncratic. Perhaps we should not attempt to conjecture the generalised affective experiences of the atmospheres of surveillance. Issues such as class, race, gender, economic status, and all manner of subjectivity are bound to position people differently in relation to surveillance. But what is apparent in the talk about surveillance that we bore witness to through our interviews, is a general lack of clarity and understanding of their processes and functions. In this respect, our data points to how the atmospheres of surveillance can be thought of as producing underlying embodied tensions due to their affective impacts upon a multitude of everyday phenomena. How potent these impacts are is not clear and what affects they may produce is equally difficult to decipher.

Perhaps further insights into these processes can be gauged through the UK riots in the summer of 2011, which were particularly widespread in London. Although many of the young people obscured their faces by wearing hoods and scarves as counter-surveillance measures, many did not. Was this due to a lack of awareness of the surveillance systems? Or was it some form of

cathartic process releasing the inner affective tensions? No doubt it could have been both of these things and/or many more. We assume however, the ambiguities of the affective atmospheres of surveillance are likely to increasingly impact upon individuals as these systems grow in stature and complexity. Due to the clandestine characteristics of surveillance, its ever increasing ubiquity, complexity, and yet normalisation, it is, we argue, ironically contributing to its general incomprehensibility and inexpressibility. It seems that there is a general lack of awareness (both academically and publically) as to how the multiplicity of these systems are impacting upon life on a day to day basis. So, psychologists have an important role to play here. Discrete systems alongside particular groups of people could be further investigated to develop understandings of the potential potency of various forms of affective atmospheres (for example, not only of the different systems but the various surveillors—the state gaze and/or the criminal gaze). Admittedly, this form of precision analysis is certainly a short coming of the present analysis. However, we recommend that methods of analysis should be particularly sensitive to the "not so conscious" processes that we have here attempted to illustrate. Indeed, researchers outside of the field of psychology have suggested that new forms of surveillance has emerged as "the dominant organizing practice of late modernity" (Ball, Haggerty, & Lyon, 2012, p. 1), this is certainly something that we should be (re)theorising in contemporary psychology.

Funding

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