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Postmodern Social Control: Dividuals and Surveillance

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To be born is to be controlled. This reality inspired French philosopher Gilles Deleuze's essay entitled *Postscript on the Societies of Control.* As man navigates through social constructs and apparatuses around him, a zero-sum game ensues where The System gradually deindividuates the one in the interests of the many. For such an endeavor to be fecund, it is necessary for organizational control to forge organic solidarity (Lincoln & Guillot, 2004, p. 6). Deleuze's somber analysis of society, collective supremacy, and surveillance operationalizes what it means to live in postmodernity.

Disciplinary Societies and Societies of Sovereignty

Before discussing societies of control, disciplinary societies and societies of sovereignty must be understood (Deleuze, 1992, p. 3). Disciplinary societies can be understood as an ultra-orderly system where "life style" is moving from one enclosure to another (Foucault, 1975, p. 193). Additionally, societies of sovereignty are characterized by ascending individualism where the populace prostrates itself to the legitimacy of a centralized agent of control, often one who rose *vis a vis* violence (Naseem, 2014, p. 27). Societies of control, thus, are those establishments which are physical and metaphysical enclosures (Virilio & Redhead, 2005, p. 34).

Take hospitals, for instance, as an example of an enclosed institution, beginning with physical enclosure. Clearly, patients are enculturated with victimization due to their maladies and due to physicians' domination of expert control (Chriss, 2013, p. 103). Individuals defer to their self-in-sick-role to integrate into a meaning paradigm: the "what is" is their illness, the "what should be" is their recovery, and the "how I should act" is deferentially to the medical sovereigns (Goffman, 1959, p. 6; Peterson, 1999, p. 28).

Dividuals

While patient enclosure is most directly caused by medical control, hospital employee enclosure, containing a metaphysical component, is the result of organizational control. When officialdoms are in the "factory-stage" of development, their manageable size permits mechanical solidarity and employee retention of self in the eyes of the administrator (Delbridge & Barton, 2002, p. 686). Such intimacy is shibboleth in the age of the corporation, where the massiveness of personnel proliferates the amount of and the styles of social interactions to a boiling point where groups must be regarded as homogenous unities to be actuarially managed, resulting in the eve of the dividual (Deleuze, 1992, p. 5). Viewing individuals as dividuals leads to one-size-fits-all decision-making, perpetuating a dromotropic society (Virilio & Redhead, 2005, p. 34). This sentiment is materialized in the FaceTime-esque medical app Maven, where entire doctor's appointments can take place on a smartphone (Maven Clinic Company, 2017, p. 1). This move towards organic solidarity is accompanied by handling the organic as numeric with the assignment of passcodes and identification numbers in order to function within a system while enabling panopticism (Foucault, 1975, p. 195).

Surveillance

Obsession with data and metadata on the public creates a kind of *structuralistic analytics*, engineered by scopophilia, in the name of effective management (Theus, 2013, p. 10-15). *Physical scopophilia* and panopticism are reified in the criminal justice system. Correctional facilities, for instance, have begun adopting the new-generation jail layout where institutional corrections are physically oriented into a podular unit to create a *bona fide* panopticon (Clear, Cole, & Reising, 2013, p. 81). Increased surveillance cameras result in catching more crimes; with corrections and courts already strained with their workload, *few-watch-the-many-*

scopophilia can actually be counterproductive and further exacerbate the carceral society (Dawson, 2013, p. 102). Omnipercipience also leads to flagrant abuse, as demonstrated by the harassment charges filed against Tuscaloosa PD in an open-letter for using surveillance cameras to gawk at the curvature of female passersby (The Surveillance Camera Players, 2003, p. 1). Notably, the aforementioned open-letter is an example of the public using countersurveillance to revolt against unjust and, arguably, unconstitutional surveillance (Chriss, 2013, p. 129).

Scopophilia

Moving on, scopophilia is not just physical, but can also refer to a craving for data and metadata on dividuals, leading to organizational policies that satiate this desire. Though deleterious and unintended consequences have been previously critiqued, it must be noted that *data-driven scopophilia* has its benefits. Returning to corrections, ever since the Crime Control Era hampered progress for the rehabilitative model, criminologists have made efforts to propagate evidence-based programming and the ideology of New Penology (Cullen, Myer, Latessa, 2009, pp. 209-210). Since *data-driven scopophilia* collineates with scientization, this element of a society of control has considerable utility to social order.

Though it may be necessary for businesses to use heightened surveillance, the responsibilization that the *lifeworld panopticon* manufactures remains a separate issue. A record 77% of Americans currently own a smartphone (Smith, 2017, p. 1). Due to this uptick, the majority of civilians have the potential to deputize themselves and perform governmentality by maintaining the peace *via* "granny patrols" and police civilianization (Chriss, 2013, pp. 229-232).

In circumstances like the Fruitvale Station Shooting, civilian responsivity to police brutality results in professionals properly heeding to justice (Blaisdell et al., 2015, p. 1). However, this *many watch the many* style of surveillance flirts with the practically disastrous dogma of radical postmodernism: polymorphous perversity of meaning (Chriss, 2013, p. 120). The *lifeworld panopticon* effectively deprofessionalizes policing, allowing for the first point of contact that a deviant interacts with to be an untrained yet highly-opinionated layperson. Deleuze worried about how institutions of authority would become societies of control with improved surveillance and tracking, thus repressing individualism (Deleuze, 1992, p. 4). Ironically, though, the biggest threat to personal liberties may be precipitated by individuals, empowered by technology, asserting their hermeneutics of justice and morality onto other individuals.

Conclusion

Societies of control, dividualization, and surveillance are all vital cogs to the operation of postmodernity. Back in 1992, Deleuze already sensed the changing tides of civilization and how the impending flow of social control would impose strictures of identification that would ultimately abate the individual. His biggest fear was that powerful collectives would encroach on the liberties of their constituents, leading to oppression and to deindividuation-minded work socialization. Upon further scrutiny, much of the quantification and bureaucratization that Deleuze is so trepidant of actually greatly benefits persons since it allows for more efficient and consistent decision-making. Nonetheless, when factoring in the ominous direction of police civilianization, the admonitory words of Founding Father Benjamin Franklin ring out: "Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety."

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