Chapter 7

The Consequences of Watching:
Controlling the Watched

ABSTRACT

The outcome of surveillance is the ability to use the narratives to understand how an entity behaves. This information offers the opportunity to predict. With the ability to predict comes the opportunity to anticipate the future. Surveillance allows for controlling some aspects of the future. This applies to all the contexts of surveillance discussed.

INTRODUCTION

As suggested as the primary theme of the book, the product of surveillance is numerous different forms of data collected often over a length of time. Independent of the motivation of the collection of information, the data become available for analysis. As suggested in Chapter 2, this information makes up Big Data which creates the narrative profile. This profile is the foundation for most of the consequences of surveillance. It is not the case that the data remains in disparate pieces, but there are specific mechanisms of Big Data analysis that can be used to construct a multi-faceted profile of the person. In this chapter I explore one of

the key consequences of the availability of profiles – the ability to control the entity which has been watched and profiled. I begin with a brief overview of the way control has been manifest in our lives with the emergence of systems that can create a "control society." I then offer the connection between control and prediction, suggesting that once there is a sense of control, it is also possible to predict the events that might happen, knowing how well behavior and attitudes can be controlled by manipulation based on the knowledge of the narratives. I then elaborate on the ways in which control and prediction works within the four contexts of surveillance.

Control in Society

History demonstrates that in a structured social system those in power attempt to retain their position of power. This tendency can have many different motivations, but the power offers an opportunity to control the behavior of those who are lower in the power hierarchy. The notion of control is central in any social system because it allows the powerful to retain power and to impose a specific description of the World to everyone the powerful are able to control. In horrific moments of human history, as in the case of the Holocaust during World War 2 of the 1940s and during the terrifying year of 2020 when a pandemic raged across the World, the powerful in societies had tried their best to retain control on people and spaces. The murder of the Jews in the Holocaust was possible because the fascist leaders of Germany under the Nazi rule were able to control the occupied people and territories by sheer military power of terrorizing people as documented in numerous historical treatises. During the pandemic of 2020, the leaders of the United States were unable to control the behavior of the people in the USA leading to America leading the World in deaths from the pandemic in 2020. The example from 2020 is more telling of the way in which control can be considered in the context of surveillance. The example from Nazi Germany demonstrates power that emanates through the barrel of a gun where freedom of choice is eliminated, and any resistance is met with violence thus scaring the powerless from resisting control. The example in the USA demonstrates that controlling human behavior – the simple

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