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Trust and surveillance

An odd couple or a perfect pair?

Fredrika Björklund

Introduction

Fifteen years ago, David Lyon predicted that the introduction of pervasive surveillance would destroy trust between individuals and trust between citizens and governments (Lyon 2003). Indeed, at first glimpse trust and surveillance appear to be an odd couple. The surveillance relationship between government (public institutions) and citizens is asymmetrical and built on a basis of distrust. In general terms, a society completely based on trust should have no need for surveillance, while a society based on distrust should more readily perform and justify logics of surveillance such as control, monitoring, and verification.

However, recent empirical studies based on social surveys tell a different story and register a positive correspondence between trust in public institutions and acceptance of surveillance (Friedewald et al. 2015; Pavone, Degli-Esposti, and Santiago 2015). In these studies, high levels of trust predict positive attitudes to surveillance. Thus, trustful citizens allow state authorities to monitor them; or, formulated in a more pejorative way, citizens give legitimacy to (trust) governments, which in turn distrust their citizens. How can we make sense of this counterintuitive finding? This chapter asks how these results from social surveys should be theorized and understood in relation to more dystopic forecasts about the effects of surveillance on trust.

Without doubt, “[t]rust is a primary constituent of the relational dynamic of most surveillance systems” (Ellis, Harper, and Tucker 2013, 1). Still, interest in the relationship between trust and surveillance has been low as compared to the interest in how surveillance impinges on other social goods. Normally, the fundamental opposition in the surveillance context is situated as the individual right to *privacy* versus surveillance (Goold 2009, 207). Although scholarship has recognized that privacy also has public value and can be considered a constitutive public good that is a basic ingredient of a democratic system (Bennett 2011, 486; Raab 2012), public framing of privacy as the main problem with intrusive surveillance policies continues to stress threats to the individual and, in so doing, directs the public discourse

into an individualization of the risks associated with surveillance. Obviously, individual security and privacy must be protected, and surveillance must be performed in ways that are consistent with citizens' personal integrity. But this is too narrow a perspective on the problems with surveillance. I argue that we need to focus more on the impact of surveillance on *societal* values and *societal* well-being, and thinking about trust is a productive way to do this. Trust is recognized as a collective asset essential for "the most basic cooperation in our economic, political, and social relationships" (Freitag and Bühlmann 2009, 1538). Trust enables and makes meaningful citizen contribution and participation in social and political activities. But, if trust flourishes also in the presence of surveillance, as suggested by social survey research, what is the problem? Notwithstanding the importance of the issue, the findings from social surveys concerning trust and surveillance are not sufficiently theorized. We don't know how this seemingly contradictory positive correlation between trust and acceptance of surveillance comes about.

This article aims at mapping some issues that must be carefully probed in order to theorize convincingly the relationship between trust and surveillance. It suggests a reasonable way to construe the relationships found in empirical research by focusing on our understandings of trust. Three main issues will be addressed: first, what is the nature of the causal connection between trust and surveillance; what is expected to explain what and under which conditions? The fact that there is an association between trust and affirmative attitudes to surveillance does not automatically mean that trust explains surveillance attitudes—although studies based on social surveys often more or less take for granted that trust should be considered the independent variable (Patil et al. 2014; Svenonius and Björklund 2018; Friedewald et al. 2016). But, in theory, surveillance may also produce trust—if, for example, citizens feel safer knowing that an area is monitored this might increase the inclination to trust. The chicken and egg problem of temporality needs to be addressed in a theoretically informed way. Certainly, in this context it is also important to discriminate between different kinds of surveillance—I attend to this issue below.

Second, we need to make sense of the positive association found between trust and acceptance of surveillance. In order to do this, the very origins of trust need to be explored. What does it mean to trust, and how should the emergence of trust be explained? Trust is a highly disputed academic concept, and different conceptualizations of trust must be addressed since this affects the way we construe the trust–surveillance nexus. The crucial issue here is whether we consider trust as an outcome of institutional performance or whether we see it as determined by sociocultural factors.

Third, the chapter ends by problematizing the idea of trust as practiced in contemporary societies. A deeper understanding of modern surveillance practices implies that we need to consider how the meaning of trust might change over time and, especially, to consider what trust might look like in the future.

The relationship between trust and surveillance

Does trust really predict particular attitudes to surveillance, as demonstrated in social surveys, or does extensive surveillance undermine trust, as suggested by David Lyon? There is a plenitude of studies engaged in the ways in which trust predicts issues such as the presence of corruption (Richey 2010; Bjørnskov and Tinggaard Svendsen 2013; Graeff and Tinggaard Svendsen 2013), the size of the welfare state (Rothstein 2010; Bjørnskov and Tinggaard Svendsen 2013), democratic success (Inglehart 1990; Jamal and Nooruddin 2010), as well as the relationship between different kinds of trust (Mishler and Rose 2001; Rothstein and Stolle 2008; Sønderskov and Thisted Dinesen 2016). These studies relate trust—regularly understood to be a good quality—to social conditions and phenomena that we normally consider desirable. Surveillance, in contrast, is hardly regarded as inherently good, at best rather as a necessary evil that serves functional purposes such as the reduction of crime levels. Therefore, we should expect the relationship between trust and surveillance to be more complex. Surveillance ought to have the potential to ruin trust given its often highly intrusive measures.

Still, trust in public institutions and governments is, in several quantitative survey studies, found to be associated with an affirmative attitude toward surveillance. The PRISMS (Friedewald et al. 2015, 2016), the SurPRISE (Pavone, Degli-Esposti, and Santiago 2015), and the PACT (Patil et al. 2014) surveys covering citizens in European states report these findings. The PRISMS project, whose main focus was on privacy and security but also covered trust, uses a number of items to measure attitudes to different kinds of surveillance, from foreign state surveillance to police surveys of football matches. Trust in institutions is measured as a composite variable consisting of five items, among them trust in government. The study concludes that among European citizens “trust in institutions has a strong and significant effect on the acceptability of the described surveillance practices” (Friedewald et al. 2015, 76). The SurPRISE project focuses on trust in security agencies specifically and finds that trust in these institutions affects acceptance of surveillance-oriented security technologies (SOSTs) positively (Pavone, Degli-Esposti, and Santiago 2015, 135). The PACT project, also covering citizens in European states, uses trust in government as one component (besides confidence in the voting system, the role of technology, and attitudes to business) in an index variable labeled as “general trust” and finds that this is associated with positive attitudes to surveillance (Patil et al. 2014). In addition to institutional trust, social trust—that is, trust in other people—also has been shown to have a positive, although weaker, correlation with positive attitudes to surveillance (Friedewald et al. 2015). But, as Friedewald et al. (2015, 93–94) note, social trust is a predictor of institutional trust, and although it has a weak independent effect it is indirectly relevant for attitudes to surveillance. The more

people trust in public institutions (and in each other) the more content they are with surveillance.

The abovementioned studies focus mainly on open surveillance and not on secret surveillance. But there is some evidence that the findings on association between institutional trust and surveillance hold also for the latter. In studying three postcommunist societies, Poland, Estonia, and Serbia, Svenonius and Björklund (2018) find that trust in institutions (measured as trust in the police, the intelligence agency, the courts, the tax agency, and in government) predicts acceptance of secret surveillance. Surveillance in the aftermath of terrorist attacks has aroused similar academic interest. In a survey on support for surveillance and security legislation in Canada and the United States after 9/11, Nakhaie and de Lint find that trust in the government, trust in airport officials, and low tolerance of minorities are key predictors. They argue that these factors, and in particular trust in government, tend to drive people “to cede civil liberties for security and surveillance” (Nakhaie and de Lint 2013, 160). Denmark (2012) notes a difference between countries when it comes to acceptance of counterterrorism surveillance policies. In countries with a legacy of a controlling state (in this case Russia and Taiwan), trust deficits work as a constraint against support for extending police surveillance, while in traditional liberal democracies, trust in government seems to be irrelevant to surveillance attitudes. The evaluation of institutional past performance is a better explanation in these cases. Since recognition of performance is frequently regarded as a condition for institutional trust, Denmark’s findings are not immediately comparable with other studies. But his study points to democratic traditions as an underlying factor that might explain how trust interacts with surveillance attitudes. Steinfeld, also engaged in the issue of counterterrorism, finds that political (institutional) trust, among other factors, plays into opinions on surveillance. She argues that, when confronted with terrorism, citizens show “a tendency to just trust authorities and surveillance systems” (Steinfeld 2017, 1671). In addition, Steinfeld distinguishes between private sector surveillance and state surveillance and finds that they are predicted in different ways.

The studies discussed above all have in common that they attend to trust as the explanatory factor accounting for surveillance attitudes. However, Pavone, Degli-Esposti, and Santiago (2015, 142) point out that the opposite may also be true, namely, that the use of more acceptable technologies might increase trust in security agencies. This remark leads us on to studies with a different approach to trust and surveillance, i.e. studies that highlight the (negative) effects of surveillance.

In addition to social surveys, there are several qualitatively oriented case studies, representing various disciplines, that address the relationship between trust and surveillance. Frequently, these studies concern the consequences that surveillance has or may have on trust and other social or individual qualities. One example is Maras (2012), who studied the effects of the EU

Data Retention Directive and forecasted, among other things, a loss in citizens' trust as a consequence of this regulation. In another study, Ali (2016) explores police monitoring of Muslim students and community organizations in New York City following 9/11. He finds that monitoring resulted in decreasing intercommunity trust as well as a decreasing sense of solidarity within the Muslim group (but also self-censoring and a culture of fear). Alam and Husband (2013) draw similar conclusions in a study of British counterterrorism policies toward Muslim communities. The securitization of urban life, including surveillance, that affects these communities not only resulted in a breakdown of trust toward state agencies but also caused declining trust between community members. In a similar vein, Duck (2017) notes that constant surveillance activities toward residents in black neighborhoods may corrode trust between residents and law enforcement agencies. Craven, Monahan, and Regan (2015) highlight the complex relationship between state surveillance and public trust with an empirical study of Department of Homeland Security Fusion Centers (with the objective of enabling different agencies to share resources and information relevant for counterterrorism activities). Sorell (2011) contrasts intrusive surveillance techniques, among them secret bugging, wiretapping, email, and covert camera surveillance of suspects in public places, against the value of building trustful relations with the community for combating terrorist crimes. But we see similar effects also in welfare institutions. Perry-Hazan and Birnhack (2018, 60), for example, investigate the increasingly widespread use of CCTV in schools and draw the conclusion that surveillance changes the nature of school activities by diverting "the educational realm to the semi-legal realm" and by signaling to children that they cannot be trusted. Szrubka (2013) studies the effect of surveillance on the Polish healthcare system, such as cameras in ambulances, and finds that this kind of surveillance has the potential to alter the meaning of trust. Thus, from the abovementioned case studies, we learn that surveillance may produce distrust.

In sum, empirical studies point in different directions and draw conflicting conclusions. Quantitative survey studies tend to see trust as the cause of more positive surveillance attitudes, while the qualitative cases studies referred to above see surveillance as a practice that has a harmful impact on trust. How can we make sense of this contradiction in findings? Rather than reducing the explanation to a problem of methodological differences, I instead suggest that the incompatibility of findings might be best explained by considering the different types of trust addressed.

While survey studies focus on institutional trust and so-called generalized social trust—the *abstract* trust in "all others"—the case studies often concern social trust on a more relational level between people living in a community, and trust as it is enacted in direct contact with a particular institution, such as the police. The latter is commonly called particular social trust—in contrast to generalized social trust. Thus, there is reason to reflect on the

features of different types of trust, as well as on how institutional and social forms of trust relate to each other. Are they totally different constructs, or should they be regarded as interrelated? In order to further discuss this issue, we need to investigate how trust emerges. In the literature, we find two disciplinary orientations, the institutionalist perspective and the socio-cultural perspective, that represent different beliefs on the origins of trust. The relationship between institutional and social trust, I propose, is at the very heart of the academic debate on the relationship between trust and surveillance.

The emergence of trust

Some scholars distinguish between three kinds of trust: trust in institutions (political trust), generalized social trust, and particular social trust (Newton and Zmerli 2011). Institutional trust refers to people's confidence in public institutions of various kinds, including trust in governments and political entities. In social surveys, institutional trust often refers to a composite variable bringing together several survey items regarding trust in specific institutions. The definition of institutional trust may vary from study to study, but trust in government, trust in the police, trust in intelligence agencies, trust in tax agencies, and trust in courts are common items used that, when combined, are regarded as a representation of institutional trust (Svenonius and Björklund 2018).

Social trust, in contrast, refers to trust in fellow human beings, and generalized social trust concerns whether people trust the anonymous other. It is a mental model of the trustworthiness of people you don't know (Rothstein and Eek 2009, 83). Typically, generalized trust is measured by the survey question, "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" (Nannestad 2008; Björklund 2019). These two kinds of trust—institutional trust and generalized social trust—are often, in difference to particular trust, ascribed the role of important building blocks for a good democratic society (Newton and Zmerli 2011).

Particular social trust refers to trust in close relationships such as within the family, among neighbors, and in social networks or communities. There is a growing academic interest in this kind of trust, although until recently it did not appear in social surveys. Two issues dominate studies on particular trust. First, is it related to the more abstract generalized social trust and, if so, in what ways (Freitag and Traunmüller 2009; Newton and Zmerli 2011; Welzel and Delhey 2015; Cao et al. 2015)? Second, may trust in close relations substitute for generalized social trust and institutional trust in societies where these kinds of trust score low—and thus have political significance in its own right (Gibson 2001; Khodyakov 2007; Ford 2017)? The discussion below ties into both of these matters.

Scholars find that trust in institutions and trust in other people (general social trust) often covary in people's attitudes (Rothstein and Stolle 2008; Sønderskov and Thisted Dinesen 2016). This seems also to be the case concerning trust and attitudes to surveillance (Friedewald et al. 2015; Svenonius and Björklund 2018). Still, the core question is whether institutional trust should be understood as the ultimate origin in the explanatory chain or whether social trust is the building block on which institutional trust rests. As we shall see, this is important for correctly understanding the association between trust and surveillance.

Theories on how trust emerges concern, to a large extent, the association between different kinds of trust. Roughly speaking, the literature provides two approaches with different takes on the relationship between institutional trust, generalized social trust, and particular social trust: the institutionalist perspective (Rothstein 2004, 2005) and the sociocultural orientation, or social capital theory (Sztompka 1999, 2005; Putnam 1993; Inglehart 1990). Simply put, the difference between these two schools of thought may be described as different ways of understanding the order in which the types of trust occur. While institutionalist theorists set trust in institutions as the origin of social trust, sociocultural theorists see social trust (Lühiste 2006, 478; Mishler and Rose 2001), and especially particular social trust, as the root of all other kinds of trust. Institutionalists care less about particular trust.

Institutionalist scholars argue that “social trust comes from above and is destroyed from above” (Rothstein 2005, 199). The root to trust in a society is a well-performing and noncorrupt public administration (Freitag and Bühlmann 2009). Good quality of public institutions is a fundamental condition that allows trust in these institutions as well as general social trust to develop (Rothstein and Stolle 2008; Rothstein and Eek 2009). Trust relies on the condition that institutions are fair, efficient, and ruled by law. If this is the case, people will learn that, in relation to these institutions, and in meeting representatives of public institutions, the best strategy is to trust and to be trustworthy (e.g., refraining from offering bribes). Since institutional officers are human beings, trust in them spills over also to people in general (Rothstein 2004; Rothstein and Stolle 2008). Not only will people be more likely to act honestly, but they will also expect others to refrain from corruption, and thus trust becomes a general quality. If public institutions do not live up to noncorrupt and fair standards, people will be forced to adapt to the current practice and also engage in corruption—and will expect others to do so as well.

Thus, institutionalist theories of trust lean on the evaluation of performance. This means that trust comes from rational deliberation on the basis of information that we have on the trustee's previous behavior (Coleman 1994; Offe 1999; Gambetta 2000). The level of trust in public institutions rests on citizens' expectations, which are based on previous experiences of good or bad governance. If, for example, the police authority acts in a way that is fair

and efficient, trust in this institution will be high. If the police have done a bad job, trust will diminish. Thus, trust is quite vulnerable and changes if expectations are not met.

In contrast, according to Luhmann (the foremost theorist among those who represent a sociological perspective on trust), trust is a communicative means to reduce complexity (Luhmann 1979, 8). It should be separated from confidence, which corresponds to systemic trust and comes from socialization. The latter concerns functional systems such as the economy and politics and is not founded on interpersonal relations, but as with trust it works in a complexity-reducing way (Luhmann 1979, 102). Luhmann's seminal work is a source of inspiration to sociocultural approaches to trust.

From a sociocultural perspective, in contrast to institutionalist theory, trust emerges from below. Sociocultural theory on trust provides an alternative view of trust as dependent on societal patterns and attitudes based on people's personal and social history. It accommodates several different orientations with partly different focuses, such as normative standards as a condition for trust (Uslaner), social capital theory (Putnam), and trust understood as routinized behavior (Giddens). But bringing these together is the idea that trust has other causes than rationalist deliberation on the performance of the trustee. From Putnam we learn that the root of any kind of trust is found in close relationships within a strong civil society and in social networks, which lay the foundation for social capital (Putnam 1993). Giddens separates trust between people—facework commitments—from trust as faceless commitments. The latter concern the way people handle the uncertainty associated with what he calls the abstract incomprehensible systems that comprise modern societies. For Giddens (1990, 1991), both kinds of trust rely on the continuity of daily life and habitual routines, that is, the ability to “bracket ignorance.” Uslaner (2013, 630), who developed the idea of trust as a norm, argues that trust is “the belief that we ought to trust others because they are part of our moral community.” Moral dispositions to trust are grounded in close relations and in early childhood, where trust is learned from families and relatives (Uslaner 2000, 571). This is where essential particular trust is built. Positive experiences of particular social trust will gain a norm-like quality, and this positively affects the confidence in people whom you don't know (general social trust). Norms work as guidelines in our social contacts and do not require rationalist deliberations in every situation.

From a sociocultural perspective, trust between people close to you, that is, particular trust, is where it all begins. Trustful experiences in families, neighborhoods, communities, and networks create a social capital of trustfulness and normative structures favorable to more abstract kinds of trust in a society. It would be a misunderstanding to think that sociocultural theorists are less interested in institutional trust than institutionalists. Rather, they argue that trust in public institutions originates not in performance but in social conditions and levels of social trust in a society. Institutional trust

emerges out of particular social trust or, formulated from a different conceptual angle, social capital. From trust in close relationships, social trust is generalized to wider circles of people and also promotes political trust (trust in institutions) (Newton and Zmerli 2011).

A sociocultural perspective also means that trust and distrust are regarded as quite stable things, once established. In a society long characterized by distrust, it is likely that distrust will persist. Trust and distrust are only to a very small extent sensitive to how institutions (or people) perform in the short run. This is a crucial difference when comparing this perspective to an institutionalist theory focusing on the evaluation of performance. Performance-based institutionalist theories imply that there is no relevant difference between different societies other than the quality of government and institutions. The fact that trust is higher in some states than in others results from better functioning state administrations, in which it is appropriate to trust. From the sociocultural perspective, in contrast, variations in institutional trust should be traced to legacies or structures not directly related to institutional performance. These legacies may be theorized in terms of social capital, norms, early socialization into trustful dispositions, or routinized behavior.

The institutionalist take on trust and surveillance attitudes

Since surveys find a stronger association between institutional trust, as opposed to social trust, and positive attitudes toward surveillance, it may seem reasonable to assume that the institutionalist perspective has explanatory leverage. This would mean that people's attitudes toward surveillance follow from their evaluation of institutional performance. An institutional perspective requires that people have an opinion on the performance of institutions (quality of government) in the country in which they live. If people appreciate government, which is most likely in democratic countries, they should also be more content with being monitored by the state—or to put it differently, they should be less concerned about the risk of governmental abuse when it comes to surveillance (Denemark 2012). Thus, the arrow goes from institutional trust to affirmation of surveillance.

However, the relationship between evaluation of institutions, or government in general, and trust remains obscure—a problem that is manifested in the practice of using a composite variable when operationalizing institutional trust in social surveys. There is a cumbersome gap between trust in a number of institutions and attitudes to surveillance. Therefore, Watson, Finn, and Barnard-Wills (2017) argue that rather than studying institutional trust in general, studies ought to focus more on trust in particular surveillance institutions. If we are interested in what performance means for attitudes to surveillance, we should probably be as specific as possible concerning institutions. Relevant

institutions need to be defined for the type of surveillance that respondents are asked to relate to. Enumerative definitions are sometimes useful, but they are also problematic, since they often have a rather weak theoretical foundation (Schneider 2017). Likewise, it is important to carefully define what kind of surveillance respondents are asked to have an opinion about (Steinfeld 2017). Narrowing the take on institutions—for example, a focus on secret surveillance agencies or the police—as well as specifying the type of surveillance in question make it possible to theorize more thoroughly on the direction of the causal arrow. In fact, from an institutionalist perspective focusing on performance, it seems reasonable to treat surveillance, and not trust, as the independent variable. Surveillance is institutional performance and may go into the evaluation of the institution, underpinning or undermining trust.

Still, in order to bring about trust in an institution, knowledge about institutional performance is needed. Knowledge, in this context, usually comes from access to information. Thus, transparency is a fundamental ingredient in a performance-based approach to trust, and this is a difficult thing when it comes to surveillance policies, which often, by nature, lack transparency. Certainly, some surveillance activities are more open than others, and sometimes governments prescribe a certain amount of transparency, for example, in requiring signs indicating camera monitoring. Generally, however, surveillance is based on the condition that everything cannot be made transparent. In the words of Monahan and Regan (2012), surveillance practices create “zones of opacity.”

The importance of transparent institutions has been a focus of both academic debate and public policies for some time (Kafer 2016). On the one hand, transparency is associated with governmental accountability and legitimacy (Taylor 2011; Brucato 2015) and discussed as a measure to enhance trust in governments and public institutions (Cucciniello and Nasi 2014; Kim and Lee 2012). On the other hand, Moore (2018) and others relativize the apparent objectivity in transparent policies and argue that facts and information are not always intelligible without contextual references. Grimmelikhuijsen (2012) finds that the effect of transparency on trust in government is small. Since trust is a mix between knowledge and feelings, increased knowledge stemming from open government may have a very limited effect. More disclosure when it comes to police brutality in the United States, for example, did not change public attitudes toward the police (Brucato 2015). Mason, Hillenbrand, and Money (2014), in a study on attitudes toward the British police, find that respondents with more initial trust did not change their opinion regardless of whether they were exposed to negative or positive information on police performance. Other conditions, beyond facts, influenced their opinion. In some cultural contexts, increased transparency may even have a negative impact on trust. Where the power distance between government and citizens is traditionally large, citizens may be sensitive to a disclosure that “construes their government in a less competent light” (Grimmelikhuijsen et al. 2013, 583).

In sum, there are three interrelated problems with applying an institutionalist perspective to the results of survey studies. First, it can hardly account for the idea that institutional trust affects surveillance attitudes unless we circumscribe trust to mean trust in particular surveillance institutions. Second, if we do this, we still have the problem that surveillance policies are seldom open to scrutiny by the public and, thus, cannot be fully evaluated. Third, the closer we get to particular surveillance agencies and particular types of surveillance, the harder it becomes to discern the causal direction, making the chicken and egg problem intractable without further theorizing.

Thus, this discussion casts doubt on the direction of the causal arrow from institutional trust to surveillance attitudes. Since surveillance policies are performance, and performance is regarded as the basis of trust, the sensible conclusion should be that attitudes to surveillance may also influence trust in institutions. Moreover, the institutionalist perspective is particularly problematic in the surveillance context since surveillance policies and practices, to a large extent, are not open for rational deliberation. Trust in the context of surveillance policies seems to come from other sources than information about institutional performance. This is where sociocultural aspects enter the discussion.

A sociocultural perspective on trust and surveillance

Is the relationship between trust and positive attitudes to surveillance easier to grasp if we understand trust in terms of norms rather than performance? Norms are less sensitive to facts than what is required for evaluations of performance—at least in the short run. Trust toward people or institutions is not based on rational consideration but on more unreflected practices—a personal or collective code of behavior.

Although there are large variations in levels of trust in public institutions in democratic societies, it is still common for a fairly large group of people state that they trust institutions at least to some extent. From a sociocultural perspective, it should be argued that the reason for this is not primarily that people have made an evaluation of the quality of government. Rather people may trust authorities simply because they adhere to a societal norm (or routines) to trust governmental institutions. People who trust the government in this way should be prone to accept policies, such as surveillance, without reflecting so much on its implications. Thus, the causal arrow goes from trust in institutions to attitudes to surveillance, and a positive association makes sense even in the absence of satisfactory performance. Possibly, these trust norms strengthen in times of perceived threats from crime and terrorism (Steinfeld 2017). However, the problem here is that, if we take this approach too far, we run the risk of underestimating people's ability to think for themselves and to evaluate the pros and cons of surveillance. If we are completely subordinated to social norms, debates on surveillance practices will be harder to accomplish.

The real merit of a sociocultural perspective on trust and surveillance is that it can account for movements coming from below that reflect what happens in people's everyday lives. Norms are not easily changed, but from a sociocultural perspective trust as a norm originates in experiences that we have from people we meet in our daily contacts and personal networks. Therefore, a sociocultural perspective accommodates the possibility that surveillance may destroy trust as we know it. If trust is about socialization and comes from experiences in close relations, then negative experiences with, for example, the local police may destroy trust from below with long-term effects on other types of trust and on norms of trust in a society (Ali 2016; Alam and Husband 2013; Duck 2017). Thus, although social survey studies find a positive relationship between trust and acceptance of surveillance, the more qualitative case studies referred to above, indicating a negative association, may tell something about what we should expect from the future. The sociocultural perspective opens space for considering how social changes may affect the trust–surveillance relationship (see, e.g., Lyon 2018). This perspective also promotes a discussion on alternative ways to enact trust.

A short historical retrospective will help to illustrate this argument. Scholars with a sociocultural orientation suggest that trust develops in relation to the overall organization of social relations in a society (Misztal 1996). Premodern agrarian society was characterized by closed and predictable social structures at the local level. Small-scale relations dominated, and rules, roles, and social control associated with these relations set the agenda for trust—which were confined mostly to people with whom one was already familiar. Modern societies are more complex, and in order to adapt to the anonymous relations featured in large markets and welfare states, more general and abstract forms of trust were required (Seligman 1997). But is this the last step, or may other forms of trust and ways of enacting trust emerge? We need to reflect on the fact that social trust levels are dropping in many countries and relate these findings to increased surveillance in society (Craven, Monahan, and Regan 2015). Is it that surveillance destroys trust, or do we witness a transformation in the way people relate to each other that mirrors alternative forms of the social contract? These questions can be addressed by exploring the relationship between trust and control. With control I here mean the social control over individuals within a society that substantiates a social order.

From a sociocultural perspective, social trust is to a certain extent about control. Trustworthiness and compliance with norms favoring trust may form the basis for social inclusion, while noncompliance might justify exclusion. General social trust can be described as a control-like norm-conformity (Offe 1999).

(W)hen actors generalize trust, in the sense that within particular social structures the assumption of benevolent agency is no longer tied to individual actors, but expected of all actors concerned (...), then this

generalized trust gains a control-like quality as actors become embedded in it.

(Möllering 2005, 292)

Knights et al. (2001, 315) refer to “the production and maintenance of ‘trust’ as itself closely related to particular systems of power and control.” The control element in social trust is crucial to the understanding of the trust–surveillance nexus as it appears in the late modern era of constantly expanding surveillance policies.

Normally, we perceive trust as associated with informal social control. But increasingly complex societies set the scene for different ways to pursue control (Giddens 1990). Today, “people do not need to trust one another since they can rely upon institutions to rectify problems that arise” (Gibson 2001, 66). A bit simplified one could say that you don’t need to build trust between yourself and your neighbors since the police will do it for you—which is frequently accomplished with the use of cameras or other surveillance methods. The eyes of cameras replace the eyes of people (Fyfe and Bannister 1998). Social informal control is replaced by institutional “control at a distance” (Monahan 2009). Differently put, citizens trust governments and public institutions, such as the police, to distrust (and control) their fellow citizens—those who are suspected of not having “pure flour in their bags” (Björklund 2011). Szrubka (2013) gives a telling illustration of how traditional informal social control—trust—may be replaced by control at a distance—i.e. surveillance. In his study on the use of cameras in Polish ambulances, he notes that cameras in the cars transform trust between the personnel and the patient. The intention behind camera surveillance is to protect the patients against theft in a situation where they cannot protect their belongings and to protect the personnel from theft accusations. Thus, surveillance of medical authorities (at a distance) replaces trust between human beings or, in other words, the nature of trust changes. To the satisfaction of all involved, trust is enacted as surveillance.

A sociocultural perspective, allowing for changes in the very nature of trust, opens space for new interpretations of the positive relationship between institutional trust and the acceptance of surveillance. It implies that the positive relationship mirrors a new understanding of trust, one that conflates trust with surveillance and thus makes the question of what explains what in trust and surveillance less relevant. Surveillance fills a trust deficit, which becomes increasingly significant, thus altering the very meaning of trust.

Conclusion

Now we can revisit the tension outlined in the introduction between survey results that show a positive correlation between trust and surveillance and

the more dire expectation that surveillance has a destructive effect on trust. The discussion above shows that although trust may be related to positive attitudes to surveillance, it is hard to comprehend this in terms of institutional performance. From a sociocultural perspective, predictions from social survey studies on the positive association between trust and surveillance attitudes do not stand in opposition to warnings about a future ruled by distrust. This perspective also opens space for studying transformations in the idea of trust over time and suggests that this might be a fruitful direction for further research.

Findings that trust in institutions increases the likelihood to consent to surveillance do not make much sense in the absence of a theory of the origins and dynamics of social trust relations. Trust approached as a social practice seems to offer more explanatory leverage to the contradictory empirical results with respect to surveillance. In this context, it is of great importance to focus on the relationship between trust and surveillance at the micro level, in local communities, and trust between people and toward the local police. Most likely, it is here that processes begin that may in the end erode or transform trust between people. This insight suggests that we need more empirical research on the effects of surveillance in peoples' everyday lives. This could be, for example, long-term studies on how the introduction of camera surveillance affects the relations between residents in a living area. Does it have any effect on how people practice trust, and in case it has—how so exactly?

In this chapter, I demonstrate that the way trust is approached affects the analysis of the trust and surveillance relationship. The results from survey studies on the relationship between (institutional) trust and attitudes to surveillance are of little interest if we do not engage in a theoretical discussion on what these results really stand for. The narrower take offered by an institutionalist perspective on trust is not sufficient in this context, and since it rests on institutional performance its applicability is limited in the context of a surveillance that is mostly hidden from the public. A sociocultural approach to trust, in contrast, has great benefits if we want to gain a deeper understanding of the trust and surveillance nexus. We should not be content with noting that the association between social trust and attitudes to surveillance is weak according to findings in social surveys. There are social mechanisms around trust and surveillance that may affect the association and reveal that surveillance tends to become a substitute for social trust. Control at a distance, in terms of technology, replaces informal control, in terms of social trust. A sociocultural perspective gives the opportunity to contextualize the relationship between trust and attitudes to surveillance and to substantially contribute to the understanding of how this relationship may work in the long run. A sociocultural approach helps us to understand how trust works with surveillance in societies where surveillance has become, more or less, the new normal.

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