Paranoia and public responses to cyber-surveillance

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Introduction

The last 20-30 years have seen an increase both in the range of surveillance technologies available and in the ways in which they are used by states, commercial entities and citizens. Over this time digitally mediated surveillance (DMS[i]) made possible by the dataveillance capabilities present in the internet and world wide web has gradually come more to the fore of political debate. Governments in a range of countries have instituted a number of measures as part of the War on Terror (e.g. the PATRIOT Act and warrantless interception in the USA) which have been criticised by civil liberties advocates. The media regularly carry reports of losses of data or compromised networks (e.g. the 2011 Sony Playstation network case). Legislators and regulators attempt to manage the collection, usage and storage of personal information by private companies. Indeed in the 2010 UK general election civil liberties issues were on the agenda and recently the UK government chose not to progress a biometric national ID card scheme, largely on the grounds of cost.

One of the most striking facets of the increase in DMS is the way in which it has become inextricably embedded in every aspect of our lives. The continued technological development of surveillance has meant that it is not only ubiquitous but also increasingly invisible to the general public both because devices can be concealed (e.g. hidden in street furniture) but also because they have become woven into the web of our lives such that it would be hard to avoid the internet or DMS in the course of an ordinary day in an urban centre.

As with any rapid technological change, the growth of surveillance has had significant social impacts. Media commentators regularly discuss it, there are TV documentaries, newspaper articles and so on and popular culture, through films like *Conspiracy Theory* and *Enemy of the State* or TV series like *24* and the BBC's *Spooks*, reproduces particular narratives.

What meaning is made by the public of this rapid change? Historically, the dominant means of investigating this question has been the quantitative attitude survey and there have been a number of these published internationally (e.g. Dinev et al., 2008; Joinson et al., 2006; Johnson & Gearty, 2007; Roy Morgan Research, 2004; Yougov, 2006; Zureik et al., 2010). However, whilst quantitative approaches are useful in that they allow us to compare large numbers of people both nationally and internationally, as we know, these methods also have important limitations (Haggerty & Gazso, 2005). For example, participants' responses very much depend on the question that is being asked and its context (Schuman & Presser, 1996) which pose a challenge when interpreting results. Moreover, the questions are often based on a certain assumptive framework – for example, Gandy (2007) has noted the influence of various interest groups in shaping attitude surveys.

Quantitative surveys of attitudes have revealed some differences between countries (e.g. Zureik et al., 2010) but these methods have also indicated that attitudes are ambiguous and conflicted. Moreover, they respond to world events and press reporting and fluctuate over time. Importantly, in the UK at least, although there have been some campaigns like the No2ID campaign, they often seem to be focused on single issues and, otherwise lack political traction and have not led to a sustained and systematic anti-surveillance mass-movement.

As a result it seems important to engage in some detailed qualitative study in order to investigate some of the discursive dynamics involved in public engagement with DMS. We are particularly interested in how people experience DMS in their everyday lives. For example, how do people talk of surveillance? What discursive resources are drawn on by the public in representing the 'surveillance society'? And what kinds of subjectivities are available within public discourse? It is the last question which is the focus of this paper. Here, we attempt to delineate the ways of being afforded by discourse about DMS.

In order to frame our study we first examine the kinds of subject positions constituted in the media and, to some extent, in research. We focus on three broad subject positions in particular (but would not claim this is an exhaustive listing): the suspicious position; the indifferent position; and the position of balancing competing imperatives. Each of these also has a more pejorative description, respectively: the 'paranoid' position; the 'sleepwalker'; and 'trading off'.

The suspicious subject: Are we all now paranoid?

A common trope in popular discourse about digitally mediated surveillance is that its increasing penetration into our lives renders us paranoid (or soon will do). The term 'paranoid' is used very loosely both in the media and in surveillance studies. Often, rather than denoting psychopathology, this term appears to be deployed to undermine the legitimacy of a suspicious position as we see when more suspicious narratives are denoted as conspiracy theories (Harper, 2008).

A good example of this position is a piece by journalist and author Henry Porter in Britain's *Daily Mail* in 2009. In it Porter argues that the previous UK (New Labour) government's policies have propelled Britain into being 'a place of unwavering suspicion, paranoia - and obsessive surveillance' where there is an 'atmosphere of watchfulness and control that has now become a way of life'. Porter argues that this change 'has been brought about with such stealth' that 'we are the very last to see it'. He concludes with a classic fear, the 'real possibility of the systems that watch our movements, monitor our behaviour and tap into the communications data linking up into one great apparatus of surveillance. This would allow the authorities more or less to monitor our every movement and transaction in real time. Nothing would remain private'.

The suspicious position has become so associated with surveillance in popular culture that it is hard to discuss one without positioning oneself explicitly or implicitly in relation to the other. As we have noted, one reading of this position locates it within a psychopathological discourse, one that implicitly undermines the legitimacy of those so positioned (Harper, 2008). A more sympathetic view, articulated by Fredric Jameson conceptualises conspiratorial narratives as 'the poor person's cognitive mapping in the postmodern age', a 'desperate attempt to represent' the unimaginable and unrepresentable totalizing world system of late capital (Jameson, 1988, p.356). Such narratives, argued Jameson, represented an attempt 'to think a system so vast

that it cannot be encompassed by the natural and historically developed categories of perception with which human beings normally orient themselves' (Jameson, 1992, p.2).

Of course, in discussing suspicion, we are addressing a dimension of experience that can range from a mild suspicion of and irritation with DMS to full-blown conspiratorial narratives. Mason (2002) argues that these latter narratives represent 'less a "poor person's cognitive mapping" than a paradigm of "everyone's cognitive mapping"' (p.54). For Mason, conspiracy theory leads to a 'paradox of identity' (p.47) in that 'it functions to express a postmodern decentered subjectivity, but it can also be a way of expressing a meaningful and centered identity or subjectivity by apparently locating the self within the secret knowledges of the powerful' (p.54). Mason argues that 'the paranoid is a figure who is both inside the secret operations of society (and therefore in a position of knowledge not shared by other marginalized subjects) and on the outside as one of the marginalized and powerless majority' (p.54). Thus the suspicious subject both knows and does not know and, perhaps, also suspects they do not know. Dean (2002) argues that suspicion -- rather than knowledge -- is the defining characteristic of conspiracy theory as 'it emphasizes that *something* has been withheld, that all the facts aren't known, that what we see isn't all there is … its accumulated assertions *remind us that we don't know*' (Dean, 2002, p.92). Thus 'we'll never see it all. We'll only be able to suspect' (Dean, 2002, p.101).

One film maker who has attempted to represent this new totalizing world system is Adam Curtis, who himself has been described as purporting a conspiracy theory in his BBC film, the *Power of Nightmares* (2004)[ii]. For Curtis conspiratorial narratives arise as a result of 'living through this extraordinary time when there are no big stories that explain reality to us. What we are left with is our own little myths and fears. That's why fear sweeps so quickly through society. There's no big story, and you panic' (Appleyard, 2009).

Of course, we must also recognise that by labelling the trend of increasing suspicion as 'paranoid', this claim functions as political rhetoric. By exaggerating the social trend of increasingly endemic DMS there is an attempt to draw attention to it, to increase its salience and, by providing a punctuation in the trend a point of entry to influencing it is opened up. Yet the suspicious position, although popular, is not the only position available in public discourse. Suspicion implies an active engagement with concerns about DMS but there is another position which is more passive and implies no such engagement, that of indifference.

The politics of indifference: Are we sleepwalking into a surveillance society?

A more recent commonplace of popular media discourse about surveillance -- in the UK at least -- is of public indifference. One way of conceptualising this indifference within political rhetoric is to characterise the public as 'sleepwalking' into a surveillance society. For example, in an interview with the *Times* the UK's Information Commissioner, Richard Thomas, stated that 'my anxiety is that we don't sleepwalk into a surveillance society where much more information is collected about people, accessible to far more people shared across many more boundaries than British society would feel comfortable with' (Ford, 2004). He noted 'I don't think people have woken up to what lies behind this' (Ford, 2004). Two years later, in an ICO press release, Thomas referred to his comments in the *Times* interview, saying 'today I fear that we are in fact waking up to a surveillance society that is already all around us'. Whilst some surveillance brought social benefits 'unseen, uncontrolled or

excessive surveillance can foster a climate of suspicion and undermine trust' (ICO, 2006). Thomas argued that those in Spain or Eastern Europe who had experienced totalitarian governments were more wary of State surveillance (Ford, 2004).

Of course, the notion of sleepwalking implies a passive subject who is not fully aware of what is going on around them. A solution here might be to gently ensure they came to no harm and did not wake. Alternatively, in the way the trope of 'sleepwalking' is invoked in political rhetoric the implied solution is to raise the person's awareness of their situation – perhaps to wake them up with a shock. Of course, the lack of a mass opposition movement to surveillance in the UK could be seen as evidence of such sleepwalking. But is the public unaware of the dangers of surveillance? Is it resigned to it and going along by default? Or, is there a more sophisticated and more pragmatic subjectivity at work? And so we turn, lastly, to the third trope of public surveillance discourse: the person who balances or trades respective moral imperatives.

<u>Balancing competing imperatives or trading them off against each other</u>?

A third culturally available form of subjectivity constructed is that of the person who either balances or trades off moral imperatives like privacy/convenience and security/freedom. For example, one MSNBC headline runs 'striking a balance between privacy, convenience' (Curling, 2006). Similarly, a CNN headline reads 'in digital world, we trade privacy for convenience' (Oppman, 2010). A BBC news online (2010) report manages to combine both:

> The US airport security agency is "desperately" working to balance travellers' privacy concerns with security needs, the White House said. Spokesman Robert Gibbs said the controversial new screening would evolve with travellers' input. [Transportation Security Administration head John Pistole said] "We're going to look at how can we do the most effective screening in the least invasive way knowing that there's always a trade-off between security and privacy," he told NBC's Today programme on Monday.

These positions have also been adopted by politicians. In his 2009 address on national security President Barack Obama talked of the need to 'strike the right balance between transparency and national security'. Similarly, in 2006, David Cameron, before he became British prime minister, entitled a talk on a modern British Bill of Rights 'balancing freedom and security' (Cameron, 2006).

The acts of trading and balancing imply more agency than sleepwalking and less pathology than being paranoid. Does the balancing of competing imperatives call to mind a judicial element or, perhaps, a utilitarian pragmatist? The person who trades off one imperative for another implies the rational consumer in a marketplace weighing up the relative costs and benefits of options (which are all presumed to be knowable in advance) before making a choice. The latter fits very well within a neoliberal marketplace and is found extensively discussed within the field of rational choice theory (e.g. Bicchieri, 2003). This subjective position implies rationality, whereas the suspicious position, particularly its pejorative twin the 'paranoid' position implies excessive emotionality (and the indifferent/sleepwalking position sidesteps the issue of emotion altogether).

Of course these notions also function as political rhetoric – the notion of balancing moral imperatives perhaps being the position in which politicians might choose to be placed. In contrast the notion of trading is sometimes used as a critique – thus

journalist John Kampfner's (2010) book *Freedom for sale* is subtitled *why the world is trading democracy for security.*

Of course, the balance/trade position is based on a number of assumptions – for example, that the costs and benefits of each option are knowable and known. Another assumption is that the options are counter-weighted against each other. However, security commentator Bruce Schneier (2008) asserts that, for example one can increase security without affecting privacy. He argues that protective security like door locks and burglar alarms do not impinge on privacy, only those security solutions based on identity (e.g. passenger profiling) affect it.

However, although commentators assert that we are paranoid, or sleepwalkers or trading or balancing conflicting imperatives is this represented in public discourse? Do members of the public orient to these notions and, if so, in what ways? In the present study we sought to interview members of the UK public residing in London and the South East. Given the constraints of quantitative opinion polling, we drew on discourse analysis, a method of analysis which attempts to address complex subjective positioning. We aimed to examine everyday discourse about surveillance. For example, one of the contours which people negotiate in such discussions is how to talk about surveillance without being seen as paranoid. Adopting too suspicious a position can leave one vulnerable to this charge. Would people adopt this position and, if so, how? Similarly, would they draw on a 'sleepwalking' or 'balancing' discursive repertoire?

Method

The study gained ethical approval through the University's ethics committee. Thirty one participants residing in London and the South East were interviewed, drawing on snowballing recruitment strategies[iii]. Nineteen were women and twelve were men with an average age of 41.2 (range = 21-62). Fourteen identified as white British, six as white other (mainly Eastern European), three as black British, two as British of dual heritage, two as black African, one as black other, one as black Caribbean and one as Sri Lankan. Of the 28 who provided information on their employment status, seventeen were employed, six were students, three were full-time carers and two were unemployed. Of the 28 who provided information on their highest educational attainment, five had Masters degrees, 12 had degrees, one had a BTEC, three had A levels, six had CSE/GCSEs, and one reported 'none'. Any details in the extracts which might identify participants have been changed and the participant names included here are psudonyms.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted and transcribed by two research assistants (Chrysanthi Nigianni and Hugh Ortega Breton), focusing on: knowledge of different forms of surveillance; experiences with and views of, the role and impact of surveillance in contemporary society. Given that much media discussion of surveillance is related to CCTV, we anticipated that we would need to explicitly ask about other forms of surveillance, especially DMS. This assumption turned out to be correct but, once prompted, interviewees were able to talk in detail about their experiences of DMS.

There are a number of methodological approaches to the topic of subjectivity. Phenomenology is a key resource but it is not the only one. Given that our data were verbal reports occasioned in the course of an interview, we drew on concepts from the genre of Discourse Analysis influenced by post-Structuralist writers, popular in British social psychology. In this approach, the analyst is attentive to the way in

which subjectivity is constructed in talk, particular through the adoption of certain subject positions which draw on discourses -- ways of talking about a topic (Henriques et al., 1984; Hollway, 1989). We will draw on the notion of positioning – here, the focus is on 'the way in which the discursive practices constitute the speakers and hearers in certain ways and yet at the same time is a resource through which speakers and hearers can negotiate new positions' (Davies & Harré, 1990, p.62). In making certain claims people may position themselves or others implicitly and explicitly and others may position them. However, these positionings are not necessarily intentional or 'free' in that only certain subject positions may be culturally available and enacted through DMS practices. Thus, throughout the paper whenever we refer to interviewees adopting certain positions we do not intend to imply that this process is conscious or intentional on their part.

The surveilled subject

Only a minority of our participants drew on particularly conspiratorial narratives, for example telling the interviewers about surveillance capabilities that, perhaps, owed their origins to popular culture or to speculative media comment (e.g. the suggestion that there was a link between a UK National Health Service database and retail loyalty card records to exclude those with unhealthy lifestyles from healthcare). These appeared to share much in common with urban myths (see Ellis et al., 2010). However, what was more interesting was the subtle discursive work engaged in by the vast majority of the participants, implicitly and explicitly positioning themselves in relation to DMS.

In the following extracts we aim to focus on a number of discursive positions and resources which were culturally available to our participants when discussing surveillance.

1. Trapped in the system

Many participants did not position themselves as the free agents of rational choice theory. Rather, one of the most culturally available discursive positions was of being helpless and trapped if they wished to use internet services like online retailing. As one participant put it 'you can tick yes or no on the internet -- you don't actually have any choice apart from to not use it at all' (Rachel, HP4: lines 114-116). Here agency was disavowed and the only choice identified was the negative one of not using the internet at all. Another participant noted that she continued to shop online even though she had experienced credit card fraud on three occasions. When the interviewer asked if she was concerned she replied 'what can I do? Stop shopping?' (Eugenie, CP17: line 53). Here the notion of stopping online shopping was constructed as inconceivable. Indeed, one participant positioned herself as 'forced' to use online shopping because of the cheaper prices available online:

> Eileen: Everything can be searched and changed online, paid for online
> <Interviewer: Hmm> absolutely everything online <u>also</u> with the -- I have used
> eBay and made some purchases <Interviewer: Uh-huh> and details had to go
> on there but I'm told they're secure but I still don't think so.
> Interviewer: Ok but it didn't stop you from doing it?
> Eileen: Well it's almost you have to move forward. You're forced to I think
> <Interviewer: Ok> I think you know if you go out to the shops you going to
> pay top price <Interviewer: Hmm> you can't beat the website, it's so
> competitive <Interviewer: Hmm> because it's cutting out the middle man so

> everyone's trying to budget so you're almost forced to go there plus time, haven't got much time.

<div align="right">(Eileen, HP9: lines 9-16)</div>

In this extract Eileen notes that, although she has been told her details will be secure she doesn't think they are and yet she still says she shops online. This creates a dilemma for Eileen – how to account for this apparent contradiction? Her response to this is that she is 'forced' to shop online because the prices are 'so competitive'. What is going on here? Could Eileen be represented as sleepwalking? Although she reports continuing to use online shopping she presents herself as someone aware of the risks. Could she, then, be seen as 'trading off' privacy and security for convenience? Not really because she does not present this as an agentic choice. Instead, it is presented as something she is forced to do. In explaining it she says 'well it's almost you have to move forward' – although inexplicit, it seems that she is drawing on notions of progress. Thus, rather than draw on the dominant culturally available constructions discussed earlier, Eileen appears to position herself as trapped by social change. Of course in portraying herself as forced to use online shopping, she does not then need to account for her apparent valuation of convenience over privacy.

There were other ways in which participants drew on discursive resources which appeared to minimise personal agency and which attributed agency elsewhere, commonly to the technological systems themselves.

2. 'There isn't much you can do about it unless you get really paranoid'

> Sarah: I was on a website the other day, and I had loads of emails and I think it was because I was on this website and then I think I must have clicked on something and it got my information and it keeps sending me junk mail <Interviewer: Oh right> it's going into my spam but, I'm sort of 'oh no' you feel a bit <u>invaded</u> <Interviewer: Uh-huh> I didn't give them my information, it like a gambling thing, erm so you always feel like you're being watched so if you apply for a credit card or something you think 'oh, you know, who's <u>really</u> having my details?' <Interviewer: Right> erm. There isn't much you can do about it unless you get really paranoid < Interviewer: Hmm> so …

<div align="right">(Sarah, HP12: lines 16-23)</div>

In this extract, Sarah reports receiving junk mail possibly as a result of her visit to a website. In common with other interviewees receiving such emails or pop-up adverts (Ellis et al., 2010) Sarah reports feeling 'invaded' and 'like you're being watched'. Here, then, she appears to adopt a paranoid position in that she is aware of DMS and discomfited by it. There is even the familiar suspicious trope of wondering what is <u>really</u> going on: 'who's <u>really</u> having my details?', of viewing the surveillance as an active agentic force ('it got my information and it keeps sending me junk mail'), of resisting the surveillance and even the use of the generic term 'them' to refer to the surveillers -- website owners ('I didn't give them my information'). However, Sarah does not explicitly position herself as paranoid. Indeed, in saying 'there isn't much you can do about it unless you get really paranoid' she appears to be disavowing it. As we noted earlier, discussions of surveillance are inextricably linked with paranoia and so participants may feel called upon to position themselves in relation to it, lest others position them. The suspicious position brings with it many costs in Western society as it is often so negatively viewed and may result in generalisations being made about a person because of it. Perhaps there is an implication here that to engage

meaningfully with surveillance would inevitably require the adoption of an explicitly paranoid position, a position that requires a qualitatively different level of investment of time and energy which might potentially be too costly in some way?   Moreover in noting that 'there isn't much you can do about it' this Sarah appears to draw on a similar formulation to the previous participant, implying that DMS is inevitable and its rise inexorable.

A number of participants drew on formulations where they implied that, although they were concerned about surveillance, it was hard to resist.

3. 'I mean I'm slightly worried about it but it is very hard to fight you know'

> Steven: I think just a general erosion of our rights in this country erm is something to be worrying about with the creeping erm (2) spying I suppose on the civilians erm (2) I suppose I mean I'm slightly worried about it but it is very hard to fight you know   Interviewer: Hmm   erm I mean those cases like the google maps is how much information should be in the public domain and the more information there is in the public domain about your personal life with the erosion of rights it's just, it's slightly worrying but I mean there is not one particular episode. It's a sort of gradual chronic towards surveillance society.

> (Steven, CP5: lines 148-155)

In this extract the Steven identifies a concern about surveillance but this concern is not strongly expressed. The initial formulation of concern is that the erosion of rights is 'something to be worrying about' which is more indirect than saying that one is worried. Similarly 'I suppose I mean I'm slightly worried' likewise signals a level of concern but does not formulate it strongly. These seem to be moderately weak expressions of concern which could not be characterised as indifference but are in a different register to those associated with the suspicious position . Are they simply called forth by being interviewed about surveillance? Is the encroachment of surveillance something that Steven identifies as something the good citizen should be concerned about, if only weakly? However, if concern was expressed too strongly it might be read as suspicious whereas not expressing any concern might be read as too passive, like a sleepwalker. The adoption of a position of reasonable concern – of a level of concern that would not be seen either as 'paranoid' or as an unconcerned sleepwalker – helps to resolve this dilemma. These positions do not simply appear to the result of a free choice – one could argue that participants have to locate themselves within culturally available (and relatively valorised) forms of subjectivity or 'ways of being' which are enacted through DMS practices.

What is interesting here is that the strength of concern appears linked to the ability to engage in relevant action 'it is very hard to fight you know'. This seems to be a similar formulation to that of Sarah who said it was hard to do something about surveillance unless one got 'really paranoid'. Here, however, it is unclear what particular elements make fighting difficult. Perhaps it is that there 'is not one particular episode' and that 'it's a sort of gradual chronic towards surveillance society'. This could be indicating implicitly some of the conditions of possibility of active resistance: that a punctuation in surveillance is required – an 'episode' which can be separated out and critiqued rather in the manner of single issue political campaigns?

The disavowal of suspicion was a marked feature of the interviews. As we saw in

extract 2, some participants appeared to imply that adopting a paranoid position would be too costly in some way. In the next section, we see a participant drawing on a similar discursive formulation, one which populates conceptions of what those costs might be.

4. 'I mean if you really start to think about it … it might be too much': The warding off of paranoia

> Katja : They say, you know, they are going to, you know, not to send or sometimes you fill you know if you want to receive blah, blah, blah and you tick the box but then, you know, I don't believe that because, you know, many times, you know, when I did actually this I started receiving some emails, you know, some trash emails from some things I've never,   Interviewer: Hmm   you know, even looked at (.) I don't know, just completely ridiculous things   l a u ghter   not interesting the least   Interviewer: Hmm   so I don't think. Where do they come from? Obviously somebody got hold of my email and where and how and I think it's beyond my (.) and I <u>don't</u> know. I just, I don't think I even (3) I even (2) in a way wanted to worry about this because I mean if you really start to think about it   l a u ghter
> Interviewer: Hmm   It's just, I don't know. It might be too much.

> (Katja CP3: lines 166-175)

In this extract Katja expresses doubt about the effectiveness of completing the tick boxes found on many websites to opt in or out of future email marketing. As we have noted above and elsewhere (Ellis et al., 2010, Tucker et al., 2011) these junk emails (or 'trash emails' for Katja), like pop-up web-based adverts, were often constructed as not only invasive and intrusive but also as puzzling as many participants expressed a lack of understanding of how DMS systems worked. As Katja puts it 'where do they come from?'. Some participants drew on constructions of surveillance which appeared to imply there was a human presence choosing what emails and adverts to send where rather than a fully automated system based on algorithms. Katja appears to imply a human presence in the collection of her email address ('obviously somebody got hold of my email'). However, in the next part of the extract, she appears to draw on a similar rhetorical feature to Sarah in extract 2 in that she again disavows what would be the paranoid position. She explicitly distances herself from such a position saying, with long pauses, (I don't think I even (3) I even (2) in a way wanted to worry about this'. This position is warranted with reference to three factors, two of which are left incomplete. She says that she does not know where or how her email address was gathered and she says 'it's beyond my …'. Perhaps the missing word here is control? If so, her comment would be in line with Sarah and Steven in drawing on discursive constructions which imply a lack of personal agency, attributing it to those DMS systems surveilling her. However, whereas Sarah says one could not do anything about surveillance unless one was 'really paranoid' and, whereas Steven links an expression of concern with the ability to 'fight' DMS, Katja draws on a discursive formulation which appears to imply that there is something about adopting a more suspicious position which might be 'too much'. This comment is ambiguous and we see at least two ways in which it could be apprehended.

One interpretation might be that the adoption of a more suspicious way of being requires one to place too much importance on DMS in one's life – it would require

one to make it the most salient aspect of one's everyday life.

A second interpretation is that this remark could be seen as drawing on cultural notions of paranoia and conspiracy theorising as expressing an excess in some way (e.g. an excessive fear or anxiety or an excess of interpretation). It is unclear what there would be too much of – fear, anxiety, preoccupation? Or that adopting such a position would require one to be 'really paranoid', perhaps implying that, in some way, it might take over one's life 'if you really start to think about it'. As with Sarah, there is a sense in which the suspicious position requires the living of a particular (and perhaps not very enjoyable) way of being.

As we have noted above, one dilemma which participants faced was how to express a suspicion that would be seen as reasonable rather than excessive or pathological. Whereas the interviewees quoted previously implied that the suspicious position would be too difficult in some way to adopt, the next participant disavows it in a different manner.

5. '<u>I don't not sleep at night</u>'

> Interviewer: What is the impact on your daily life? Do you feel that your everyday life is affected in some sense?
> Steven: Not really. I mean we are talking about it now but I'm not someone to discuss a lot on it.
> Interviewer: You don't think about it?
> Steven: if I see a camera in an unusual location I think 'OK'.   Interviewer: Hmm   erm for example there was once, I was just passing a school and it said the police are watching this area erm with secret, you know you are under secret surveillance -- CCTV -- because it was outside the school. I've never seen this before so I thought 'there goes another freedom'   Interviewer: Hmm   yeah it doesn't really affect my life in any huge way. I don't<u>not</u> sleep at night because of that   l a u ghter

> (Steven, CP5: lines 133-143)

In this extract, the Steven is being asked by the interviewer about whether surveillance affects his everyday life. He responds 'not really' and positions himself as 'not someone to discuss a lot on it'. Steven could be seen here as adopting a relatively indifferent position. When the interviewer pursues this question ('you don't think about it?') he reports that he notices surveillance when it is made salient in his life – here, in respect of CCTV. The relative salience of DMS, then, may be another condition of a more active engagement with it.

In noting that 'it doesn't really affect my life in any huge way', Steven is clearly not adopting a paranoid position. Indeed, he seems to explicitly disavow it, following up with the report that 'I don't <u>not</u> sleep at night because of that' – the nature of this response humorously exaggerated. This latter comment could draw on popular conceptions of the paranoid person as someone so overwhelmed with fear and suspicion that it dominates their everyday life and prevents them sleeping at night. However, equally this Steven could not be characterised as 'sleepwalking' – rather, he is aware of surveillance particularly if it is made salient, for example in noticing a new CCTV camera or a sign reporting surveillance activity.

Whilst some participants disavowed the paranoid position, others self-consciously adopted it, though often in an ironic and humorous manner.

6. Ironic self-diagnosis: 'I'm naturally suspicious of government'

As we noted earlier, since suspicion is so associated with surveillance, it was no surprise that interviewees appeared to feel a need to position themselves in relation to it. In most of the extracts presented so far, the participants have positioned themselves as 'not paranoid' in varying degrees. However, there were a number of participants who either drew on more conspiratorial accounts of surveillance capabilities or explicitly used the term 'paranoia' or a related concept. For example, Rachel, talking of how she covered the camera on her laptop whilst she was changing her clothes in case it was remotely activated, said 'I think that maybe somebody could tap into the camera and they could be watching me [laughs] you know I'm getting changed. I'm, you know, call it "para"' (Rachel HP4: line 190-192). In the next extract we see a similar claim.

> Interviewer: I would ask you of that, do you think it affects you?
> Arthur: Oh yes, yes the feeling is always there. As I said I'm naturally suspicious of government and (.) so on and (.) and erm (.) you know I've got my life to get on with it and these things, government bodies and so on make life create that situation as well l a u ghter   doubly guilty on top of everything else they're guilty of so erm <u>but</u> I do not like to, that feeling of having to devote some my mind-space to it, you know. I should be living my life creating, improving my, not my not dealing with erm the consequences of actions of people erm of people, if you can call them people, who seek to control the lives of others.

> (Arthur, CP4: lines 73-81)

Here Arthur responds to a question about effects on his life in the affirmative. In this he is different to Steven. This could lead to him being positioned (e.g. by the interviewer) as adopting a paranoid position. However, Arthur appears to claim this identity for himself when he states 'I'm naturally suspicious of government'. Just before this extract he had said that he was 'naturally suspicious of organisations' (line 72). These kinds of formulations of the suspicious position work to depathologise the position. Thus he literally naturalises and normalises his concerns which are thus cast as reasonable. At the end of the interview he says 'I'm one of life's suspicious people and cynics' (line 129) which leads to laughter. This brings out two other aspects of the discursive work going on here. By claiming an identity as 'one of life's suspicious people and cynics' he could be seen as implying that his suspicion is partly personality-related: he just <u>is</u> that kind of person. Another striking feature is humour – in the extract from line 129 the claiming of this identity leads to laughter. For Rachel, she laughs as she describes her concerns about DMS. It seemed that some interviewees demonstrated their awareness of the possibility of their accounts being read as paranoid, signalling this with humour or by making an ironic self-diagnosis. Both of these could serve as a form of rhetorical inoculation – preventing, in advance, the positioning of them as paranoid, in that the classic trope of the paranoid person does not realise they are paranoid. These kind of rhetorical formulations are often found in the academic literature (Harper, 2008) and Knight (2000) has referred to the deployment of irony and self-reflexivity as a way of anticipating and disarming criticism.

Arthur's account could be seen, in some respects as invoking the paranoid position,

could also be seen as attempting to depathologise this position. One final way of doing this is to, in a similar way to Steven the participant in extract 5, address the issue of how much it affects or preoccupies his life. Thus he says he dislikes devoting 'mind-space' to it and states 'I've got my life to live', commenting 'I should be living my life'. Again, then, the adoption of a more thoroughgoing suspicious way of being is seen as requiring too much and Arthur could also be seen as drawing on elements of a more 'indifferent' position. This kind of account not only implies that Arthur departs from the classic paranoid position but it formulates the very lack of concern as a form of resistance to those who 'who seek to control the lives of others'.

Discussion

In this paper we have attempted to trace the ways in which a discursive analysis might contribute to understanding how subjectivities are constructed within the broader discourse of DMS. We have shown how certain ways of being are enacted as a result of DMS practices and that people fluidly locate themselves in relation to them – and are, in turn, located by those same practices.

As with any study, the present project has a number of limitations. Our participants were predominantly of working age and all lived in London and the immediate surrounding urban area of the South East of the UK. As a result, we did not access participants from rural areas or smaller conurbations. Likewise we deliberately aimed to recruit those who were ostensibly not highly surveilled as the subjective experiences of the highly surveilled are likely to be more pronounced (McCahill and Finn, 2010). 60.7% of our sample had a degree or higher as their highest educational attainment. The most recent national figures on educational attainment are that 21% of the working age population have a degree or higher (Office for National Statistics, 2010) so, in this respect, at least, our sample are unrepresentative of the population at large. As a result, it would be useful to access a wider range of participants both in the UK and in other countries to investigate whether the discursive features of subjectivity construction reported here have a wider currency.

A number of further questions are suggested by this study. For example, since our participants' interactional concern about DMS seemed tied to its salience in everyday life, what might the implications be of DMS becoming increasingly invisible?

Another aspect arising from this study is the role of affect in our participants' accounts (e.g. irritation, worry as well as indifference). There are considerable epistemological and methodological challenges in properly attending to the role of affect in qualitative textual analytic methods like discourse analysis (Cromby, 2011) and our analysis here has not attempted to do this for these reasons. However, the current 'affective turn' in the social sciences has given rise to a number of experimental and innovative methods to apprehend affective meaning embodied in the accounts of research participants (Brown et al., in press; Cromby et al., 2010) and these could usefully be drawn on in the field of surveillance studies. Williams' (1977) concept of 'structures of feeling' might also be another useful conceptual resource This refers to the lived experience of the quality of life at a particular time and place – the culture of a point in history. This might help to locate individual participants' accounts with broader cultural concerns.

One of the interesting features of the analysis was the interactional concern with issues of agency with many of our participants imbuing DMS technologies with agency. Seeing technology as an active agent has become more popular with Actor Network Theory and Haggerty and Ericson's (2000) concept of the surveillant

assemblage. Nineteen of our participants spontaneously mentioned the word 'track' or a derivative when discussing surveillance suggesting that this term was very culturally available to our participants. But the term 'track' is ambiguous in relation to whether the tracking is passive or active and thus, when it was used by participants, it could be read as implying either and was thus useful in its flexibility.

However, many of our participants implied that they were powerless to resist the rise of DMS and we are reminded of the dangers of seeing participants as entirely free agents, simply choosing discursive positions. As Marx put it:

> men [sic] make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.
>
> Marx (1852, chapter 1)

It will be important in future research, then, to note that, as Parker argues, echoing Marx, 'people "make" discourse, but not in discursive conditions of their own choosing' (1992, p.32).

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