



Legacies of Surveillance in Central and Eastern Europe

The Like Fish in Water' Survey

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The Project

- Pawel Waszkiewicz (Warsaw Uni), Fredrika Björklund (Södertörn Uni), Ekaterina Tarasova (Stockholm Uni) and myself
- Looking at Central and Eastern Europe, 18 countries in total
- Subprojects:
 - Survey in focus countries (Estonia, Poland, and Serbia)
 - Case studies: CCTV regulation (PL), E-governance (EE), gated communities (PL)
 - Regional comparison of Data Protection Agencies
- Funded 2013—2016/17 by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies

Some regional commonalities

- Comparatively
 - Low levels of interpersonal and institutional trust, but great variation
 - Low levels of political participation
 - High levels of corruption, both in high-level and in everyday life
- The study is based on the assumption of similarities in kind, but not necessarily of degree, of surveillance and police repression
- (Bernhard and Karakoç 2007; Hooghe and Quintelier 2014; Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2011, 2013, 2017)

Post-Communism

- Ontological "in-between-ness"
- A transport route between communism and that which comes after
- OR stable "competitive authoritarianism"?

- Approaches:
 - Descriptive (time/region)
 - Post-colonial discourse
 - Cultural (eg. homo sovjeticus)
 - Rationalistic model/Institutional performance

Homo sovjeticus

- Inability to separate one's own and others' interests
- "Learned helplessness": Life is essentially controlled by external factors
- Focus on informal social networks to compensate lacking support from public institutions
- Distrust towards political institutions
- Value dimorphism ("doublethink")
- Security triumphs political rights and autonomy
- (Tyszka 2009)
- Mistake to assume unity - probably we should be talking about different generations of the H.S.

Critique of culturalist perspectives

- Attitudes can mostly be explained by institutional performance
- The label 'post-communist' is often assumed a given status without much idea of its fundamental assumptions, the most central of which is assuming the existence of cultural legacies.
- 'Post-communism' may reflect a Western discourse, a way of underplaying complexity in the problematisation of a geo-political 'Other'
- Previous research is inconclusive regarding basic assumptions of generational effects

Post-communism in surveillance studies

- Previous studies highlight corruption, police abuse of discretionary powers, distrust, and possible age effects.
- BUT:
 - Assume the existence of ontologically stable post-authoritarian or -communist legacies
 - Do not focus on mechanisms
 - Partly impressionistic or underdeveloped accounts
 - Theoretically thin
 - Or lack historical perspective

“A legacy of surveillance can be observed if respondents with experiences of surveillance during communism differentiate from the rest of the sample population by an effect that cannot be explained by other factors.”

The Like Fish in Water Survey

- Methodological heuristic: statistically explore the concept of long term effects of surveillance
- Data from LFIW survey in Estonia, Poland, and Serbia (N=3034)
- Carried out by Ipsos during Winter 2014 and Spring 2015

Technical aspects in international surveys

- Questionnaire design and sequencing
- Procurement regulations and survey research
- Sampling, sample frames, and populations: How to handle differences?
- Interviewer training regarding sensitive questions
- Watch the step: the autonomy of the contractor
- Weighting data – auxiliary variables
- Non-response analysis

Translation in international surveys

- TRAPD/Team translation approach: National translators in collaboration with researchers, adjudicated by survey experts.
- Research institutes (Ipsos) often unfamiliar with the approach
- Translating theoretical concepts: Privacy
 - "Prywatność" in Polish
 - "Privatnost" in Serbian
 - "Privaatsusest" in Estonian
 - "частной жизни" in Russian

Items

- Surveillance concerns:
 - How worried are you personally about the following? / Surveillance by intelligence agencies
- Privacy concerns:
 - When it comes to privacy, how concerned are you about the following?
- Legacies:
 - State secret services before 1989/90 used many means to gather data on people. I will now read you a list of some means of data gathering. Please tell me if you recall being subjected to any of the following measures, and if yes, which?
 - Do you think that the archives of the secret service from before [INSERT YEAR OF TRANSITION] should be opened to the public?
 - “The surveillance carried out by public institutions today is very similar to the surveillance carried out during the communist period” VS. “There is no similarity between surveillance today and surveillance back then”

Probabilities of worrying about intelligence agencies

	Worry about secret surveillance		
	Low	Medium	High
No surveillance exp.	0.457	0.314	0.230
Surveillance exp.	0.372	0.269	0.359

Note: Pearson $\chi^2(2) = 12.2969$ Pr = 0.002

Results

- Attitudes to surveillance: People who worry much tend worry also about surveillance, even if surveillance could be a response to other worries
- Just because one accepts the need for surveillance/security does not mean that one does not worry about it
- Legacies: There is a statistically significant effect of experiences of surveillance during communism
- People who were monitored
 - Are more reluctant to accept historical revisionism
 - Are slightly more enthusiastic about democracy
 - Feel more secure than others
- The effect cannot be reduced to age, institutional trust (in e.g. the police), or perceptions of corruption

Thank you!



Please keep an eye on the coming special issue of
Surveillance & Society on post-communism!

Come Summer '2018 it will be published on

<https://ojs.library.queensu.ca/index.php/surveillance-and-society/>