

WHO IS WATCHING YOU, AND WHY?

A SOCIAL IDENTITY ANALYSIS OF SURVEILLANCE

Submitted by Aisling Therese O'Donnell to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology, January 2010.

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Aisling Therese O'Donnell

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AISLING THERESE O'DONNELL

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ABSTRACT

The underlying theme that draws together all the chapters presented in this thesis is that surveillance, like any feature of our social world, is not imposed in a vacuum; and that information pertaining to the origin and purpose of surveillance is vital in determining how it will be perceived and evaluated (and how it will then impact on behaviour). The key aims of this thesis are, first, to demonstrate how a social identity approach can account for varying reactions to surveillance originating from different sources; second, to investigate how various contextual features exert their impact, resulting in the disparate perceptions of surveillance that exist in our society; and finally, to demonstrate how the imposition of surveillance can itself impact on the broader social context, including the relationship that is understood to exist between those watching and those being watched. These aims are broken down into ten research questions that are addressed in seven chapters.

Chapter 1 reviews the literature on perceptions of surveillance and that on social identity, and attempts to illustrate how they may be theoretically combined, resulting in the advancement of both fields. In Chapter 2, we present two studies which demonstrate a negative relationship between shared identity and the perception of surveillance as an invasion of privacy. This relationship was mediated by perceptions that the purpose of surveillance was to ensure safety. In Chapter 3, two studies demonstrate how level of surveillance moderates followers' responses to leaders with whom they either share identity, or not. Imposing high surveillance where identity was shared with a leader undermined perceptions of the leader as a team member and affected willingness to work for the group, reducing levels to that of leaders without a shared identity. Chapter 4 presents a study that aimed to investigate the role of social identity and surveillance in affecting both discretionary

behaviour and task performance. High surveillance led to higher productivity on a task, but this was associated with lower quality of work. Additionally, when identity was shared with the person in charge, helping this person was detrimentally affected by high, as opposed to low, surveillance; whereas no such differences were found where identity was not shared. Chapter 5 presents two studies which showed that framing surveillance as targeting the in-group led to outcomes such as increased privacy invasion, lower acceptability of surveillance, and reduced levels of trust in the implementers of surveillance, as compared to when surveillance was framed as targeting an out-group. However, a third study failed to replicate these results. In Chapter 6, we address how level of threat in the environment can affect evaluations of surveillance. Two studies showed that high levels of threat led to surveillance being seen as less privacy-invading, more necessary, and as having a safety purpose. Finally, in Chapter 7, we review and integrate our findings, discuss the limitations of the research, and consider the implications it has, both theoretically and practically. We conclude that, overall, the findings presented in this thesis support the notion that the source of surveillance and the perceived purpose for it are integral to the perception and interpretation of the surveillance.

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STATEMENT OF THE CANDIDATE'S CONTRIBUTION TO CO-AUTHORED PAPERS AND CHAPTERS

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of this thesis were written up as papers for publication, two of which are currently in press. These papers are reproduced here largely unchanged and so a certain amount of repetition is inevitable, to ensure that arguments within chapters flow as originally intended. Some changes have been made, however; for example, links between chapters have been identified, and where American spelling was used, this has been changed to British English for consistency. As reported in more detail below, the major contribution to the papers, and all chapters of this thesis, was made by the candidate. However, please note that in order to recognise the collaborative nature of the research, the first person is used only in the plural sense (i.e., “we” rather than “I”) throughout this thesis.

Studies 2.1 and 2.2

O'Donnell, A. T., Jetten, J., & Ryan, M. K. (2010). Who is watching over you? The role of shared identity in perceptions of surveillance. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 40*, 135-147.

These two studies, presented in this thesis in Chapter 2, were submitted as a paper to the *European Journal of Social Psychology* and accepted for publication in January 2009. The research was designed by the candidate in collaboration with Jolanda Jetten and Michelle Ryan. The candidate supervised the data collection which was carried out by undergraduate students. The data were analysed by the candidate, and the interpretation of results and writing of the manuscript was carried out by the candidate under the supervision of Jolanda Jetten and Michelle Ryan.

Studies 3.1 and 3.2

O'Donnell, A. T., Jetten, J., & Ryan, M. K. (in press). Watching over your own: How surveillance moderates the impact of shared identity on perceptions of leader and follower behaviour. *European Journal of Social Psychology*.

Studies 3.1 and 3.2 of this thesis, forming Chapter 3, were originally written as a paper and submitted to the *European Journal of Social Psychology*. The paper was accepted for publication in July 2009. The studies were designed by the candidate under supervision from Jolanda Jetten and Michelle Ryan. The candidate was responsible for data collection and data analysis (with supervisory advice). Finally, the candidate wrote the paper in collaboration with Jolanda Jetten and Michelle Ryan.

Study 4

O'Donnell, A. T., Ryan, M. K., & Jetten, J. (2009). The hidden costs of surveillance on performance. *Manuscript submitted for publication*.

This study, comprising the whole of Chapter 4, was written as a short report for the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. The paper has received reviews and appears in the thesis in its revised (although not final) form. The study was designed by the candidate with supervisory support from Michelle Ryan and Jolanda Jetten. The candidate carried out the data collection, then analysed the data with supervisory support. The paper was written by the candidate in collaboration with Michelle Ryan and Jolanda Jetten.

Studies 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3

These three studies have not yet been written up for publication. Each study was designed by the candidate with supervisory support from Michelle Ryan. The candidate supervised data collection by undergraduate students Megan Clinch and Sarah Farrar for Studies 5.1 and 5.2, and collected the data for Study 5.3. The data were analysed by the candidate with supervisory advice. Finally, the chapter was written by the candidate in collaboration with Michelle Ryan and Jolanda Jetten.

Studies 6.1 and 6.2

These studies have not been prepared for publication as of yet. Both studies were designed by the candidate with supervisory advice from Michelle Ryan. Data collection for Study 6.1 was carried out by an undergraduate student, Tamsin Meadows, under the supervision of the candidate, and the candidate collected the data for Study 6.2 herself. Data analysis was carried out by the candidate with support from Michelle Ryan, and the candidate wrote the chapter with supervisory input from Michelle Ryan and Jolanda Jetten.

STATEMENT OF THE SUPERVISORS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO CO-AUTHORED PAPERS AND CHAPTERS

As outlined in the candidate's statement, the substantive work in the research presented in this thesis was conducted by the candidate. This includes the literature review, study design, statistical analysis, and interpretation. The supervisors contributed to the papers and other chapters by giving advice on study design, statistical analysis, and writing style. Also, they gave guidance on the theoretical framing of this thesis through discussion of the contents and their arrangement in the chapters as outlined above.

Prof. Michelle Ryan (first supervisor)

Prof. Jolanda Jetten (second supervisor)