

# David brins conception of surveillance society

Sociology



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According to Brin, surveillance society is characterized by immense and irreversible developments in technology that increasingly enables sophisticated surveillance. Brin sees the movement toward the surveillance society as an inevitable process driven by the constant advancement of technology. Hence, the image of technological development as an inexorably rising tide. The mainstay of Brin's argument on surveillance society is the technological environment that makes the emergence of a surveillance society not only a concrete possibility but also a reality in the making.

### III. Criticizing Brin's Idea of Surveillance Society

Most importantly, there is nothing inevitable with human societies. Although the technological developments and the consequent emergence of surveillance society at present may seem as an irreversible phenomenon, there is no guarantee that alternate forms of society cannot emerge. Both culture and politics have tremendous influence in bringing about such profound changes, a fact that Brin has not reflected upon. The problem is that Brin, in his rush to reach the conclusion of "surveillance society", has been overwhelmed by the recent developments in technology that trapped him in a kind of crass technological determinism whereas he identifies technological development as the moving force of human history. When Brin looks upon the structural aspects of the contemporary world that lead to the surveillance society, he, on the other hand, fails to see the impact of human agency that could potentially prevent, reverse, or block the emergence of the surveillance society. Furthermore, surveillance society is not a universal phenomenon, the cultural and political differences exist between nations emphasizes the reality that what happens in one or two so-called advanced countries cannot be replicated into other countries. Even there could be

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penetrating surveillance without relying upon advanced technology at all as it is true in the case of primitive societies.

#### IV. Conclusion

Brin's conception of surveillance society is theoretically flawed since it is grounded on technological determinism and a belief in historical inevitability. What Brin discerns as the impeccable proofs of the emergence of surveillance society cannot be taken for granted. It is important to bear in mind that political and cultural upheavals could question the notion of surveillance itself.