

Overseers of the poor

Business



John Gilliom, an associate professor, Ohio State University highlights the manner in which welfare rights have been curtailed and the extent to which the Overseers of the Poor a Surveillance system is a resistance and a limit to Privacy or individual autonomy.

His study of welfare recipients is an occasion to get back on the traditional thinking about privacy rights. This paper endeavors to review Gilliom's methodology and findings. Gilliom had an interest of establishing what the state agencies were unable to see or whatever they would forbid within their jurisdiction. This necessitated the choosing a methodology that would not need to work through the welfare bureaucracy of the state. He, together with assistants employed a semis-structured and in-depth interview with the apparent welfare recipients and the caseworkers in the Southern part of Ohio.

Two consultants who were formerly welfare recipients were utilized to interview the welfare clients. This was a brilliant undertaking since these consultants would be able to connect their personal experiences with issues of welfare and their contact with Appalachian Ohio plus their similar social class and gender with the welfare recipients would be invaluable in establishing a quick and strong bond of trust that facilitates sharing of practices and perspectives. This would allow him to stay at a distance from any conventional discourse on the issue of privacy that would negatively impact on his research (Gilliom, 2001). There are a number of strengths in this methodology. The insights inherent in his research of the interior world for the welfare recipients, the watched, are commendable.

However, Gilliom ignores the fact that there needs to be a limit on aid recipients and the related need for a limit to some personal information required for the enforcement of these limits. Also criticized is the unexplored interaction between the reorganized interests and privacy rights with an ethic of care feeling amongst the welfare recipients. This book is a good empirical study but has failings in its poor challenge to gathering of information and failure to acknowledge in a meaningful manner that collection of information may be legitimate. The author does not explore the tough issue of what the personal information should be collected and how this information should be made useful. There have been proposals for a new privacy, Fair information practices that will reduce the threats to privacy.

This is indeed a good idea since the state agency should ensure the country's security by limited surveillance on individual privacy but should not cross certain limit in doing so. The consent and warrant of the property owners should be Supreme in this regard (Slevin & Wingrove 1998). From the interviews, the take away is that Welfare recipients do not consider talk on privacy as an important issue although they reject the classical notion of privacy showing that the fair information practice will be an adequate and noble course since suing the state for a massive violation of someone's home, his integrity and citizenship is an uphill task. A lot of politics is involved plus this does not make any economic sense in real life situation.

My position in the powerful book by Gilliom, *Overseers of the Poor* a Surveillance has indeed been reaffirmed. There should be a balance between state surveillance and respect to autonomy since the interests of both needs to be taken into account. The state therefore needs to conduct surveillance <https://assignbuster.com/overseers-of-the-poor/>

in a more responsible and responsive manner. The conversation of the low-income Appalachian Ohio mothers who speak of bureaucracy and its advanced system of surveillance as they struggle to run their families is indeed captivating. A vast network of computers, caseworkers, fraud control agents and even neighbors make these women uncomfortable by the constant monitoring of their movement and actions. This situation should be negated as much as possible.

2) Everyday Resistance The recipients, the low-income Appalachian Ohio mothers who speak of bureaucracy and its advanced system have a feeling of resistance towards the program that they feel is uncomfortable to them. The resistance is justified since these women face a monthly care that is inadequate and are ignorant of the important sections of the welfare state while at the same time face state scrutiny. They are forced to seek for casual jobs that are hidden from welfare services, receive gifts for jobs done from friends and relatives and engage other people in the community to avoid rules of welfare. This is a justified resistance to the command of the state and this frustrates the surveillance system and welfare bureaucracy- that is they defy the state commands, rather than publicly objecting to the infringement of their rights that could land them into trouble. There is cooperation among mothers in the community towards this daily struggle to ensure their course is effective.

They help each other in buying domestic goods that are sometimes hard to afford alone. The women should not feel guilty of cheating the system in their struggle for their daily evasions. Defiance, fear, anger, guilt and pride that women face in their quest should keep them going in trying to get the <https://assignbuster.com/overseers-of-the-poor/>

little extra cash, diapers and food stamps. 3) The Multiple Faces of power and Issue of Surveillance According to Bachrach and Baratz, Lukes power has multiple faces in regard to whether it is dominated by a pluralist democracy or it is in the hands of a ruling class. This is indeed a debate that has preoccupied the American political philosophy for a good duration. Lukes proposes that a critical study on this issue is important rather than a general outlook at the ruling class or plural democracy.

The issues that are underneath hence less observed should be focused on to understand the mechanism of power. There should therefore be no bureaucracy on the issue of surveillance since America is a free state with pluralist democracy that respects the rights of its citizens. In the one-dimensional perspective, power rests on the authorities who can make policies for surveillance upon the citizens without any question. This is the authoritarian type of power that does not give citizens any choice. The two-dimensional perspective shows that power may or may not be used since the subjects have a choice.

The people in power have the ability to force and deny the subjects the ability to make a choice or discuss something. The surveillance program in this case is a must (Lukes, 2005). The three-dimensional perspective says that the citizens are not aware of their needs since the politics is shaped to prevent debate of these needs. The state in this case manipulates the citizens by installing surveillance without the citizens realizing that this curtails their freedom. The citizens here don't have a problem with the authorities' efforts to maintain the status quo through the surveillance

system. 4) Justice Brandeis' Statement and America's position On Overseers of the Poor a Surveillance system.

America has policies that allow for monitoring cell phones, airport surveillance, in terms of body scan, drug testing in high schools and gender testing for college scholarship. These are all surveillance systems aimed at establishing the facts and maintaining security. America therefore stands against Brandies statement, " the greatest right we have is the right to be left alone." A balance to the right of privacy and right to security of America should be made by providing clear limit for both of this so that there will be no more contest between this opposing situations. Citizens should be informed of surveillance in order for them to provide consent for the surveillance whenever necessary.