



**Arguments
Against
Surveillance**

Tough Stand To Defend Privacy

„I don't have anything to hide“

„It's only used to catch terrorists
and child molesters“

„I don't feel surveilled“

„Who could be interested
in my data“

„It protects us“

„They only collect useless data“

„It's only computers browsing through
informations“

On The Surface

Pro

- More effective law enforcement against terrorism, child pornography, fraud
- Protection of life and property
- Only some irrelevant data are collected
- Innocent people are not affected

Contra

- An uncanny feeling
- Some minor injustices in some country far, far away
- Some intellectual concerns regarding values

The Public Judgement

**Societally
important,
practically
relevant,
objective pros**



Some debatable,
rather
intellectual and
subjective
contras

Sadly...

Most activists' discussions implicitly support that view!

- High importance of the wholesomeness of the **civil rights**
- **Emotional** discomfort
- Particular **measures**
- Orwellian **Dystopianism**

The Activist's Judgement

Societally
important,
practically
relevant
and objective
pros



**Some debatable,
practically
irrelevant and
subjective
contras**

A Lost Cause...

Avoidance of gruesome crimes and actual dangers **vs.**

Some irrelevant personal data, the wholesomeness of some values, individual discomfort



Rather important, actual, practical and objective concerns



Difficult to judge, intellectual, subjective concerns

...due to a lack of materiality

It Doesn't Have To Be That Way

There are **clear-cut, practically relevant and material contra arguments with a factual base!**

Those have to be delivered to the public.

Activists and the press have to inform the public **about these acute & material arguments as well!**

The Material Contrasts

Psychological consequences:

- A loss of the sense for autonomy, freedom, authenticity and individuality
- A monoculture of values
- A loss of some respective abilities

On a societal scale:

- Rigid, norm-bound, inflexible societies

The Material Contrasts

Socioeconomical consequences:

- A new and speculative class society

Technopolitical consequences:

- Surveillance infrastructure is apt for and cannot be protected from totalitarianism

Overarching:

- Owner-dependence of all these consequences

Psychological Consequences

Effect of an observer's presence:

People think and behave differently when under surveillance. They act more towards (or more against) what the observer wants.

Even if they only feel that they're under surveillance.

Surveillance Is A Constant Observer

Technologically mediated, even thought-hypothesizing **ubiquitous** surveillance

=

**A constant
observer**



Result: A generalised psychological preference towards conformity, self-control and control of others!

Autonomy

Autonomy: An impression to have your own set of beliefs, of premises and to independently decide from it

Ubiquitous surveillance: A foreign set of premises and beliefs acts as a framework

Result: Autonomy is subordinated to a framework: The impression shrivels.

Freedom, Authenticity & Individuality

Stemming from autonomy:

- **Sense of freedom** as the impression to be able to realise autonomous decisions, to live the autonomous life
- **Sense of authenticity** as the impression of having your own beliefs and having arrived there on your own
- **Sense of individuality** as the impression to be a person with an individual, own path, being distinguishable from others

The Monoculture Of Values

Surveillance enforces laws. Laws realize certain values. Some values contradict others.

Ubiquitous surveillance: Implicit conformity with the laws **and** their underlying values.

Result: Law-represented values become “natural”. Any sense for contradicting values dies out.

Limiting Abilities

Natural effect:

Unneeded abilities die out.

Technoanthropological effect:

Where technology substitutes abilities, those abilities shrivel.

The Ability to Decide

Following the loss of autonomy:

The ability to decide what is best for you is exceedingly substituted

by the ability to find out what the observer wants or how to circumvent him.

Result: The ability to decide autonomously shrivels.

The Ability to Judge Ethically

Analogously following the loss of values:

If value-related decisions are constantly preordained, there is **no need for a sense for values or how to handle them.**

Result: To judge ethically is substituted by the **sense to judge in accordance** (or in opposition) with what should be expected.

An Interesting Parallel

Kids of **overprotective mothers:**

- Indecisive
- Dependent
- Either rebellious or capitulating
- No ethical competence
- Little own personality
- Supressed and unhappy

Some guy in Canada whose name I forgot...

On A Large Scale

Due to the generality of the preferences for conformity and control:

The space and abilities for **reformatory thought and action are eradicated!**

Result on a large scale: A rigid society, inapt and impotent to internal reform or to adapt to external change

Can we ever want that?

Psychological Consequences At A Glance

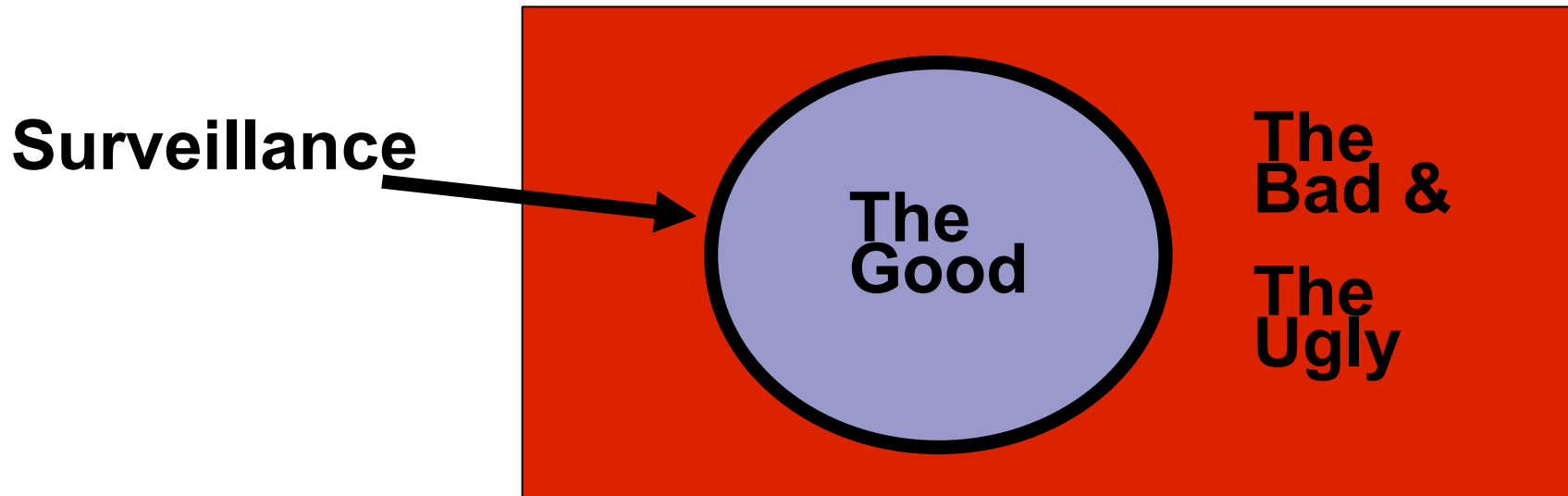
The **Constant Observer** brings:

- A generalised preference towards conformity and control
- A loss of the impressions of autonomy, freedom, authenticity and individuality
- A loss of a sense for non-conform values
- Diminished abilities to decide independently and judge ethically
- A society trapped in mental rigidity and impotence towards reform and revolution

Interlude: Why Is That All Bad?

Justified Question:

If we are limited to some general framework: **Why should we be offended by that?**



Answer:

Who decides what is evil?

All of humankind? Society? A constitution?

No: the owner of the surveillance infrastructure!

Public Misunderstanding

„Surveillance protects **good and right**“

Only because: Surveillance protects the interests of the observer!

„Surveillance protects **what the owner of the infrastructures defines as good and right!**“

Socioeconomical Consequences

Data as a means to judge people:

- **Profiling & scoring** hypothetically sort people by their techno-informational behaviour
- The resulting classes are a new basis for life-relevant decisions

Equals the introduction of a **new (profile-)class society, based on hypothetical and automatised processes**

Good = Profit

Surveillance



**The
Profit**

**The
Poor &**

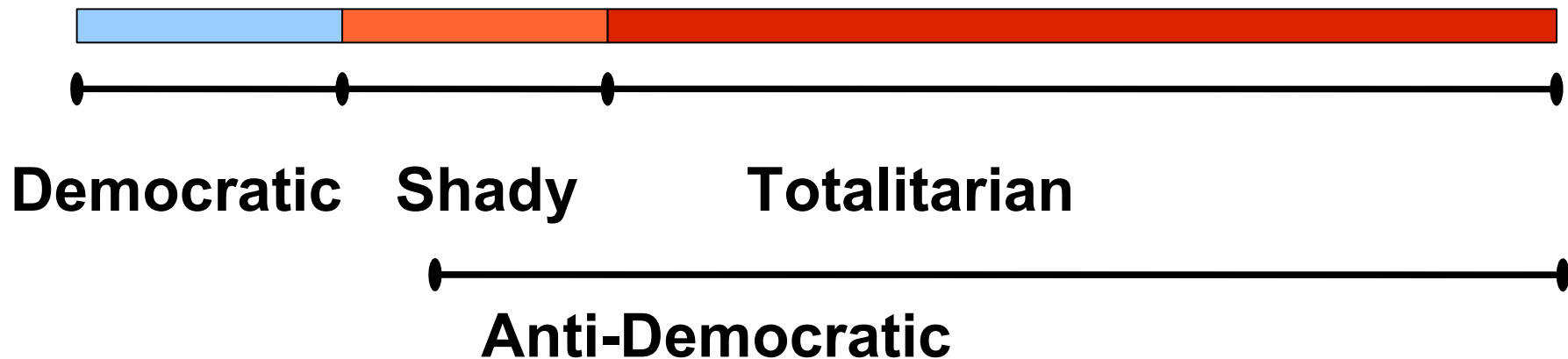
**The
Needy**

Technopolitical Consequences

Political technologies?

Surveillance infrastructure is more apt for totalitarian use than for democratic use

Possible uses:



A Technical Question

Can the surveillance infrastructure be **prevented from totalitarian misuse?**

Technical question! Social regulations change!

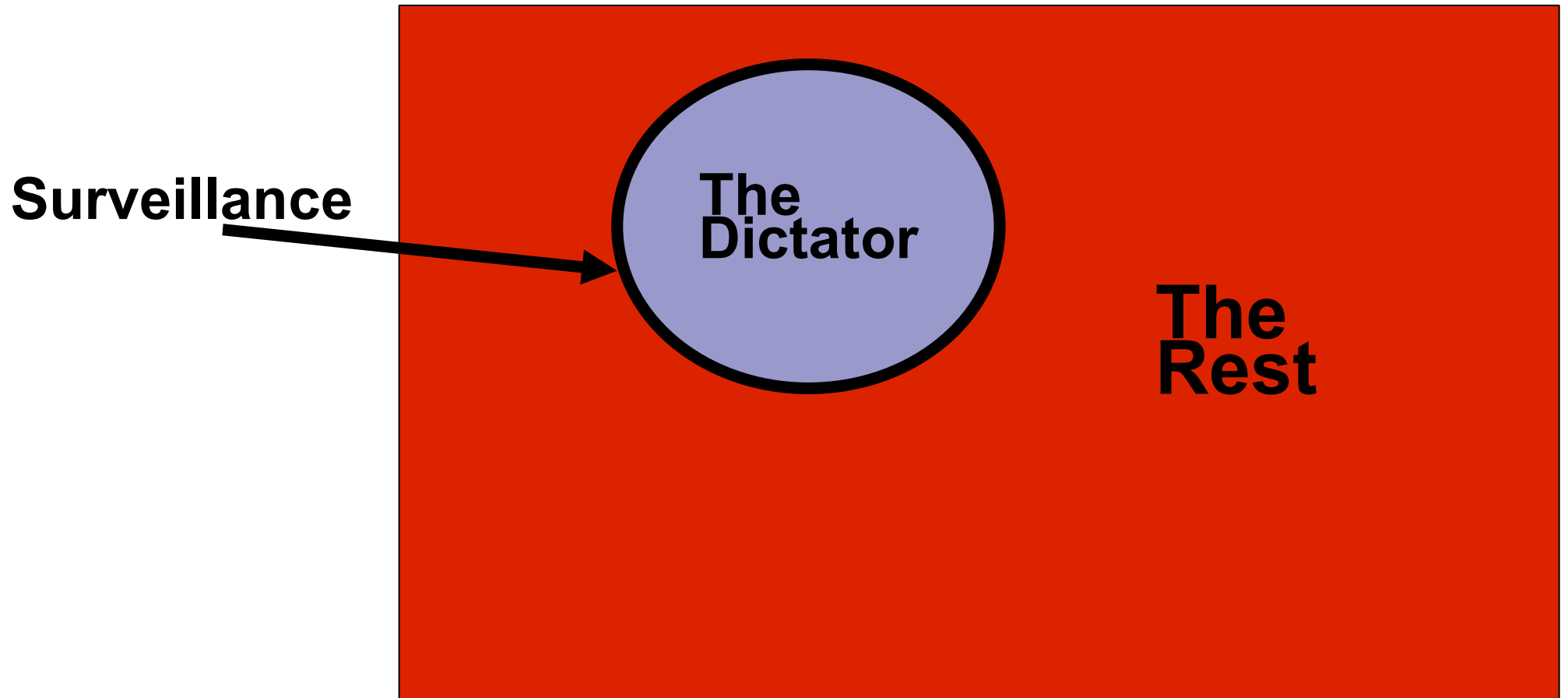
Categorical answer: **No!** It's impossible!

Result: An **anti-democratic misuse tendentious infrastructure** is currently completed without any option for democratic control

Technopolitical Consequence

- The technological infrastructure **in its current state** is ready for complete totalitarian abuse
- Totalitarian abuse **cannot be prevented** – in principle
- Future totalitarian regimes will have **full psychological and actual control**
- Surveillance infrastructure **stabilises totalitarianism and rather destabilises democracy**

Good = Dictator



General Thesis

Surveillance limits space..

- **Psychological space** needed to feel autonomous, free, authentic, individual, to have values, to decide freely and to judge ethically
 - **Social space** needed to think and live, for reform and change
 - **Actual space** of acting and communicating
- ..along the definitions of the owner of its infrastructure!**

Intellectual Concerns....

Four tenets of liberalism:

- **Freedom**
- **Equality**
- **Democracy**
- **Neutrality of the state**

Intellectual because: Abstract values based on abstract definitions; relevant rather to theories than to daily life!

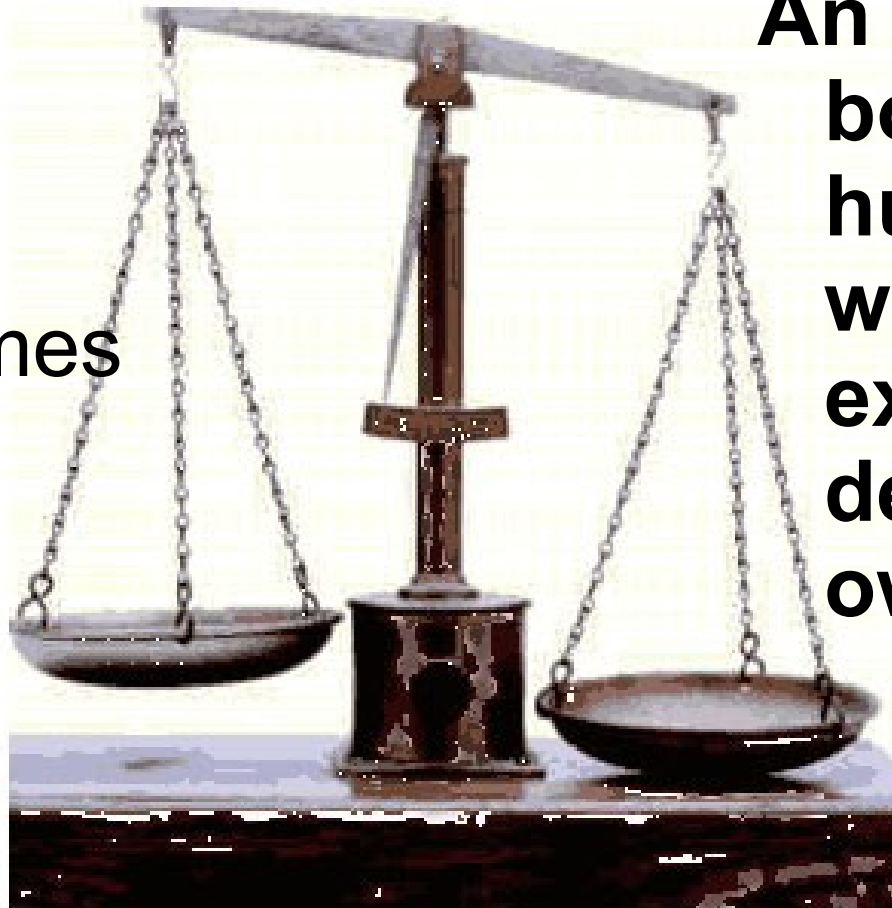
... Are Factual Concerns

Surveillance attacks the **material condensates of the values** under discussion.

- Psychological consequences undermine freedom
- Socioeconomical consequences undermine equality
- Technopolitical consequences undermine democracy
- Owner-dependence undermines neutrality of the state

The Real McCoy

A better
protection
against
certain crimes



**An infrastructure
bound to encage
humankind in many
ways of its
existence along the
definitions of its
owner!**

A Future, But Bound To Happen

- Surveillance is not ubiquitous yet.

But it will be!

- Data and surveillance are not the basis for all economical or societal decisions thus far.

But they will be!

- There is no dictator now!

But there will be!

A Striking Analogy

Protecting privacy is quite analogous to protecting the environment:

- **Privacy is the foundation** of freedom, of liberty, of individuality, of culture and politics, of intellectual life in general
- The **outset of ubiquitous surveillance and the necessary dynamics** are there and factual
- Once the infrastructure is established, it will be **too late**

Privacy Activism is Environmentalism

Privacy is the **clean water**, the **fertile ground**
and the **fresh air** of all life beyond mere
survival!

If you don't protect it today, don't expect to be
breathing tomorrow!

**Privacy activism is
environmentalism!
And no less important!**

The Good Book

S. Gaycken & C. Kurz (eds.)

„**1984.exe** – Gesellschaftliche, politische und juristische Aspekte moderner Überwachungstechnologien“

Transcript

December 2007

Order now!

