Chapter 3
Who Watches?

ABSTRACT

The watching entities can be broadly classified into two groups, institutions (I) and people (P). The I watchers are made up of different elements amongst which the state is the most prominent one. The I watchers also include corporations, educational institutions, and corporations that offer digital services. The P watchers include parents, siblings, spouses, and children. All these watchers make up the spectrum of entities engaged in surveilling each other.

INTRODUCTION

The first two chapters have offered the ways in which surveillance has worked through history leading up to what is often being called the "surveillance state" in the World of the 2020s. It is important to dwell on the idea of the surveillance state briefly to appreciate the shortfall of connecting the notion of surveillance to state alone. To begin with, there is a lack of specific agreement about the term, but it generally refers to the way in which a government can become the one watching its people in an insidious manner to constantly keep the country secure. Many countries can be called a surveillance state given the variety of ways in which the government watches its people. However, as I have indicated earlier, the question of watching has to be far broadened beyond

what is captured by terms such as the surveillance state. There are other similar terms that seems to privilege some watchers over others, such as "mass surveillance" and "electronic police state" but each of these terms place specific emphasis on one kind of a watcher.

Such confusion about who the watcher is addressed in this chapter. Here, I lay out a comprehensive representation of the different entities that have gained the capability and interest in watching. In this chapter, using exemplars, I offer a listing of the different watchers. The catalog offered here is built around the fundamental duality of the watchers – as persons (Ps) and as institutions (Is). The P/I nomenclature offers the opportunity to discover the different kinds of Ps and Is that operate and offer some descriptors and names to the watchers so that it is possible to explore the different technologies of watching employed and the implications of the different watchers and the tools they use. This cataloging of the watchers is the starting point of the understanding the practice of surveillance as the practice is placed within the theory of surveillance as described earlier. Given the abundance of watchers in the "I" category, it offers a starting point for this chapter.

The "I" Watchers

It is important to understand the notion of an institution in the context of surveillance. The conventional meaning of the term stems from the Latin term *institutus* which dealt more with the aspect of "institute" as an act of setting up something. The word institution is derived from that origin and has gone on to mean a set of spaces where there is an adherence to a set of conventions and rules that define the way things are done within the sphere. The idea of rules is vital to the description of an institution because those rules structure the relationships within an institution. In most cases the institution itself has a structure that is often well-defined with specific functions and people who do the tasks. It is possible to visualize any institution and be possible to identify its key tasks and functions and how the institution is structured to meet its goals to perform its job (Suman, 2015). It is especially possible to visualize the relationship between structure and goal by considering an institution that has become universal in the Twenty-First Century – the

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