



Watchful Eyes and Silenced Voices: Assessing the Transnational Effects of Surveillance on Media Freedom



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BACKGROUND

- As technology has expanded into all aspects of our lives, so has the ability to surveil people. A large portion of this surveillance is to commodify, sell, and influence data about individuals (Zuboff, 2019).
- In the context of journalism, surveillance can be especially dangerous as it may put journalists at risk throughout the entire reporting process. Whether that be through contacting and working with a source, or a dampening effect on what they feel safe reporting.
- This research explores this context considering surveillance threats from both government and corporate actors and their potential impacts on media freedom in different countries. Many of these countries are interlinked, as the surveillance technologies developed in a democratic nation may be sold to an authoritarian country to control and monitor the speech and operations of journalists.
- At the start of this project, we reviewed the literature with the research question below in mind.
- Primary Research Question**
 - What is the current state of the literature on surveillance and media freedom?*

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY RESULTS

+The phenomenon under investigation is the use of digital surveillance to control and influence journalists, particularly those involved in investigative reporting.

+The reviewed articles collectively highlight the prevalence of state and corporate surveillance, the methods used, and the impact on journalistic practices and press freedom.

+Key findings indicate that journalists face significant threats from both government and private surveillance entities, which employ sophisticated technologies to monitor and censor journalistic activities.

+Given the evolving nature of digital technologies and surveillance tactics, there is a critical need for ongoing research to inform policy and protective measures for journalists.

- Themes
 - +Government Surveillance and Censorship
 - +Counter-Surveillance and Activism
- Papers Focus
 - +Impact of surveillance on press freedom
 - +Counter-surveillance tactics
 - +Legitimization and public perception of surveillance
- Methods
 - +Firsthand interviews
 - +Legal analysis
 - +Ethnographic studies
 - +Quantitative and qualitative methodologies
- Theories
 - +Surveillance and control
 - +Legitimization of surveillance
 - +Civil responsibility

REFERENCES

- Zuboff (2019), *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, New York: Public Affairs.

METHODS

- Since this research is in early stages we began with an annotated bibliography of the existing literature
- We first searched EBSCOhost with the following search terms:
 - (surveillance or surveil or hack or monitor) AND (journalism or journalist or media freedom)*
- This initial search returned 495 results. We then reviewed each of the 495 abstracts to determine which papers to retain in the literature base.
- Much of the literature was only marginally related to our topic, only 18 papers were directly relevant to the context of surveillance and media freedom.
- 2 papers were not available in English, so 16 papers were analyzed in total
- For each remaining paper the topic, method, research questions, theory, results, and an overall evaluation of the paper were recorded in an annotated bibliography.

FUTURE WORK

- This annotated bibliography is the first step of a larger project investigating the impact of surveillance on media freedom.
- Future research will focus on a full systematic literature review, technical analysis of compromised devices of journalists under surveillance, and developing guidance on mitigating the threat of surveillance.

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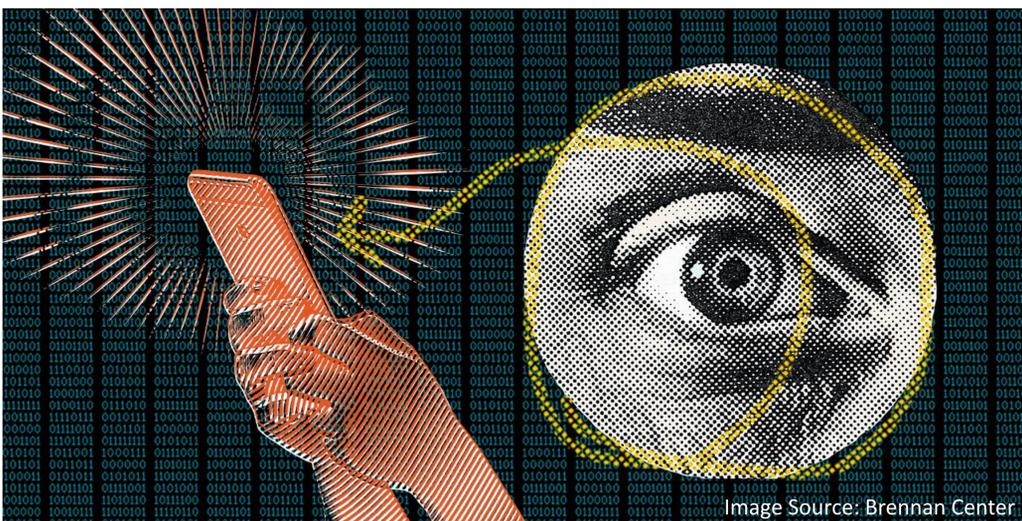


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