



Digital Surveillance and Democracy

Invitation

Rethinking national security, secrecy and intelligence
governance - Panel Discussion

Monday, May 13, 2019, Room A 300, 6:30 p.m.

The revelations by Edward Snowden in 2013 and subsequent inquiries have highlighted how Western intelligence agencies use the potential of digital surveillance. Agencies like the US-American NSA, the British GCHQ or the German BND are part of transnational intelligence networks that collect and exchange data on a massive scale. Within these agencies, tech savvy security professionals use algorithmic analytics to make sense of the large data sets, for example to determine who is a citizen or a non-citizen, and what counts as suspicious behavior.

In the light of large-scale, algorithmic and transnationally connected surveillance by intelligence agencies, the question arises if we need to re-interpret the relations of categories underpinning modern democracies such as national security, civil liberties, oversight, separation of powers, and rule of law. Concerns over technologically advanced surveillance often translate into dystopian visions of our democratic fate. Examples are references to totalitarianism in the manner of George Orwell's 1984, to the idea of "post-democracy", or warnings against a rising "algocracy". But has the perceived responsibility to protect democratic societies through surveillance already turned into an existential threat to democracy, or do we need a more nuanced approach? Can social scientists offer alternative problematizations of secret, digital surveillance in order to understand the challenges that arise for democratic societies? How can democratic societies address the gap between complex, transnational surveillance on the one hand and resource-poor, national oversight on the other? We invite you to discuss these questions together with:

- **Claudia Aradau**, Professor of International Politics at King's College London
- **Didier Bigo**, Professor at Sciences-Po Paris and King's College London
- **Thorsten Wetzling**, Project Director "Digital basic rights, surveillance and transparency" at the Stiftung Neue Verantwortung (SNV)

The panel will be moderated by **Jeanette Hofmann**, WZB. The discussion will be held in English.

For registration please send an e-mail to ronja.kniep@wzb.eu until May 9, 2019.

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Our event location is wheelchair-accessible. If you need support, please let Friederike Theilen-Kosch know: veranstaltungen@wzb.eu

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