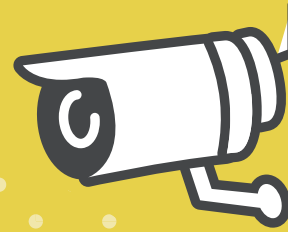# A BRIEF HISTORY OF
SURVEILLANCE

MARX AND WEBER
HISTORICAL GROUNDING

The term "surveillance" first began to gain traction in the field of sociology following the work of Marx and Weber on labour, capitalism, and the rudimentary role of social control and power therein (Lyon, 1994; Best, 2010).

Marx understood surveillance as a tool utilised by capitalists to "monitor workers [in order to] ensure their compliance as a disciplined force," thereby maximising efficiency and, ultimately, profit (Lyon, 1994; 25).

Weber was critical of the emphasis Marx placed on the term within the "context of class relations" (Lyon, 1994). He suggested that surveillance could best be understood within the wider context of modern organisations.

WORKER MANAGEMENT
SYSTEMISED SURVEILLANCE

The rapid development of technology gave rise to the field of worker 'management' through information technologies as a means of streamlining the monitoring and evaluation process. From here, the seed of systemised surveillance was planted, and Foucault's theory of surveillance took hold (Rochlin, 1997; Staples, 2002; Lyon, 1994).

FOUCAULT AND THE PANOPTICON
SURVEILLANCE AS DISCPLINE

Building on Marx and Weber's bodies of work, Foucault introduced the notion of surveillance as a disciplinary tool for controlling social identities and dictating acceptable behaviour. He introduced the now oft-cited Panopticon prison as an exemplar (Foucault, 1991).

Panopticon was the model that served as the foundation upon which Foucault conceptualised surveillance, and the subsequent relationship of power and subordination between the surveilled and the surveillant (Foucault, 1975).

Asymmetries of power were central to this theory; these imbalances foster self-discipline and institutionalise subordination (Lyon, 1994; Marwick, 2012).

CONTEMPORARY NEOLOGISMS
SURVEILLANCE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

In an attempt to reconfigure understandings of surveillance in light of the dynamism of modern digital economies, theorists coined the term "surveillant assemblage". Within this assemblage, there is a conglomeration of systems, practices, and actors across both "State and extra-state institutions" (Haggerty and Ericson, 610). This results in the blurring of the lines between surveillant and the surveilled, privacy and the public gaze, resulting in an "enmeshment within a matrix of power" (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000; 616, Staples, 2002).

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