

**UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE
EXPLORING THE DIGITAL CITY
6 TAPE ONE**

MAN: I think we should get this underway. On behalf of Lorens and myself I would like to welcome you to the third of this series of seminars by the Arts and Humanities Research Council on the theme of Exploring the Digital City and some of you have been here before but it is also the inaugural event of a kind of relaunched Geddes Institute for Urban Research which is a new interdisciplinary institute within the university for will be exploring and discussing all things urban. Just because there has been a slight gap between the first two seminars and today's seminar, I thought it was just worth revisiting what the whole series is about. Essentially it was about bringing into some sort of interdisciplinary dialogue discourses from a range of different areas, from architecture and sociology, from geography and planning and social work and so on, to explore the effects of digital technologies on the design, the representation and experience of urban space. Many of you were at the first seminar which was about new media and new space and saw the installation at Laser Net, then the second seminar explored issues to do with media ecology and freedom of speech. Today we focus on issues of surveillance and/or policing and how those interrelate in politics and civil society and so on and I'm delighted that we have two very influential speakers with us today, David Lyon from Queens University in Ontario and Mike Nellis from Strathclyde University. David Wood from the University of Newcastle is on his way here but has yet to get here. So what I'll do is introduce David who is going to speak first and then there will be an opportunity for questions and then depending on where we are in terms of the timetable we can either break for lunch and have Mike's paper immediately after lunch or ...

So it is a great pleasure to welcome David to Dundee. I'm sure David's work is known to many of you and he has written several very influential books on surveillance, including *The Electronic Eye* and *Surveillance after 9/11* and most recently a book on the panopticon. So David, it is a great pleasure to have you here.

DAVID LYON: Thank you, thanks for the welcome, I was told that it was relatively informal and I think that's what my talk is. I've been talking with people trying to work out where you are coming from and I'll try to speak on the sorts of issues that I think are of interest to this meeting. I have been working on issues that relate to [inaudible] and systems for a number of years but I am now launching myself into a larger project on this so it is around this area that I am going to talk this morning. I know a little bit but not an awful lot about the British law as it is now that relates to identification cards and I'll try to give some British examples that relate to this. In fact I don't know her but do you know somebody call Pam Anderson from Glasgow University? Anyway, she is on the Science and Technology Committee at the House of Commons and she argued in that report that came out in August that much more note

should be taken by the various bodies involved in the British ID card system of social sciences and she and one or two others seemed to be hinting that this had gone beyond trying to discover the opinions of the so called prime users, so to some people out there broader, which seemed to me to be encouraging. I am going to try to suggest some reasons why that is a good plan to consider national identification systems in respect of social sciences and humanities.

The most obvious reason I think is that new technologies are now thoroughly implicated with political practice at every level and therefore it is simply not examining the issues in a comprehensive fashion to imagine you can talk about political practice without addressing questions of the development of new technologies and in the case of ID cards, of systems. So I have followed people like Andrew Barry and Darren Barney, each posing questions of technology and political activity, the political process.

I want to suggest the beginnings of a theoretical way of thinking about national identification card systems and I'll call this the card cartel, partly because I'm addicted to alliteration but also because the longer phrase, the oligopolisation of the means of identification, is a bit of a mouthful, so let's call it the card cartel as a shorthand for the oligopolisation of the means of identification. What I am getting at there is it is inadequate, it seems to me, to think about identification cards merely in terms of theories of the state, theories of the nation state. We are looking at multiple factors that are involved in the production of identification cards, multiple interests represented in their development, we are looking at different kinds of technologies for a start, [inaudible] involved in the database registry, smart card technologies and biometric technologies and all sorts of questions have to be raised at every level about these, not only to do with how the cartel operates, that is to say who benefits from the cartel and who has life chances and who is affected by the cartel. But also specific questions about the nature of the technologies being used, the networks, the smart cards and the biometrics, which include mundane questions about whether or not they work and questions about whether or not they work are good questions but are frequently questions that can mask issues of principle, whether or not there should be cards in the first place. Questions regarding the vulnerability of large scale systems and this is a national identification card system in any country, but using the British case it is a tightly coupled complex system and thus is highly vulnerable to various kinds of breakdown and, should it come to that, attack. So there is a curious logic, if you take the view that national identification cards relate to 9/11 and anti-terrorism movements, they themselves are highly vulnerable to attack so that's another kind of question you could ask. Then of course there are the questions that are linked, two questions that are linked together. On the one hand the way in which the systems operate and what I suggested a moment ago which has to do with the narrowing of identification to one scheme has to do with who is benefiting from the card cartel? All identification systems are engendered to discriminate between different groups of the population so the very big question is which groups are being categorised and classified and which benefit and which do not. Anyway those are the kinds of questions I wish to raise.

I thought I would, if you wanted a title we could call it ID Cards or Card Cartel – city, citizenship and social sorting, because those are the themes that I want to address within what I have to say. Anyone who mentions nation state is seeking ways of securing stable identities for populations so that citizenship can be defined and administered in effective ways. In times past the activities of the nation state in securing those stable identities have appeared in various guises from voting registries through census classification and then later in the early part of the last century with the development of passports as a token for those travelling across national borders. In each case the means of securing those stable identities is [inaudible] faced and this fits neatly with the kinds of things that I've tried to argue about surveillance in general which is that it is fundamentally ambiguous and should not be taken to be intrinsically a negative or a socially questionable or politically questionable process, so in the tradition of trying to understand the ways in which nation states have developed in identification in relation to citizenship, one could look at the work of Max Weber, looking at the advantages of [inaudible] within the nation state, the assurance of benefits and entitlements and so on, Charles Tooley who has made a similar kind of argument on the one hand and what is often taken to be a Foucaultian position, that looks more at the consular and [inaudible] aspects of such methods of state identification. I don't take it that Foucault was entirely intending to produce that result from his work and it seems to be that the focus on governmentality helps us to get away from that merely consular approach that has infected some Foucaultian stoics. For Foucault bio-power, mix up citizens in particular ways, classifying them for various purposes in the entities that I've named already, things like the census and passports. Any kind of statistical activity particularly related to national government administration has demonstrated over the past couple of hundred years an appetite for accurate numbers and a kind of insatiable hunger for increasing the spread, the reach of such categorisation, starting with simple questions about [inaudible], who may vote and who may not, who may travel where, those kinds of questions and moving outwards.

In the 21st century, the quest of stable identifications involves several new features. It is digital, permitting very fine and integrated profiles. It tends to be based on biometrics of various kinds including finger prints, facial scans and iris scans most commonly. It tends to be multi purpose, that is to say a number of tasks are performed by the identification system including some that overlap with commercial interests and it is, despite the fact that they are national identification systems, they are increasingly inter-operable with different countries, different jurisdictions. An obvious case in point, similar situations attain in North America with the smart borders programme which was initiated long before 9/11 but really took off after that, and in other countries too. For various reasons there are regional attempts to apply integrated systems of identification, particularly for travel purposes. South Africa, sorry Southern Africa for example, is introducing something called the univisa and the univisa will cover travel throughout the southern African region so Botswana, Mozambique and South Africa itself, Zimbabwe, Zambia and so on, they are all going to be part of that unified travel identification system.

Identification cards associate data, certain kinds of data, with an identifiable person. It enables access to data that are held in files and those data are then modified with every transaction and interaction that is facilitated by the card, so the identification card system facilitates interaction between the identified individual and the organisation in this case, mainly departments of government. And it involves some kind of checking in relation to an individual although once was related to signatures and such like, questions, now tends to involve biometrics on the grounds that supposedly you cannot leave a biometric behind, it is part of your body, you can't forget it and it is attached or part of your system. Along with that are personal identification numbers.

Okay, so there are some of the general contours of what I want to say. I was staying in a bed and breakfast in Dunblane this weekend and another guest there at the breakfast table, asked me what I was speaking about. I told him and he immediately launched into small [jump in recording]. This man is a retired naval officer and he told me about a business that he ran. He told me that there was absolutely no problem that he could see with these cards, he still had his little national identification card from the Second World War. I didn't think they were issued to people under 16 but he claimed that he still had his card. The system came to an end, certainly in terms of the card, in 1952 and as you are probably well aware, the number persisted in the form of the National Health Service number and the system rolled on in exactly the same way as it had previously as far as the numerical association with identifiable individuals was concerned. Anyway, he told me there was no problem whatsoever and I realised I was going to have a hard time explaining to him why it was important to say the kind of things that I want to say this morning and it is true that ... Good morning, welcome.

DAVID WOOD: I'm very sorry, the train was an hour late.

DAVID LYON: Well we are very glad to see you. What I would have tried to explain to him, had I had longer to do so, would have been something along these lines. That although we anticipate that someone in his position would not have a particular problem with a national identification system, as indeed the majority people in Britain would not in their daily use of the card have a particular reason to think that it was affecting them negatively to use it. Okay, that would make a starting point of what I would want to say if I had had time to talk to him. Let me say a bit more about the card cartel, just to go back to that starting point. The card cartel, or the oligarchisation of the means of identification, why am I using that as a starting point? Well Karl Marx once wrote about the ways in which the labourers toil was appropriated by the capitalist employer as a way obviously of increasing the profit levels of the enterprise but what Marx viewed crucially was that something was being expropriated from the worker. That is to say, the means of making an independent living. So Marx was to talk about the way in which the means of production, the means of providing for oneself through meaningful activity had been appropriated and that there was a monopolisation within the capitalist enterprise of the means of production. Max Webber, who agreed with an awful

lot of what Marx said but who wanted to broaden out the analysis both with regard to the economic sphere and, more significantly, to the sphere of government and of administration. There was actually a monopolization of the means of violence which was characteristic of the modern nation state and in this case the independent citizen who had certain rights and expectations of government was having something also, according to Webber, rather important expropriated from them in the process of monopolization. A few years ago John Tolpay produced an argument about the passport and he argued that the passport should be understood in this rather broad way, rather like the monopolization of the means of production and the monopolization of the means of violence, and he argued that what was being expropriated through the development of the passport system in the modern era was the means of free movement and so in his fine little book which I think captures some of the most important things about the passport, he argues for a theory of the monopolization of the means of movement. That's why I am making this up in terms of what I am calling the card cartel because I think that it is really important for us to consider how, assuming there is something right about the [inaudible] of movement, why it is important to broaden the argument and not talk merely about identification cards as, as it were, representing the monopolization of the means of identification. I want to think of it in terms of the monopolization of the means of identification and I want to try to explain a little bit why that is important.

It is definitely beyond a sort of state monopoly when it comes to looking at national identification card systems and beyond the monopolization of the means of movement moreover. We live in an era of global corporations and of extensive outsourcing and this applies in the sphere of government as much as [inaudible] and outsourcing is certainly a very strong aspect of socio-technical systems such as national identification card systems so I think it is very important for us to think of a broader concept than mere monopolization and of course it isn't just a matter of the means of movement, we can't think of identification cards merely as having to do with movement, although importantly I do think they do have to do with movement and I'll comment on those in a moment. Of course they relate to movement not merely across national borders but within and especially in urban areas, which gives us a segue into the overall [inaudible].

They are not just for movement, they are crucially for access, access to various forms of entitlement, rights, information, so on and so forth. And thirdly of course national identification card systems are by definition for whole populations of this entity that we still refer to as nation state, however much in some ways it may becoming anachronistic to talk in those terms, it is still very important for us to think about the nation state in this regard. They are universal. You obtain a passport if you need to cross the national border, you are issued a national identification card as a means of indicating some kind of citizenship of a nation state and you need not necessarily be crossing the border in a physical way in order to qualify for the need for these cards. Of course in several schemes, including the British one, there have been debates about the voluntary nature of the identification card but it is perfectly clear from

evidence elsewhere in the European Community quite apart from other countries, that the notion of a voluntary card is a pretense, it is neither ... well it becomes very difficult to operate in countries that have national identification card systems if you don't have one. The pressures to have a card are huge and in various studies we have done in other European countries it has shown that it really is a myth to think you can have a voluntary card system. Obviously cards have to be rolled out over a period of time and you can't do them all overnight therefore it is sometimes expedient to describe the early roll out as voluntary but it really doesn't make sense. By definition it will end up, in the United Kingdom as in other countries, as a universal system so it is not merely an item like a passport which everyone does not necessarily need to have. So in several ways talking about a card cartel makes sense of a broader situation than monopolization.

Let's just think about the nature of the card cartel. I think I'll turn this into a major point and discuss it. If you look the evidence of how in the British case the card has been developed thus far, several corporations have been involved. One of them, PA Consulting, has already earned I think £14 million from the development of the ID card system and that for design, marketing and co-ordination activities in relation to the British ID card, that is to say without regard to the actual technologies involved for example in the card. Before 9/11 and for the sake of argument I am assuming that the reason for the timing of the British ID card system as the American ID, as in the Italian upgrade, as in the French upgrade, in several cases relates to 9/11 that the plausibility and political climate enabled the adoption of the upgrades and developments of these cards. Just before, in the year 2000, the Economist noted with regard to biometrics that, and I quote, "The killer application that would carry the biometric technologies into the consumer mainstream has yet to be found." The year 2000. In 2002, the US trade journal, "Intelligent Enterprise", noted that, and I quote, "Homeland security will help fuel an IT recovery. IT solution providers will one day look back on the war on terror and be grateful for the opportunities born out of terror." Larry Ellison of course was the very first to propose a national identification card system for the United States of America, he did it before the dust had actually settled at ground zero and offered free software for a national identification card system in the United States. He didn't mention the massive cost of maintenance of such a system or the roll out costs other than the free software, which was a magnanimous gesture. I can think of some other examples of the ways in which there are some pretty strong interests involved and corporate interests involved in the identification card systems but that should give you some clue as to the sorts of background within which the post 9/11 ID card enthusiasm has emerged.

I have already made some comments about where identification systems and identifiers have come from but it might just be worth pointing out that there is a long history, not just of national identification card systems but also of the kinds of identifiers that are involved and that history is a very interesting one. In the project that I want to work on next, I want to look both at the historical background to national identification card systems and get a sense of the [inaudible] that apparently these systems are designed, but I also want to get a

comparative sense of how they are in different countries and of course some of that story is the same story, that is to say the historical is most interesting in a number of different countries, so relatively popular for example is Christopher Rengie's book on [inaudible] does some interesting work on the use of slave passes in the United States and the identification, even tagging systems, that were used for slaves and if you ask about fingerprinting of course, the first serious work was done by Herschel I believe within the British colony administration in India, that was Calcutta. If you look at American interests in Latin America, then you have to look at the identification systems in Argentina. There are just so many interesting backgrounds to the use of particular identifiers for particular purposes, colonial administration being a very important one, of course crime control being another, fingerprints being associated both with colonial administrations and latterly with crime control, through to wartime efforts, different types of identifiers, again fingerprints could be used and in the British case fingerprints were important for the wartime effort and have complete systems based around differential identification like the apartheid system and the [inaudible] passbooks. That in itself is a huge fascinating area, the ways in which people were identified, the forms of identification between white, black and Indian and the ultimate inefficiency of that system that actually prevented some of the worst abuses that might have occurred if the system had actually worked better. The use of identification cards and identifiers in the Soviet Union under Stalin, the use of identification systems and particular identifiers in Nazi Germany, the use of IBM Corporation in the production of an inefficient ID card system in Germany. The historical and the comparative are very interestingly intertwined, both as identification systems and identifiers, especially those that relate to the human body, what we now call biometrics and of course early biometrics were in the form of photographs and fingerprints or thumb prints. So interesting continuities, both historically and comparatively. Myself, I'm coming to the view increasingly that I can't understand contemporary systems, however much they may differ because of their digitality and their use of biometrics and so on and so forth, however much they may appear to be different I think there is some tremendously important continuities with those earlier systems developed all over the world for those purposes.

There is a lot that I want to say about the development of the British identification system, perhaps we can talk about that in discussion of earlier rationales for an identification card system, early 20th century I mean, not early 21st century, are curiously similar to the rationales for today with the exception of the word terrorism. Let me say one or two things, I can see from my watch that time is running short so the matter of individuation that relates to identification and identification systems is of course a crucial one within modernity. The very notion of individuating the, as it were, atomic person is one that we really only read strongly in modern times and I just want to say one thing about surveillance and the card, in relation to a nation state and administration. Edward Heaps has a very interesting book called *The Information State in England* based on an article in *Historical Sociology* of a similar title, but he makes the argument that the mere mention of government

information is not the same thing as surveillance. He wants to argue that surveillance is only met watching over or maintaining records for monitoring that has the intention of stopping certain people doing certain things or, less important, permitting them to do certain things. I think the book is a really very useful exploration of the so called information state in England but I take issue with that definition of surveillance. I want to argue that surveillance is all those forms of collection of permanent information, that there is not a separate moment at which surveillance for some specific purpose comes into play. Now I also want to argue that this becomes even more so in the case of digitally mediated information because data used for one purpose may well be used for another and there was function proof before digital technologies but function proof is far easier in the realm of information technology databases and I want to argue that all that personal data that is collected by government departments is a form of surveillance and this links in with the notion of the ambiguity of surveillance because I don't want to suggest that surveillance is always somehow negative or constricting or restrictive let alone oppressive and repressive. I want to argue that surveillance may well enable, may well entitle, may well have a number of positive elements that I suspect that we would be in favour of. If you look at that British history of national identification card systems by and large, in the earlier parts of the 20th century it had everything to do with attempting to increase the inclusion of those who otherwise were marginalised and disadvantaged within the administration of benefits and entitlements and so on and so forth. So I want to argue that surveillance is any systematic routine detailed attention to personal details for some purpose that, as I say, does not have to be read in a sinister or negative way necessarily at all.

I think that is almost enough to give you an idea of where I'm coming from and how the sort of discussion that I've raised about national identification card systems might fit with a series on the digital city and the implications that we are living our everyday life within the city. Just a couple of points in closing. One, the border and the ban. You may have come across the work of Giorgio Ramen and he argues that today, to understand the position of the citizen we have to look not at the city but at the camp, not at Athens but at [inaudible] and he makes some very striking points in his work, particularly on the state of exception. Indeed he was due to do a teaching spell at Newark University and refused to go because it was the post 9/11 regime and he would have had to be fingerprinted and of course he would have tattooed, and he refused the opportunity to go. What he argues is that the citizen in the contemporary city is a detainee, that there are new ways in which we have to understand the city. Now you could read him as making some rather shrill points that simply are unrealistic but I think that he has an important point and here is my ex-Navy friend from the bed and breakfast goes blank. I think for him there is no particular problem with the ID card, he is a retired white man and he has no particular reason to think that the card would have any negative effect on him. If however he was not white, then he would have reason to think that there might be problems. For example, if you look at biometrics, whether iris or face scanning or for that matter fingerprinting of thumb printing, you will discover

that there are some interesting systematic difficulties with non-white populations, that is to say black, Hispanic, Asian, and those difficulties are within the realm of what is called failure to enroll. [Inaudible aside] I'm not going to go into the details of these because we don't have the time but it is very interesting that the FTE suggests that the normal recipient of the ID card is white and those difficulties as I say can be generalised across a variety of non white [inaudible] and I've yet to explore some of the ramifications of this, for example the use of national ID cards on a population wide basis in the Philippines or Hong Kong or wherever there are some issues that I haven't understood yet but there are a couple of very interesting sources that argue apparently competently, again this is one of the things I want to research more carefully, but there are strong continuities between means of identification of a previous [inaudible] controlled regimes and contemporary biometrics, quite apart from the other sorts of issues that we might have with biometrics such as [inaudible] and so on and so forth, the are fundamental issues of FTEs and white populations.

So the border and the ban [inaudible] has taken further some of the best points and argued that you should not think in terms of a panopticon but a banopticon, which is a delightfully subtle piece, I wish I could think of such subtle wordplay in French as the French can do in English, but it is a neat way of thinking about Foucault and an [inaudible] way of thinking about identification systems. Of course I haven't touched on the international [inaudible] which adds a whole dimension to what I've been talking about and again it brings in the importance of the global city states and so on within identification regimes. If in the end the British ID card is a contactless card like the way it is used on the Oyster card, then it will comply with machine readable travel documents requirement of ICEA, the international [inaudible] of aviation organisation and thus be usable for those international conflicts too, so there is a global dimension that I haven't really addressed but I think it needs addressing.

So these cards it seems to me have to be seen in terms of an analysis that works out of social sciences and humanities, one that is seen that connects identification and citizenship not merely with some bland notion of the general rights of citizens to belong to a particular nation state but in terms of their consequences in everyday life, in urban areas, the border is everywhere with an ID card not just in the physical limited territory and as Menhabí say, there is frequently a sociological vacuum in discussing citizenship, I think this is exactly where that vacuum can be seen. Much more can be said but I think I'll leave it there, thank you.

MAN: Thank you very much indeed. We have got plenty of time for discussion, I think what we might do is have discussion for twenty minutes or so and take an early lunch. Can I also welcome David Wood who is our chair today but unfortunately was delayed by GNER.

END OF SESSION

52 minutes