Article | Liminal Surveillance: An Ethnographic Control Room Study During a Local Event.

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Abstract

This paper introduces the term liminality as a way of understanding the dynamics behind temporal, increased surveillance during events. Liminal surveillance mediates existing surveillance systems and reveals how surveillance technologies can be stretched and twisted. The empirical, ethnographic data that is presented in this paper was collected in the emergency control room during Unofficial St. Patrick's Day, a local student event on the campus of the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign. Two surveillance technologies in use are central: CCTV and social media. The paper concludes that liminal surveillance enabled the authorities to isolate their surveillance and patrol related to the festival from regular policing activities. The event legitimized new surveillance practices and the increased use of CCTV and social media. After the event, surveillance returned to normal. However, the liminal surveillance has had a legacy: the use of surveillance technologies on campus will continue to grow in the years to come.

Introduction

Events like festivals, parades, and sports tournaments are social phenomena that disrupt normal social patterns. Sporting mega events like the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup, for example, are symbolic, global affairs that promote cities, catalyze huge infrastructure projects and unite visitors from all over the world (Boyle and Haggerty 2009). Festivals organized on a smaller, local scale are characterized by more community-oriented social interactions. An example is Burning Man, an annual festival based on radical self-expression in the Nevada desert.

What these events have in common is that they attract people who want to break away from everyday life in order to experience a kind of solidarity that is stronger than in normal situations. Events are risky endeavors, not least because of the possible unpredictable behavior of the people taking part. For authorities, they are 'planned disasters' that demand strict security measures. At a deeper level, authorities see them as 'policy windows' (Kingdon 1995) in order to implement security and surveillance measures they already had in mind (Boyle and Haggerty 2009; Bennett and Haggerty 2011; Giulianotti and Klauser 2011; Samatas 2007, 2008, 2011; Fussey and Coaffee 2011). For example, authorities in Greece installed more than 1,200 cameras for the Olympics in Athens for safety reasons and crowd control, which resulted in increased surveillance after the Games were over as well (Samatas 2007, 2008). Surveillance systems introduced at (mega) events have the tendency to expand and be used for reasons other than those for which they were intended (Bennett and Haggerty 2011). That is why mega events are important research sites for surveillance scholars.

Smaller, more local events, such as annual festivals and parades, are less well studied in the context of security and surveillance. However, they are, like mega events, increasingly framed in these terms by local

authorities and law enforcement. Given the smaller scale and available budgets it is less likely that completely new surveillance infrastructures will be installed. Instead, existing surveillance technologies such as closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems—if available—will be employed for the safety and security measures of the local event. In other words, the local event will temporally disrupt established, routine, and 'normal' surveillance practices.

Hoover (2008), who studied the Burning Man festival, and Van Heerden (2011), who published an article on the local Klein Karoo National Arts Festival in South Africa, introduced the term liminality to unravel the characteristics of events. Events take place in times that are set apart from the day-to-day routine when explicit and implicit rules that "governed the everyday utilization of public space and social interaction in the host towns [are] adapted or transgressed" (Van Heerden 2011: 65). Both Hoover and Van Heerden refer to safety and security aspects, yet pay less attention to the increasing security measurements and surveillance implemented during local events.

This paper aims to contribute to the discussion on events and surveillance to further develop the concept of liminal surveillance. Studying surveillance as liminality will tell us a lot about its dynamics, because:

- liminal periods and circumstances (e.g. local events) mediate the evolution of existing surveillance systems;
- liminal surveillance shows us how surveillance can be stretched and twisted, a mechanism know in surveillance studies as function creep (Lyon 2007).

In this paper, the surveillance practice occurring during the local student event, Unofficial St. Patrick's Day—in short, *Unofficial*—at the campus of the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign, USA, is central. The aim of the paper is not to research and question the legitimation, effectiveness, and outcomes (Phillips 1999) of increased surveillance as such. Instead, it aims to understand the mechanisms behind liminal surveillance and how it affects and mediates actual surveillance practices. It does so by presenting the observed actions and interactions of the authorities in an emergency control room setting.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: in the first section the concept of liminal surveillance is worked out in detail. Four dimensions will be introduced in order to enhance the analytical content of the concept. Sections two and three present the setting of the study (the control room) and elaborate on the methodology and methods used for data collection (ethnography). These sections are used to reflect on the surveillance literature and to contextualize the actual surveillance practices. Next, the empirical part of the paper will present in detail the particularities of liminal surveillance during the event, *Unofficial*. Two surveillance technologies used during the event are central: CCTV and social media. In the final discussion and concluding sections the introduced dimensions of liminal surveillance serve as tools with which to draw out empirical and analytical insights.

Liminal Surveillance: Concepts and Dimensions

Liminality is a well-known theoretical concept in anthropology and cultural studies. It was introduced by Van Gennep (1960) and later extended by Turner (1964, 1969). Van Gennep used it to reflect upon a temporary and transitional period between two fixed and clearly separated phases or states of an individual during what he called a rite of passage: a pre-liminal phase of separation, a phase of liminality (e.g. the adolescence), and a post-liminal phase of aggregation. Turner adopted and further developed the concept: for him, liminality not only referred to a phase or space in a rite of passage, but it could describe any condition or state that put an individual 'betwixt and between' general societal norms.

Turner also argued that liminality could occur in non-ritual spheres, such as entertainment, in youth and counter-cultures, and during festivals (Tzanelli 2007). These phenomena take place in modern,

industrialized societies and tend to result in the same, anti-structure patterns that pre-modern rituals follow. However, they don't result (necessarily) in transformations of social norms and rules: things (can) go back to 'normal' after the liminal event. Moreover, Turner argued that rituals in the pre-modern society were necessary, whereas the participation in a liminal event in modern societies is a matter of choice. For Turner these differences warranted the introduction of the term 'liminoid' (Turner 1982). Liminoid is a quasi-liminality and refers to betwixt and between phenomena that are not ritual, more open, and based on voluntary participation. In order to avoid confusion, however, the more familiar concept of liminality will be used throughout this paper (for this argument see Van Heerden 2011: 56).

Liminality has been used, although not very often, in Surveillance Studies. Examples are surveillance in border regions (Zureik and Salter 2005) and the use of cameras in casinos (Schwartz 1995/2002). In these studies liminality refers to the places and spaces where surveillance is carried out (i.e. borders and casinos). However, the point of this paper is that it is not only the event/space that is 'betwixt and between', but also the surveillance that takes place. Liminal surveillance is the targeted, temporarily intensified use of a surveillance system for the safety and security management of a particular social event.

It is well known in Surveillance Studies that surveillance systems are characterized by increases and decreases in use (see Goold 2004). The term liminal surveillance offers the opportunity to further investigate the underlying dynamics. Liminal surveillance cannot be reduced to the intensified monitoring of unwanted behavior. Instead it is multi-dimensional. Based on Turner's work, I distinguish four key dimensions of liminal surveillance:

1) *Time-space*: liminal surveillance is temporal and situational. The temporal element in this dimension can be related to moments of increased surveillance. The space refers to the unique setting in which the surveillance is situated. *Unofficial* takes place at a local university campus: a creative space, but one that is also vulnerable to criminal behavior. The surveillance measures implemented by local officials—including the use of cameras on campus (Walby 2006)—must be seen in the context of campus safety and crime (Brantingham and Brantingham 1994; Fisher 1995; Wilson and Wilson 2011).

2) *Normative*: liminal surveillance defines what can be seen as legitimate and possible. During the period of structural erase (i.e. during the event) novel configurations of ideas and norms arise (Van Heerden 2011). This is not only true for the participants or the 'initiates' of the event, but also for the authorities overseeing it. Law enforcement can use surveillance techniques in other ways than in normal conditions, for example, because politicians temporarily increase resources (i.e. budgets and facilities) and support intensified surveillance.

3) *Social*: liminal surveillance creates new partnerships. The local event, *Unofficial,* can be framed as an 'in-between-ness' during which the students stray from their normal routines and are able to experience communitas, a term is used by Turner (1969) to describe the experience of 'togetherness' that people can experience during the liminal phase. Again, the people who experience communitas during events are not only the initiates (students), but other actors as well, such as fire fighters and law enforcement.

4) *Power*: liminal surveillance disrupts normal social patterns but does not result in a power-vacuum. Liminal experiences give participants opportunity (i.e. the power) to remold themselves and society, and transcend structural constraints on the basis of their collective experience (Yang 2000). At the same time, because of the threat to the status quo and possible de-stabilization, liminality will lead to (new) forms control in disciplining individuals (Swartz 2007; Andrews and Roberts 2012). That is why the study of liminal events cannot be reduced to understanding pleasure and leisure. Danger, risk, and the reduction of risk are integral part of the discourses on events (Shields 1990).

Control Room Ethnography

The analysis of liminal surveillance in this paper concerns the practices in the emergency operations center (the control room) during *Unofficial* in 2012. This puts the paper in the tradition of interpretative qualitative research into (CCTV) emergency control rooms (e.g. Norris and Armstrong 1999b; Smith 2007; Monahan 2007) and—more broadly defined—in the paradigm of human-technology interaction in control rooms (Suchman 1987; Heath and Luff 1992). Control rooms are complex settings dedicated to the collection, clearing, and dissemination of information about a particular event or emergency. The control room operation is not a neutral practice: professionals working in these settings make sense of the information and negotiate the relevance of the information for their task. The work itself is mediated by (surveillance) technologies (Heath et al. 2000; Goodwin and Goodwin 1996). Two surveillance technologies within the emergency control room are central to this paper: CCTV and social media.

Since the early 1990s, when CCTV cameras began to appear in the surveillance of urban space, scholars have called for attention to this phenomenon (Goold 2004; Norris et al. 2004; Webster 2004; Lett et al. 2010; Doyle et al. 2011; Webster et al. 2012), theorizing it in terms of the Panopticon, Big Brother, surveillance assemblages, and the maximum surveillance society. Surveillance researchers studied the places and spaces of CCTV-surveillance, such as city centers (Coleman and Sim 2000; Martinais and Bétin 2004; Hier 2004; Zurawski 2007) and sporting mega events (Bennett and Haggerty 2011; Giulianotti and Klauser 2011). Research into the routines of CCTV operators in control rooms has always been an important part of CCTV research. Since the pioneering, ethnographic study by Norris and Armstrong (1999a, 1999b) many scholars have participated in control (CCTV) room settings (not to mention ethnographic research on CCTV outside the control room) (see for example: Crane and Dee 2001; Goold 2004; Smith 2002, 2007; McCahill 2002; Newburn and Hayman 2002; Hempel and Töpfer 2004; Sutton and Wilson 2004; Neyland 2006; Monahan 2007; Wagenaar and Boersma 2012).

Although the control room studies differ in detail, researchers reported similar results (for a more elaborate overview see Smith 2007): a) CCTV operators tend to watch individuals on the basis of their race, color, posture, and clothing (prejudice), b) they watch people mainly because they belong to a group (usual suspects) or because they are in a particular location, c) sometimes they surveill individuals for no obvious reasons, d) voyeuristic behavior can easily become part of control room routines because watching CCTV images can become tedious and boring (called the CCTV 'boredom factor' by Smith 2007; see also Ferenbok and Clement 2011).

Due to what has been called the time/space distanciation in CCTV surveillance, it can be difficult for the operators to directly interpret the behavior of those who are monitored (Norris and McCahill 2006; Smith 2007). CCTV researchers found that the camera images were useful (if at all) mostly in retrospect (i.e. after a particular event took place). Finally, (CCTV) control room research convincingly shows that the effectiveness of CCTV systems depends on the extent to which the system is integrated with other surveillance techniques (McCahill 2002; Smith 2002).

The second surveillance technology studied during the event was social media. Control room surveillance is no longer limited to the use of camera images. Information posted on social media sites (surveillance and the new generation internet, Fuchs et al. 2011) plays an important role in control room settings and in crisis response in general. As social media becomes more persuasive, its use has implications for emergency response professionals (Palen 2008) who use it to make sense of the situation 'out there' and to create what they call an 'operational picture' (Boersma et al. 2012). Currently there is a lot of attention for the question of how emergency responders can use social media for their work (for example White 2012), yet little attention to the surveillance aspect of its use.

Social media sites that have 'entered' the emergency control room setting will increasingly become the loci for surveillance. The personal data and information put on social media websites by participants of local events is used by law enforcement to control their behavior. It can be seen as a classic example of what is coined 'participatory surveillance' by Albrechtslund (2008). Participants active online during a liminal event experience 'virtual' communitas (see Herwig 2009). At the same time, those who post messages and images on social media sites unknowingly provide information for policing activities.

Methodology and Methods

This paper is based on (organizational) ethnographic research, a growing research tradition in Surveillance Studies (Green and Zurawski 2013). Ethnography enables the researcher to combine observations, short conversations, more lengthy interviews, and documentary research into what can be called a 'thick description' (Geertz 1973; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995) of a particular social situation. Organizational ethnography is, as the term itself suggests, ethnographic research used for the understanding of organizational routines, practices, and norms. This type of methodology is not—per se—meant to uncover causal relationships, but rather used to deepen the understanding or the 'Verstehen' of actual practices. The prerequisite for this kind of research in the organization is being where the action is or, in more anthropological terms, doing research in-situ. In particular, ethnographic research focuses on the materiality (e.g. mediating technologies), actual practices and sense-making. Four vignettes will be presented in this paper to give in-depth examples of surveillance practices.

This research into the surveillance practices in the operations center during *Unofficial* is part of a long, substantial research into the routines, communication patterns, networks, and cultures of emergency response organizations (including emergency control rooms) in the USA and Europe (Wagenaar et al. 2009; Boersma et al. 2009, 2010; Wagenaar and Boersma 2012). During the event, the author was present in the operations center for about sixteen of the twenty hours in which the room was in full operation. Before the start of the observations the author was introduced to the highest ranking officials and the main aim, not the details, of the research was made explicit. The author was next to the operator of the CCTV system in the room. Part of the research included two bike rides on campus to get a sense of the atmosphere of the activities. The vast majority of the time was spent in the operations center, however, including lunch and dinner hours.

The methods used during the research are typical for ethnographic research. The author observed the behavior of those present in the operations center while being a 'fly on the wall'. In other words, there were no interruptions of the officers' activities other than short informal conversations about their routines, organizational norms, opinions about the course of the event, and their past experiences with policing and surveillance. Before the event, short interviews were undertaken to get a better sense of *Unofficial* and the planned emergency response operations in order to better understand what was and would be going on. After the event the author held recorded interviews with key-actors. First of all, the author interviewed three police officers of the University of Illinois Police Department. Two of them were in the operations center during *Unofficial*, including the operator of the CCTV system. The other was on patrol during the event. The latter showed how he used an iPad to view CCTV images during patrol. Two recorded interviews were undertaken with a representative of the Illinois Fire Service Institute and one with the director of the Champaign County Emergency Operations Center. The author talked to the Champaign city official responsible for public information of the Champaign Fire Department and with the chief of the Campaign Fire Department. He also had two phone conversations with the bar-owner who initiated *Unofficial* activities some years ago. Finally the author had informal conversations with University of Illinois staff members.

Published documents concerning previous events and reports about the outcome of surveillance by the University of Illinois Police Department and *The Daily Illini* were useful sources to frame and

contextualize *Unofficial* 2012. Finally, the data posted on social media websites, including Facebook, PicFog and Twitter, provided a wealth of information about student behavior and excitement during the event that otherwise would have been missed, although no systematic content-analysis of social media websites related to *Unofficial* was undertaken.

The Event: Unofficial St. Patrick's Day

Since 1996, the first weekend of March at the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign has been called Unofficial St. Patrick's Day or, in short, *Unofficial*. The 'official' St. Patrick's Day is a cultural and religious holiday, celebrated internationally, commemorating St. Patrick and the day he arrived in Ireland. Starting as a Christian festival in the 17th century, it gradually grew into a celebration of Irish culture in a much broader sense. It has been popular in the USA since the late 18th century, when the Irish diaspora began organizing festivals. Later it became a holiday for non-Irish Northern Americans as well. The color of the festival is green, the Irish color: people wear green clothes during the festival, printed with shamrocks, a three- or four-leaved plant, the festival's token. People, mostly students, wearing these clothes are called 'the Greens'. At the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign the event is called *Unofficial* because St. Patrick's Day, March 17, often falls during the university's Spring break. Local bar owners took the initiative to replace the event to a weekend before the actual St. Patrick's Day in order to secure their income. It grew into an annual local event attracting thousands of young people from outside the Twin Cities, as Urbana and Champaign are often called. For most of them the event is about excessive drinking and self-expression (and to experience 'communitas'). Most of the students begin the festivities with 'kegs and eggs' at 6:00 am and continue drinking until late at night. Colorful pictures of their behavior can be found on Facebook and other social media websites. The activities related to the festival are not concentrated in one location, but spread out informally over the Twin Cities. Most of the activities, however, are on or near campus and take place inside local bars and in the students' apartments and dorms. There is a plea to make *Unofficial* an 'official', legal event through the organization of concerts or parades, like at the New Orleans' Mardi Gras festival (for this opinion see *The Daily Illini*: Weber 2012).

Previous *Unofficials* have got out of hand, resulting in dozens of intoxicated young people, under-aged drinking, and even casualties due to accidents directly related to the festival (Editorial 2012; Betz 2012). That is why the authorities announced severe restrictions after the first *Unofficial* was held, which caught the authorities by surprise. In 2012, shortly before the start of the event, Tomaz Betz, the director of Student Legal Services, wrote in *The Daily Illini*, the independent student-newspaper:

> Underage possession of alcohol, fake ID, disturbing the peace and disorderly conduct are
> all misdemeanors under state statutes that can involve being processed at the Champaign
> County Jail, which means fingerprints and the potential of a permanent criminal record.
> (Betz 2012)

Increased surveillance and a zero tolerance policy have emerged as a result of the authorities' risk management (Schenk 2011). This includes the intensified use of the campus CCTV system.

Liminal Surveillance during *Unofficial*

The CCTV system
In early 2010, university authorities adopted a CCTV surveillance system based on Milestone video management software on campus. The Milestone software is Internet Protocol (IP) based and enables the user to centralize the system: "If security is decentralized on a major university then police cannot use that system to its maximum capacity," Police Chief Barbara O'Connor said in a public interview. "We have developed a policy where anyone on campus purchasing a camera system must have it approved by the chief of police" (NetworkCentric Security 2010). The reason for the implementation of cameras was

campus crime, especially the increasing theft of laptops from the university library, the university's food stores, and sexual assault in university buildings. The implementation of the project began with the installation of just a few cameras, but by 2012 the system consisted of about 700 cameras and the idea is to expand it further in the years to come. The cameras are owned by the University of Illinois, meaning that there are only cameras within or on the exterior of university buildings, not in other parts of the Twin Cities.

The university campus CCTV system consists of different types of cameras: 1) fixed cameras permanently pointing in a single direction such as toward parking places, entries of cafes, or junctions; 2) outdoor business cameras (like dome cameras), installed on the facades of buildings and parking garages; 3) Pan Tilt Zoom (PTZ) cameras, which are the most sophisticated ones: digital cameras with zoom options, 360 pan, controllable via the internet. Side-to-side, up-and-down movement options can be used to watch 'hotspots' on campus such as the bigger parking lots, large student buildings, and squares.

The images recorded by the cameras are stored for 30 days, which is the policy of the University of Illinois Police Department. During 'normal' days of operation the images of the CCTV system are not viewed in real time, because it would be too time-consuming and demand too much staff, as the operator of the system explained:

> …with so many cameras: how can you do that? You know. You might be able to monitor, but even when you monitor half a dozen screens, and put twelve cameras on each one, you still need ten people sitting there and ten people waiting to take their place. So it wouldn't work… It really is, and unfortunately, a reactive system. It is very reactive. I mean, I can, anybody can pull up a camera and look at it for a few moments or a few seconds or a few minutes at a time on a request. But there is a difference between that and sitting and concentrate the whole day.

Sometimes, if law enforcement deems the crime serious enough, they temporarily publish footage on publicly available social websites, such as YouTube. By doing this they hope to get information from the public about the crime.

In other words, in normal situations the system is used for retrospective surveillance: camera images are watched after a crime or an atypical situation has been reported. One police officer told the author: "…the biggest way we use it, is for after a crime occurs and we wanna see if we have video footages of the suspect". Since the summer of 2011, officers can pull up camera images on their iPads using a system called iRa C3. One officer explains:

> I have an iPad and the iPad has software that I can [use to] pull up cameras. And we have been experimenting with different systems, but these supervisor cars have mobile hotspots. So, I can either can get connection through a wireless on campus if I am close to a building, you know, or in a building, or I have the mobile hotspot in my car and I can pull up the iPad.

Liminal use
During a local event there is an additional way of using the system, as the police officer told the author during an interview:

> …as a supervisor, you know, I can use it to check on things. Not so often, you know. You really want that capability during something like *Unofficial* or during a football game when it is very, very busy and you don't have to get out and navigate through those

crowds and busy streets. You can just sit there and check on things. Makes it pretty convenient.

On top of that, the emergency operations center set up during *Unofficial* (and for that time only), meant that there were two different hierarchies working at the same time:

> …the operations center is in charge of all the people working on Unofficial St Patrick's detail… But there is still the regular police site working: regular patrol units, regular dispatchers, everything like that. So, there is still answering the calls, you know, that come in through 9-1-1 and stuff like that, and we are still dealing with a lot of stuff so that does overlap, but it is two separate things going on at one time.

Since 2010, the emergency operations center, where most of the emergency response officials came together for this particular event, has been housed in one of the buildings of the Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI) (Schenk 2011). During the 2012 event, one could find fire fighters, dispatchers, city officials, and members of the (privatized) ambulance service gathered in the same room. The presence of the police—campus, local, county and state—was dominant: there were police officers from the cities of Urbana and Champaign, the county, the State Liquor Control Board, and the University of Illinois Police Department. The officials use this room more often during events like football games and for training exercises. However, the way they use it during *Unofficial* is unique.

The whole operation at the time of the event, not including preparations, took about twenty hours: the activities in the room started about 6:30 am on Friday and continued until about 2:30 am the following day. The officials worked in shifts of eight or twelve hours (depending on their organizational rules), but some of them (especially those involved in CCTV surveillance), stayed much longer in the room. Also, the numbers of police officers on patrol increased from eleven (the average number of police officers on patrol during normal days) to around one hundred for *Unofficial*, some of them undercover. People who visited the room during the day, such as municipality officials, almost immediately responded to the CCTV images. Questions such as "Can you zoom in on this or that" were frequently asked. One of the visiting officials gave a vague promise: "The system was useful last time; I wish we could install more cameras permanently. Please let me know how we can arrange that!"

The projected images of the CCTV cameras and the data from the emergency control room offered participants a common focus for discussing strategies and planned actions. In addition to the already installed cameras, law enforcement used fifteen additional, temporally installed cameras (called re-deployable cameras, Waples and Gill 2006) pointing at 'hotspots' such as buildings judged to be high risk, and the entries of cafes, bars, and restaurants. The screen on the left hand side of the room was used to project information from the 9-1-1 Emergency Response Center. In this way the officers could see the incoming calls and the positions of the patrol cars. The CCTV images/footage were projected on three screens in the middle of the room, taking a central location. The center screen was called the hotspot window, since the most important or—at a particular moment in time—the most relevant images (in terms of risk and security) were projected there. The two screens on the right hand side of the room projected the images of the weather forecast and streams from social media websites, in particular Twitter and Facebook.

Surveillance as practice

During *Unofficial* it was quite obvious what was considered unwanted behavior, at least to the police officers: wearing green shirts or being in a group with 'Greens' was enough to attract the police's attention. "Keep an eye on the Greens" was a remark that could often be heard throughout the day. Their behavior made the Greens the 'usual suspects', as overly watched persons are called in CCTV surveillance

(Phillips 1999; Norris and Armstrong 1999a, 1999b). Here are two vignettes that present examples of surveillance practices:

> *Vignette 1: Inspection of three persons with suspicious behavior in a car.*
> For about 30 minutes the focus was on three persons, dressed in green shirts, sitting in a car in a parking lot. The dispatchers in the control room consulted the police databases by using the car's license plate to figure out if there was anything suspicious. A police car that was driving in the neighborhood stopped at the scene, alerted by the operations center personnel. Two patrol officers asked the occupants of the car, two young men, for their identification. They hid two bottles of liquor under the front seat of the car, an action that was captured by the camera. The operator zoomed in on one of the persons who tried to hide his hands. It was unclear what he was doing. One of the boys became aware of the big camera (that was temporally installed as part of the increased surveillance during the event), and started to point at it. The operator's reaction: "Of course, cameras are no secret, they are big and visible". One of the officers in the operations center gave the officers on patrol some information about the operational picture on the basis of the camera images.

> *Vignette 2: Students hanging out on a balcony.*
> During past *Unofficial* celebrations students threw things off balconies onto the street, sometimes aiming at police officers passing by—it became part of their cat and mouse game. Not only did they show this kind of maladaptive behavior, students fell off balconies because they were too drunk to remain stable. Two years ago a student died after he fell from a balcony. This is the reason balconies have become heavily surveilled during *Unofficial*. One student building, the tallest on campus, was under constant surveillance during the course of the event. Regularly, the operator zoomed in on windows and balconies where there was a lot of green to be seen. If there were too many people on balconies, the patrol officers were immediately informed about the risky situation. The striking green color of the students' outfits was an advantage for the police during the event. If there was a concentration of green, the operator used the cameras to estimate the number of students at one location: "During the last half an hour about at least one hundred Greens went into this building" was the message to the officers on patrol. To capture groups of students with cameras was more difficult during the darker hours, because then the cameras only project black and white images.

The vignettes illustrate how the CCTV system was expanded (with temporal cameras) and employed, as well as how the liminal period (i.e. *Unofficial*) mediated the evolution of the surveillance technology. Camera surveillance was focused on behavior that was suspicious or deviant and directly related to *Unofficial*. Sometimes the operator zoomed in on faces in order to capture details of his/her identity. This was done not to undertake immediate action, but for later evidence if needed and requested. Because of the CCTV in use, the police have more evidence about the behavior of individuals than they would otherwise have if there was no operator to target the camera or use the zooming function. The cameras in 'normal' use would not have been able to do this, because those cameras cannot zoom in or out or be selective independently; they remain in a particular position. Likewise, the operator sometimes followed the officers on patrol with a camera: "Now we have proof of what they are doing, so that we later can say: we have proof and not hearsay".

Social Media in-use in the Control Room
During *Unofficial*, CCTV was used in combination with social media surveillance. Watching social media websites, in particular Facebook and Twitter, was an integral part of the operation room's practice. In 'normal' situations the police do not study the social media behavior of students all the time. However,

during the event publicly available information on Facebook, Twitter, and PicFog was used intensively by the police. In combination with the CCTV images, it created what the police refer to as 'the operational picture of the event'. Information on social media websites was regularly compared with the data of the emergency response system and/or with the information from the police on patrol. Not surprisingly, students celebrating *Unofficial* were very active on several social media websites. Vignette 3 gives an idea of how social media was used in the control room setting:

> *Vignette 3: Use of social media websites*
> In the early morning there was an incoming call about a fire in an apartment building. The local police checked Facebook and Twitter to see if there was any information about the fire. And indeed, someone had posted a message: "10am and the drunken stupidity of Unofficial St Patrick's day has already started a fire on campus. There are times I hate this town". Some Tweets mentioned the exact address of the building. For the police this additional information was an incentive to undertake action: "For me this is serious enough now, I will send my people to the scene" one officer announced. Social media became, in addition to CCTV, a source to double-check the incoming information of 9-1-1 emergency calls. One of the officials explained this to me: "It is useful information, only if you use it right. It can be a falsifier for them but not for us".

By looking at posted pictures and footage on the internet, officers were able to get a feeling for what was going on outside. This was useful because the serenity of the emergency control room was in sharp contrast to the excitement on the streets and in the dorms. Some examples of Tweets that were projected on the screens include: "Gonna be an interesting day. It's Unofficial St Patrick's day at UofI. The students are already out in green drinking booze on the porches"; "Unofficial St Patrick's day is considered a battle through my eyes… between my body and alcohol. So yeah, it is considered GEAR"; "Celebration of St Patricks day. Carefree kids drinking/partying around the clock".

Watching social media and talking about the images was a way for the officers to kill the time. Every now and then the officers joked about the cameras: "Why don't you go to the street and jump up and down in front of them!" By watching social media in combination with camera images they could not only 'taste' the atmosphere outside but initiate conversations about the event (and past events) to make their work bearable during the quieter moments. In other words, social media was a welcoming source of variety in their work. The conversations became more and more comradely, particularly in the hours when not much was going on in the streets of the Twin Cities, immediately becoming professional if the situation became threatening for public safety.

Back to Normal

Towards the end of *Unofficial*, when the action was 'almost over', the officers kept each other sharp by reflecting upon the camera images, telling each other stories about their work and actions during previous occasions, still their attention eventually waned. One officer entered the room, late at night, and winked to one of the officers in the room: "Drive with me home tonight, and then you will see where the working lieutenants are". And although there was no planned end to the event—after all, the event is unofficial— most of the student activities visible to the cameras were over by 1 am. A recurrent remark towards the end of the evening and at the beginning of the night was: "It is like a regular Friday night now".

> *Vignette 4: The banality of surveillance*
> Late at night we had dinner in the operations center. The social media footage, the projected images of CCTV, and local television news reports fused into a long, cluttered image that we eventually experienced as cinema-like. It was as if we—present in the operations center—were watching a movie: eating pizza, drinking soda and staring at fragments of camera images from an event far away without a clear plot, but fascinating

enough to hold our attention because we were, in one way or another, involved in the action, like the prison guard at the Panopticon. Halfway through the evening, a student, clearly in a state of drunkenness, yelled at the camera of the local television station: "And the police gave us a lot of trouble today!" causing general laughter in the operating room. The State police officer from Chicago left the room after the last shift. With a wink he said to the local police officers: "Stay away from the Greens and see you next year!" A local police officer: "So, I don't have to show up this Monday?" His chief in a direct reaction: "Yes of course you have to, Monday it is back to business!"

In those hours the absorption of footage posted on social media websites in combination with staring at the CCTV images became like zapping through television channels. Or, to put it more reflectively, the control room practice became an integral "…part of the visual repertoire of modern life, embodying a compulsive desire to record time and space, in all its banality, in pursuit of something of interest" (Gates and Magnet 2007: 283).

Discussion and Conclusion

During *Unofficial* 2012 the police issued 310 tickets, not significantly different than the year before, when 328 tickets were issued. The numbers: 177 fines for minors in possession of alcohol, 87 for public possession of alcohol, 17 for adults allowing under-age kids drinking, 5 for throwing dangerous material, 3 public urination, 21 other offenses, like carrying open liquor out of premise, sale of alcohol to a minor, and the possession of cannabis (source: The University's Division of Public Safety, 9 March 2012; The News Gazette 2012c). University of Illinois students received 116 of the 310 tickets. The authorities mentioned in the media that the vast majority of tickets were fines for 'out-of-towners' (i.e. students that came from other cities to celebrate *Unofficial*) stressing that those not exposed to the early warnings of law enforcement were more likely to violate the announced rules (The News Gazette 2012b, 2012c).

CCTV and social media certainly helped the police to make sense of what was going on in the streets. However, it also became clear that the information was often redundant or resulted in overload. There were simply too many images for too long a period of time projected on the walls. This was a real problem, according to the operator: "…even with trained people watching cameras you only can get 20 minutes out of it. They are actually monitoring cameras before they just kinda go blind to it".

From the observations presented above and from the secondary sources it can be concluded that the temporarily intensified, liminal surveillance was directly related to the (mis)conducts of students and visitors celebrating *Unofficial*. The event clearly mediated the use of the surveillance technologies. At the same time, the use of surveillance technologies was more narrow and intensive during *Unofficial* than in the 'normal' situation. In a normal situation CCTV images can be consulted by individual police officers (i.e. by using their iPad system) but they are not watched real time by a team of officials, let alone projected on large screens in a big control room. CCTV and social media in normal use is for retrospective surveillance only. The liminal use of the system during the event has consequences for the surveillance practices of the police during *Unofficial*. And it helps us to better understand the drivers for increased surveillance. The multi-dimensional perspective introduced earlier in this paper can make this more explicit.

First of all, the time/space dimension of liminal surveillance reveals that the temporal intensive use of CCTV and social media in the emergency control room enabled the police to isolate their surveillance and patrol related to festival from regular policing activities. In the control room the police could combine the CCTV images with other sources of information such as social media websites and share it directly with colleagues from different disciplines (ambulance services, fire service) in the room. One officer explained

that it was important to "[k]now their names and see the faces". Also, the control room united various disciplines including law enforcement teams to focus on campus safety and crime.

In the second place, the social dimension of liminal surveillance enables us to reflect upon the interaction of those who participated in the control room setting. The *Unofficial* event, with the emergency control room temporally in full operation, enabled a smoother and more effective exchange of information between different professional disciplines. For the police officers on patrol it meant that they could directly (physically or by means of their communication systems) consult the control room—where a team of professionals was ready to assist them in their actions and where the CCTV system could be used to monitor different locations at one time—and combine it with the information they got from the street. In that sense the system functioned as a force multiplier. Also, it gave the professionals the ability to experience—in Turner's terms—communitas, a kind of togetherness and camaraderie that can help them to build and sustain good relationships.

In the third place, with the normative dimension we can better understand what were seen as legitimate and possible surveillance practices. Liminal surveillance during the event enabled officials to test the system in an 'extreme' situation: both the operator, who could improve his skills by using the system, and the officers in the room, who passively made use of the system, gained better knowledge about what can and cannot be done. They could also advocate the use of the CCTV system and seek support for expansion: conversations with temporal visitors of the room were important to further promote CCTV. The installation of more cameras is a huge investment—as one officer told me "…it is a very expensive window"—so the more the police can show what can be done with it, the better it is for them.

Finally, the power dimension sheds light on how the authorities could raise attention to the use of CCTV on campus to create public awareness for security, emergency response, and policing practices. Before *Unofficial* and in the aftermath of it, the University of Illinois Police Department was engaged in a debate about security, safety, and privacy on campus. In particular, *The Daily Illini* was an important venue for providing the audience an idea of their otherwise more hidden activities and to manipulate public opinion. Aaron Landers, one of the department's police officers, gave a substantial interview to *The Daily Illini* (interview by Quilici 2012a). In a response on the same page, staff writer Morgan Quilici (2012b) stated: "For a long time I have looked at police officers in a way that made them seem almost inhuman. They are just like us. They have feelings and emotions. They have families".

After *Unofficial*, surveillance went back to 'normal'. However, this observation does not mean that the surveillance system did not change at all after the event was over. In fact, the liminal surveillance has a legacy: law enforcement convinced the local authorizes that the (CCTV) surveillance techniques have added value for their work. The operator told me later that more cameras will be added to the system in the years to come.

Acknowledgements

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