

Conference “Cultures of Privacy”: Abstracts & Bios

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Thursday, 26 June 2014, 15.00 | KEYNOTE ADDRESS

David Vincent

Privacy and Surveillance in the Nineteenth Century

David Vincent is professor of Social History at the Open University, UK. He is a visiting fellow of Kellogg College, Oxford University and former president of the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities. He is the author or editor of fifteen books and numerous articles on British and European social history. His publications include *The Culture of Secrecy: Britain 1832-1998* (1998) and *The Rise of Mass Literacy. Reading and Writing in Modern Europe* (2000). His forthcoming book, *I Hope I Don't Intrude: Privacy and its Dilemmas in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, will be published in January 2015.

Abstract

This keynote address will focus on the first public controversy about state espionage of private communication which took place in Britain in 1844. It will seek to understand why the intense public debate marked a watershed in attitudes to government interception of mass communication and how the event has echoes of the current debate about digital surveillance. Through an examination of the printed and visual commentary on the controversy it will discuss the main elements of the privacy panic which ensued inside and outside Parliament. These included evidence of an actual abuse, a suspicion of a deliberate government cover-up, an energetic and varied popular media, a sense living amidst a revolution in communication, an apprehension that technical change had unknowable implications, and finally a conviction that the distributed power of the networks could be vested in a single government agency.

Friday, 27 June 2014, 9.30 | PANEL I

Privacy and Democracy

Introduction: Volker Depkat is professor of American Studies at the University of Regensburg.

Chair: Jürgen Gebhardt is professor emeritus of Political Science at the Friedrich-Alexander-University of Erlangen-Nuremberg.

Sunshine Hillygus

Privacy and Electoral Politics in Today's Information Environment

Sunshine Hillygus is associate professor of Political Science and director of the Initiative on Survey Methodology at Duke University. Her research examines American political behavior, campaign communication strategy, survey methodology, and information technology and society. She is co-author of *The Hard Count: The Social and Political Challenges of the 2000 Census* (2006) and *The Persuadable Voter: Wedge Issues in Political Campaigns* (2008). She received her PhD in political science from Stanford University in 2003. Before Duke, she taught at Harvard University, where she was the Frederick S. Danziger Associate Professor of Government and founding director of the Program on Survey Research.

Abstract

Dramatic changes in the information environment and technology have fundamentally changed electoral politics in the United States. Every citizen who registers to vote will be asked to disclose some information about his/her political identity. Often unbeknownst to him/her, the state voter list is then shared with the two major political parties and, in some states, to commercial entities, interest groups, and inquiring individuals. Parties and candidates marry this information to consumer and government data to predict if and how each citizen will vote. A voter's political identity is now effectively public, with consequences for campaign communication strategy, as this information is used to determine who a candidate contacts and what message they send.

Sebastian Haunss

Contestation about Privacy in the Digital Realm

Sebastian Haunss is senior researcher at the Collaborative Research Center 597 "Transformations of the State" at the University of Bremen. His research areas are social conflicts and political mobilizations in the knowledge society, legitimation of states, international organizations and economic orders, social networks and social movements. Recent publications are *Conflicts in the*

Knowledge Society: The Contentious Politics of Intellectual Property (2013), *Enforcement vs. Access: Wrestling With Intellectual Property on the Internet* (2013), *The Politicisation of Intellectual Property: IP Conflicts and Social Change* (2011), and *Politics of Intellectual Property: Contestation over the Ownership, Use, and Control of Knowledge and Information* (co-editor, 2009).

Abstract

Edward Snowden's revelations about the surveillance practices of the US-American NSA and its British counterpart GCHQ mark a (preliminary) nadir in the history of privacy in the digital realm. They demonstrate forcefully that every aspect of digital communication is systematically monitored by state surveillance agencies – not just in these two countries but most likely in every country according to its technological means. In addition to that, private firms are building their own databases, in which they record the traces of our digital lives. Against this backdrop I will discuss whether and under which conditions the demise of privacy in the digital realm might be reversed, by addressing the question whether there are any collective actors visible who might successfully mobilize for privacy protection in the digital realm and thus put the issue on the political agenda. Looking at recent conflicts about internet politics, I analyze how privacy issues have been framed in the political debate and to which extent actor coalitions have formed around these issues.

Friday, 27 June 2014, 11.30 | PANEL II

Privacy and Public Feeling

Chair: Katharina Gerund is assistant professor of North American Studies at Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg.

Erika Doss

Public Feeling, Public Healing: Contemporary Memorials and the Mediation of Grief

Erika Doss is professor of American Studies at the University of Notre Dame, where she offers courses in American, modern, and contemporary art and cultural studies. Her wide-ranging interests in American visual cultures are reflected in the breadth of her publications which include *Benton, Pollock, and the Politics of Modernism: From Regionalism to Abstract Expressionism* (1991), *Spirit Poles and Flying Pigs: Public Art and Cultural Democracy in American Communities* (1995), *Elvis Culture: Fans, Faith, and Image* (1999), *Looking at Life Magazine* (editor, 2001), *Twentieth-Century American Art* (2002), and *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (2010). She is co-editor of the "Culture America" series at the University Press of Kansas, and is on the

editorial board of *Public Art Dialogue* and *Material Religion: The Journal of Objects, Art, and Belief*. Her current book project is “Spiritual Moderns: Twentieth Century American Artists and Religion.”

Abstract

In the past few decades, thousands of new memorials have materialized in the American public landscape, including seemingly spontaneous offerings of flowers, candles, balloons, and teddy bears erected at sites of tragic and traumatic death, such as New York’s World Trade Center in 2001. These temporary memorials represent changed cultural and social practices regarding formerly privatized performances of grief and mourning, and changed understandings of death and dying. They further embody heightened expectations of the capacity of public, material, and affective cultures to negotiate the psychic crisis of sudden and often inexplicable loss. Focusing on select examples of temporary memorials, this paper considers the expanded presence and privileging of grief, among other public feelings, in contemporary American means of commemoration.

Katja Kanzler

Privacy, Professionalism, and the Female Lawyer in Contemporary TV Legal Drama

Katja Kanzler is professor of North American Literature at the Technical University Dresden. Her research interests revolve around the forms and dynamics of textuality across different genres, media, and cultural contexts, and the cultural work they enable, especially concerning negotiations of ‘race,’ class, and gender. Her publications include *Participating Audiences, Imagined Public Spheres: The Cultural Work of Contemporary American(-ized) Narratives* (co-editor, 2012), *Ambivalent Americanizations: Popular and Consumer Culture in Central and Eastern Europe* (co-editor, 2008), and *‘Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations’: The Multicultural Evolution of Star Trek* (2004). Her current project – which is part of the research initiative “Selbst-Bewusste Erzählungen” by American Studies Leipzig and Dresden – explores how and to what discursive effects legal fictions cast the law as narrative.

Abstract

In the emphatically gendered matrix of (classic) tv genres, the legal drama emerged as a ‘masculine’ text-type – a gendering that is closely connected to the genre’s interest in professionalism and to the ‘public’ nature of the political and ethical issues that its narratives negotiate in their microcosms of law. This paper explores how recent legal drama series such as *The Good Wife* (2009-present) or *Damages* (2007-2012) develop the figure of the female lawyer to reflect on and adapt the genre’s gender(ed) conventions. It will particularly interrogate the ways in which these programs organize narratives around their

female lawyers that unfold the multiple intersections and interdependencies between the private and the public, asking for the cultural work that such complications of the private-public binarism do in the texts' storyworlds of law.

Friday, 27 July 2014, 15.00 | PANEL III

Aesthetics of Privacy

Chair: Klaus Benesch is professor and chair of English and American Studies at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich.

Julia Watson

Getting or Losing a Life? Privacy and Online Self-Presentation

Julia Watson is professor of Comparative Studies at Ohio State University. She and Sidonie Smith have co-written *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (second, expanded edition, 2010), co-edited five collections on life narrative, and published several essays, most recently on the metrics of authenticity in testimony and on online life narrative. Her recent essays are in the areas of graphic memoir, posthumanism and visual diaries, and voice in memoir.

Abstract

Dave Eggers' recent novel *The Circle* focuses on a Google-like technology corporation with the watchword "PRIVACY IS THEFT." Digital environments, spaces of "intimate publics" (Berlant), situate subjects as assemblages of surfaces, networks, archives, nodes, and avatars. Self-presentation on social media is inescapably relational and interactive. In disclosing aspects of personal life formerly deemed 'private,' subjects tacitly acknowledge its impossibility as lives circulate and are dispersed around the globe. The presentation of self is also contextually embedded in shifting paratexts that blur the boundaries of individual lives and may 'remix' aspects of multiple persons. Exploring key concepts in the contents, coordinates, and categories of self-presentation, such as archive, memory, identity, authenticity, branding, and quantification, points up how the 'self' is resituated as a distributed subjectivity across shifting relationships and ideological investments. The impossibility online of private, controlled self-presentation to selected audiences suggests provocative questions about the possibilities of agency for virtual 'I's.'

Karsten Fitz

Public Photography and Private Lives: American Presidents and the Staging of Privacy

Karsten Fitz is professor of American Studies / Culture and Media Studies at the University of Passau. He has also taught at the Universities of Regensburg and Bayreuth. He studied American Studies and Political Science at the University of Hannover, where he received his M.A. in 1994 and his PhD in 2000, and at the University of Washington, Seattle. Fitz received the Fulbright American Studies Fellowship 2002-03, which he spent at Harvard University and the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, MA. His book publications include *Negotiating History and Culture: Transculturation in Contemporary Native American Fiction* (2001) and *The American Revolution Remembered, 1830s to 1850s: Competing Images and Conflicting Narratives* (2011). Most recently he has edited an anthology titled *Visual Representations of Native Americans: Transnational Contexts and Perspectives* (2012).

Abstract

The concept of Republican Citizenship has served as a powerful cultural ideology in the U.S. since the emergence of a decidedly American political culture during the American Revolution. The fact that George Washington was frequently hailed – and as often represented – as American Cincinnatus during the revolutionary period and the Early Republic demonstrates how closely the private and the public sphere have always been connected in American political culture. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, statues (e.g. by Jean Antoine Houdon) and paintings (e.g. by Edward Savage and John Trumbull) established a visual aesthetics of privacy which reflected the cultural values and expectations projected onto the American head of state. Although the selflessly patriotic citizen-soldier as political leader has in the meantime been replaced by various, less mythic versions of the common-man category, the private lives of American presidents are still considered of immense importance in American political culture today. Because in the U.S. the private lives of presidential candidates are considered as providing essential information on the candidate's capability to run the country in a virtuous way, it is taken for granted that the private sphere of political leaders is of public – that is media – interest. While putting a clear focus on Barack Obama / Pete Souza, this talk will discuss the visual aesthetics of privacy in the photographic record of the American president since the Kennedy administration. To this day visual representations of staged privacy of American presidents and presidential candidates are cultural interpretations rather than historical documentations, because they are used as tools to reflect a reciprocal rather than a dichotomous relationship between the private and the public spheres that goes back to the era of the American Revolution.

Saturday, 28 June 2014, 10.00 | PANEL VI

Privatization of Public Space

Chair: Barbara Hahn is professor of Economic Geography at the University of Wuerzburg and Director of the Bavarian American Academy.

Steven Hoelscher

Making Place Public in an American City

Steven Hoelscher is professor of American Studies and Geography, and former chair of the Department of American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. He regularly teaches graduate seminars on the history and geography of photography at the Harry Ransom Center, where he is Academic Curator of Photography. His books include *Reading Magnum* (2013), *Picturing Indians* (2008), *Textures of Place* (with Paul Adams and Karen Till, 2001), *Heritage on Stage* (1998), and he has published more than 50 book chapters and articles in such journals as *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, *American Quarterly*, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *Ecumene*, *Geographical Review*, *GeoJournal*, *History of Photography*, *Journal of Historical Geography*, *Public Historian*, and *Social and Cultural Geography*. In 2005, he received the University of Texas resident's Associates Teaching Excellence Award and for the past decade he's been teaching comparative urban history in Vienna, Austria.

Abstract

The proliferation of gated communities, parks managed by private corporations, and shopping malls as the model for retail development – all monitored by surveillance cameras – define much of what's important about American cities today. In this paper, by use of a case study from New Orleans, I argue that the increasingly privatization of public spaces is best seen as part of a long struggle for the right to the city.

Christian Stein

Mutating Public Private Governance: The Transatlantic Journey of Business Improvement Districts

Christian Stein is research associate at the Department of Human Geography at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main. His research and teaching interests are critical urban geography, urban planning, and empirical social research. Relating to his PhD project his research is focusing on the analysis of the international mobilization of urban revitalization policies. Within that context, he is analyzing the spread and transfer of business improvement districts based on empirical work in several European cities. His project is part of the DFG (German

Research Foundation) funded joint research project on “Re-Ordering the City in the Neoliberal Era.” He holds a diploma in social geography, geographical information science, and urban planning and he studied at the University of Münster and the University of Lund/Sweden.

Abstract

Business Improvement District (BID) are discussed as emblematic, both for increasingly important forms of privately financed and regulated urban development and for the mobilization of such policies across a multitude of cities around the world. In many cities, particularly in North America, BID became crucial for service, maintenance and even planning and development in inner-city districts. Moreover, even in some cities in Europe, the momentum of privatized urbanism shaping public space is ascribed to the implementation of BID during the last decade. However, I argue that BIDs in Germany are not just other examples of modes of privatizing urban development modeled on their north-American archetypes. Rather they are highlighting the mutability and resilience of entrepreneurial urbanism and the importance of welfare state structures paralleling the rolling-out of neoliberal urban governance.

Bavarian American Academy

The BAA promotes interdisciplinary research in the social and cultural sciences. Funded by the Bavarian State Ministry of Education, Science and the Arts, the Academy provides a platform for Bavarian Scholars investigating North American culture, society, politics, and economics in their hemispheric and global contexts.

The organizers wish to thank the following institutions for their support:



Contact

Bayerische Amerika-Akademie
Bavarian American Academy

Karolinenplatz 3
80335 München

Tel. + 49-89-54 50 40 30

Fax + 49-89-54 50 40 35

info@amerika-akademie.de

www.amerika-akademie.de

