

# Digital Citizenship after Snowden:

## Self-Regulation and the Need for Critical Education Strategies



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Vienna, 2014



## Research and methods



- Surveillance perceptions and electronic participation
- Mixed-method research design
- Survey questionnaire (N = 799 internet users), mixed-mode, convenience, snowball and purposive sampling
- Focus groups and interviews:
  - Experts, activists, university students and citizens with different political positioning

## Contextual background

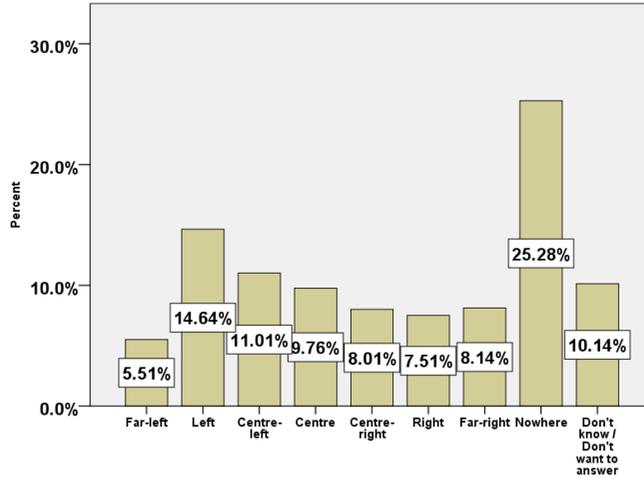


- Greece: long legacy of state surveillance (Samatas 2004)
  - Mechanism of sociopolitical control
  - Traditionally, state surveillance of left parties and activists
- In recent times of crises:
  - Ubiquitous financial surveillance
  - Surveillance of political elites and activists
- Communicated by the media in a dramaturgical way

# Political spectrum



Where would you position yourself on the political spectrum?

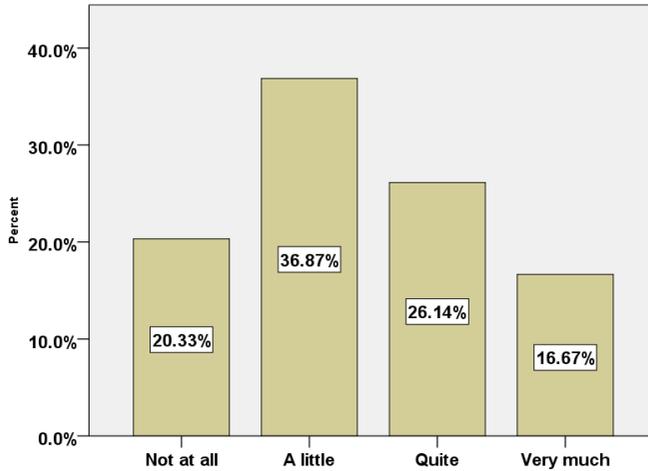


N = 799

# Internet surveillance



Are you concerned about the ability the state authorities have to monitor Internet activities (e.g. email, social networking sites etc.)?

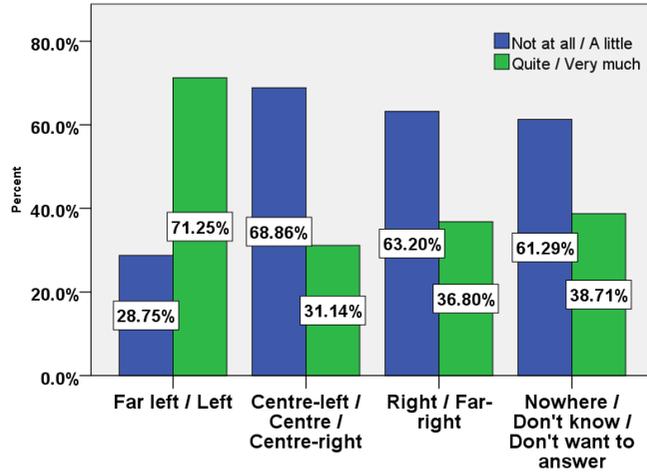


N = 792 (excluded Don't Know responses and missing values)

# Internet surveillance and political positioning



Are you concerned about the ability the state authorities have to monitor Internet activities (e.g. email, social networking sites etc.)?

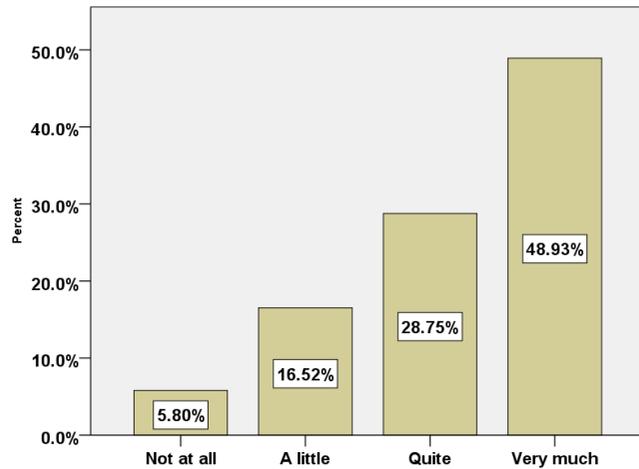


N = 792 (excluding missing values)

# Transnational surveillance



Are you concerned that foreign, transnational authorities also have the above abilities to monitor citizens of Greece?

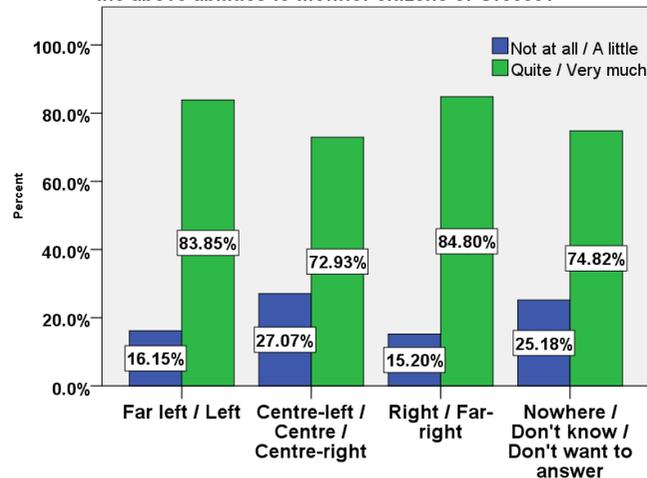


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## Transnational surveillance and political positioning



Are you concerned that foreign, transnational authorities also have the above abilities to monitor citizens of Greece?



N = 793 (excluding missing values)

## Personal ideology



“[...] If somebody at this moment acquires access to my Facebook account [...] can identify my political ideology. That I am left etc. In that sense, exactly because this kind of identification can be done by any other person who sees me offline in my daily life, because I participate, for example, in demonstrations, in trade unions etc; because anyway these are things for which I am not hiding and I share them openly [offline], this kind of information I also share online”

**(Focus group discussion: Left wing participant)**

## Regime type and quality of democracy



“Let’s say that we were at this moment in China [...] if I would like to organise a mobilisation of the Tibetan people, it should be taken for granted that this effort would be suppressed by the Chinese government. Although it may have been clear on Facebook that I support Tibet - because I would have posted pictures of bold people with pink clothes - however, if I wanted to organise such a mobilisation, I would not have done it, neither via Facebook nor via email”

**(Focus group discussion: Left wing participant)**

## Trade-off between Lawfulness vs. usefulness



“The legal framework - what is legal and what is not - is not actually clear. There are some crucial moments, in which certain things must not be shared [...] I think this is the limit, what can the other [the government] use against you legally or practically in order to obstruct you [...] If somebody can use a certain information [against me], even if not legally, in that case I wouldn’t use the internet, not even the phone”

**(Focus group discussion: Left wing activist)**

## Technical vs. legal knowledge / perceptions



- “[...] While I am interested in surveillance as an issue, I am not personally concerned; I take for granted that I am a target of surveillance and I don’t care [...] In any case, if you are a legal expert, you know that even if you are being surveilled, this (data) cannot be used against you [...] I personally feel this relative safety”

**(Interview: Professor of Law)**

- “[...] I know very well that I am being surveilled and I try in every way to prevent the interception of my private files [...]”

**(Interview: Professor of Informatics)**

## ICTs, politics and individual cybersecurity



- **Between self-censorship and apathy**
  - “I am totally apolitical in my electronic communications; I have never expressed there any political views” **(Interview: Former intelligence agency member)**
  - “[...] an IT specialist can be protected 100% against surveillance” **(Interview: Professor of Informatics)**
  - “(I don’t take any measures) because I am convinced that whatever I do at an amateur level, somebody who will want to have access (to my data) will have it; therefore, why should you bother?” **(Interview: Professor of Law)**

## The large category of apolitical citizens



- **I have nothing to hide or to be afraid of**
  - “Personally speaking, it is not of my concern even if I am under surveillance 24 hours a day, I don’t care, I have nothing to hide or to be afraid of” (**Apolitical participant**)
- **Imaginative perceptions of surveillance**
  - “Everybody is being surveilled. The phones and movements of all of us. They can at any time track you, see anything, what you said, what you did, with whom you were, were you were [...]. I believe that when I speak on the phone with anybody, with my mother, my friends, my colleagues, all of these are being surveilled at any particular moment” (**Apolitical participant**)

## Conclusions



- **Feeling of powerlessness**
- **Effects of raising of awareness?**
- **Political economy of surveillance**
  - **Who is surveilling? Whom? Why?**
- **Critical education strategies**
  - **Social, political and legal understanding**
  - **Technical literacy**

**Thank you.**



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