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Who is Afraid of Dataveillance? Attitudes towards Online Surveillance in a Cross-Cultural and Generational Perspective

Bakgrund/Frågeställning

In the age of social media and surveillance capitalism, state and corporate surveillance converge technologically, using the same technologies for crime prevention and national security as for monitoring the digital consumer. As state and market surveillance converge, it can be hypothesized that media users with different experiences of state surveillance might also differ in their attitudes to commercial surveillance. This paper compares media users in three different countries, with three different historical surveillance regimes, to respond to the question whether such past experiences have had an impact on attitudes towards present forms of state and corporate dataveillance.

A quantitative online survey sample from Estonia, Portugal, and Sweden includes two generational cohorts – one older, having first-hand experiences of state surveillance regimes (in Estonia and Portugal), and one younger, lacking such experiences. The analysis reveals that attitudes towards state surveillance are related to attitudes towards corporate dataveillance, but these two attitudinal components have different predictors and are generation-specific phenomena. The study also indicates cross-cultural differences concerning experiences of state surveillance among older generations and inter-generational variation regarding attitudes towards surveillance in all countries. This suggests that the formation of generational values, mindsets and practices are more strongly connected to global cultural and technological developments, as well as to individual-level trade-offs, than to past experiences of authoritarianism.

Metod och Resultat

Konklusion