Algorithmic Surveillance: Big Data, Algorithms, and Social Control

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This paper focuses on the uses and consequences of big data and predictive analytics in social control. After tackling the issue of defining "big data", the paper presents the implications of big data in the production of knowledge. It then focuses on selected domains of informal and formal social control, such as policing and criminal justice systems, which are being reshaped by big data and predictive analytics. By focusing on the impacts of predictive analytics on economic-political systems and democratic processes, the author claims that democracy and the rule of law are being reshaped into an "algorcracy" – the rule of the algorithm. This paper then focuses on automatization in policing and criminal justice settings by presenting specific predictive analytics already in use or in testing in pre-trail detention, sentencing, and parole procedures. It concludes by presenting the negative consequences of big data and predictive analytics in social control and by offering remedies for such.