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Chapter 3
What Has COVID-19 Taught Us About Democracy? Relational Democracy and Digital Surveillance Technologies

Elena Ziliotti

3.1 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has called attention to the absence in the West of institutions and procedures to debate health surveillance tools in a democratic way. The democratic ideal of governance entails that the political decisions that have the potential to affect the members of society are taken by the citizens, or indirectly by their representatives. The democratic principle of self-governance suggests that in a democratic society, the decision to experiment with digital surveillance technologies must not be insulated from public debates, especially when such experimentation (or the abstention from it) can significantly affect parts of the public in either the short- or long-term. Inputs from different parts of the public must inform decisions on the principles that guide digital surveillance technologies and the use of these technologies must be the subject of debate by the citizens or their representatives.

The democratic idea of self-government contrasts with the practice of experimentation with digital surveillance technologies in several Western democracies. Private corporations like Facebook and Google exercise unlimited power on algorithms that structure the national and international digital public sphere of many

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democratic societies (Simons and Gosh 2020: 2).[1] Yet, during the COVID-19 crisis, many Western democratically-elected governments decided to refrain from using certain new technologies (such as control of phone geolocation data, transportation card data, and CCVTs footage) to manage the pandemic.[2] An exception to this is the introduction of voluntary contact-tracing apps to track the COVID-19 cases, which were introduced in some Western countries with the promise that they could be useful in preventing the spread of COVID-19, while also respecting citizens' privacy. However, the introduction of these apps proved not to be well-timed and few of these apps turned out to be effective.[3]

This chapter contributes to the existing literature on the relationship between democracy and digital surveillance. It argues that the paradoxical relation of Western countries with capitalist and state-driven forms of experimentations with digital surveillance technologies urges us to rethink how democracies must engage with these technological experimentations. I argue that the relational conception of democracy offers a viable approach to explain how digital surveillance can be put under democratic control and how such experimentations with new digital surveillance technologies can take place. The relational account of democracy offers a context-sensitive approach to digital surveillance technologies that places public deliberation at the centre of the democratic decision-making process. Furthermore, reaching a decision independently from the public discussion can deprive decision making from key contextual information and the epistemic inputs of different members of society that may hold the key to finding a successful solution in a given situation. Not only does this suggest that the existence of digital surveillance activities conducted by private parties should be a matter of democratic deliberation, but also that, if digital surveillance technologies are going to have a strong societal impact on the fight against COVID-19, then there should be a public discussion on the topic. To illustrate how relational democratic experimentations with digital surveillance technologies would look like, I will discuss the case of South Korea's experimentation with new digital surveillance technologies during 2020, the first year of the pandemic. This chapter does not argue for an increase in surveillance, nor does it support forms of state

[1] The use of digital surveillance technologies managed by self-interested parties is the subject on a heated debate in Wester democracies. Shoshana Zuboff maintains that the deploy of digital surveillance technologies by private corporations has led to a new form of capitalism that exploits users' private experience for the production of data to be sold into the market (e.g. targeted advertising) (Zuboff, 2019a, 2019b). Other scholars like, Stephen Graham and David Wood argue that the adoption of digital surveillance can worsen the position of already marginalized groups (Graham & Wood, 2003). For other critical analyses of digital surveillance, see Gilliom (2001) and Bogard (1996).

[2] Exception to these trend are South and North Dakota. In these states, a contract tracing app gathers citizens' last 10-day location data through GPS, Wi-Fi and cell towers (North Dakota Health, 2020; State of South Dakota, 2020).

[3] The slow progress of contact tracing apps has multiple reasons. In the USA, seven months into the COVID outbreak, these apps were "hampered by sluggish and uncoordinated development, distrust of technology companies, and inadequate advertising budgets and messaging campaigns" (De La Garza, 2020). Low numbers of downloads seem to be a key issue also for the ineffectiveness of the NHS's contact tracing app *COVID app* in UK, where only 28% of the population downloaded the app (Lewis, 2021).

digital surveillance against capitalist digital surveillance. The chapter argues that in a democratic society, legitimate and epistemically-superior experimentation with digital surveillance must be democratically controlled.

Drawing on pragmatist ethics and political discussions on relational democracy, Sect. 3.2 introduces the relational democratic approach to digital surveillance technologies. The interdependence between the individual and the community is at the basis of relational accounts of democracy, which also underlies a specific relationship between democracy and new technologies (Sect. 3.3). To clarify how this different democratic approach to technologies could look like in practice, in Sect. 3.4 I discuss the case of Korea's experimentation with new digital surveillance technologies in their battle against COVID-19.

3.2 Relational Ideal of Democracy

The relational conception of democracy considers democracy as 'a way of life' or 'a culture'; it emphasizes the social and collective experience of democratic life. Elizabeth Anderson maintains that democracy can be understood on three levels: as a mode of governance, as a membership organization and also as 'a way of life' (Anderson, 2009); each of these levels interacts with the others. Unlike liberal democrats, who understand democracy more in institutional terms, relational democrats emphasize the kind of social relations that tight fellow citizens together in a democratic society.[4]

The relational conception of democracy does not reduce democracy to a 'communitarian' ideal, nor does it deny the importance of the cultivation of a person's individuality. It maintains that such cultivation is a social phenomenon and individuality can be developed only through social relationships with others. As John Dewey, the first philosopher to formulate a relational conception of democracy puts it, democracy is "the greatest experiment of humanity – that of living together in ways in which the life of each of us is profitable in the deepest sense of the word, *profitable both to a single person and helpful in the building up of the individuality of others*" (my emphasis, Dewey, 1938/1991: 303). In Dewey's terms and those relational democratic theorists that followed him, the goal of a democratic community is the personal development of its members, but this is not an individual enterprise as individuality can be achieved only in and through the help of a cooperative community (Savage 2002: 93). What is distinctive of democratic life is, therefore, the development of a "habit of amicable cooperation" through which citizens cooperate and justify their preferences concerning the public interest and not on individualistic terms (Dewey, 1981a: 227).

While the relational view of democracy is often presented in opposition to liberal democracy, Dewey did not reject liberal values. In his view, the realization of individual autonomy and freedom presupposes the existence of a collective community

[4] Relational accounts of democracy have been presented by Elizabeth Anderson (1999, 2009), Samuel Scheffler (2010,) and Niko Kolodny (2014)

in which individuals can flourish. From Dewey's standpoint, therefore, the debate between liberals and communitarians that occupied Western political philosophers for most of the 1980s and the 1990s rests on a false dichotomy. In his view, "[t]he real problem comes from supposing that we must choose between individual autonomy and genuine community" (Savage, 2002: 93). Individual liberties and community life are intrinsically intertwined such that the cultivation of one presupposes the cultivation of the other.[5]

Thus relational democrats reject the traditional liberal view of democracy. What is distinctive of traditional views of liberal democracy is the belief that liberal principles must shape and limit democratic rule. Most liberals maintain that the 'government of the people, by the people, for the people' should be directly promoted. Democracy recognizes the self-government authority of individuals by allowing individuals to (more or less directly) govern themselves. Nevertheless, the liberals' support for democracy is not unconditional: to be "conducive to freedom", in Saffron and Urbinati's words, democratic rule must be shaped and defined by liberal values (2013: 443). Relational democrats do not deny the value of liberal principles but question their role in a liberal democratic society. Such principles should be pursued for the sake of the people, such that the people, not the realization of certain states of affairs, are the ultimate objective of interest for democracy (Anderson, 2009: 223). The importance of a cooperative community for the development of individuals redefines the meaning and the goals of democracy. The protection of individual liberties, although valuable for a democratic community, is not the ultimate justification of a democratic society.

Through the lens of relational democracy, democratic politics acquires a new meaning. Dewey maintains that democracy must adopt a scientific attitude which he calls the 'experimental approach' (Dewey, 1981b: 167). Democratic politics is the process through which the community identify what issues are collective problems and puts together different epistemic resources to solve them. Democratic politics is, therefore, a form of 'social inquiry'. Its decision making is a constant and never-ending process, expanding beyond the short-term electoral cycles. Even if a political decision proves to be successful, it could lead to new problems and perhaps the need to consider different perspectives. The goal-oriented and epistemic value of democratic-decision making distinguishes the relational understanding of democratic politics from classic liberal accounts. The latter stress the justifiability of a political decision, while the relational democrats view democracy as first and for most a process where intelligent decisions are made. In democracy, experimenting with new solutions and mistakes are remedied by pulling together different epistemic inputs from members of society (Anderson, 2006).

[5] This idea is well captured in Dewey's words: "[l]iberty is that secure release and fulfillment of personal potentialities which take place only in rich and manifold association with others: the power to be an individualized self making a distinctive contribution and enjoying in its own way the fruits of association" (Dewey, 1946: 150).

3.3 Relational-democratic Approach to New Digital Technologies

The relational understanding of democratic politics redefines the relationship between democracy and technological experimentations, such as those we have recently undergone. From a relational-democratic perspective, in times of crisis, experimentation with new technologies is a possibility open for discussion. Depending on the nature of the challenge that the community faces, even the introduction of digital surveillance technologies can become a topic of public discussion provided that they can help the community to fulfil its collective aim. However, there is a caveat: the relational ideal of democracy does not support the introduction of digital surveillance under all conditions. For pragmatists, democracy is ultimately a community of equals and, therefore, even democratic experimentations with new technologies that may well have a significant impact on society must not be insulated from public deliberation. Furthermore, for pragmatists, an undemocratic decision would also have fewer chances to reach the 'best' decision. Reaching a decision independently from the public discussion can insulate the decision-making from key contextual information and the epistemic inputs of different members of society that may hold the key to finding a successful solution in a given situation.[6]

Having clarified the relational democracy's approach to experimentation with new technologies, it remains unclear how society can initiate such experiments and avoid the potential ethical and practical risks of technological experimentations. Assuming that a democratic society can approve the introduction of digital surveillance technologies, do democratic societies have the means and know-how to manage these technologies? Is it realistic to believe that such experiments would not be abused by self-interested parties? As mentioned above, this hypothesis is not farfetched if we consider real examples of commercial digital surveillance, like the one practised by Facebook and Google.

One way to approach this question is with recourse to Ibo van de Poel's ethical framework for evaluating experimental technology. Van de Poel argues that we have limited operational experience of certain technologies, such that their social benefit or threat cannot be straightforwardly being accessed (2016). Anticipatory methods to predict the social impact of experimental technologies are likely to be only partially successful. The outcome of the introduction of an experimental technology depends on how the technology 'connects' with a given social context, however, our ability to foresee the effect of such connection is limited since we have minor

[6] Contemporary epistemic democratic theories and pragmatism converge on the claim that democracy's value partly depends on its ability to reach 'good' decisions. However, they hold different views of what a 'good' political decision is. While Dewey maintains that the epistemic power of democracy depends of its ability to meet our own reflective satisfaction with the practical results, epistemic democrats maintain that democracy can "track" or "correspond" to truth. For a defense of Dewey's idea of successful decision making against epistemic democratic approaches, see Fuerstein (2021), while for an overview of the epistemic democratic debates on the true-tracking property of democracy, see Landemore (2017).

operational experience of this technology. Thus, surprise and uncertainty about the introduction of these technologies will remain. Furthermore, "anticipation may well lead to a focus on scenarios that are morally thrilling but very unlikely" (van de Poel, 2016: 670). This also suggests that any adoption of these technologies is "de facto experimentation" (van de Poel, 2016: 672) and that a different method to appraise new technological developments from anticipatory studies is in order.

Van de Poel's analysis of experimental technologies is valuable for this chapter because digital surveillance technologies can be considered as a type of experimental technology. The difference between experimental and non-experimental technology primarily depends on the operational experience that we have of that particular technology. Furthermore, "how much and for how long a period, operational experience is required may well depend on the technology and the kind of (social) impacts one is interested in or worried about" (van de Poel, 2016: 670). Arguably surveillance is not a new phenomenon, but digital surveillance is. Our operational experience of this new form of surveillance remains quite limited, especially in emergency situations like a health crisis.

So, assuming that a democratic society can democratically approve the introduction of digital surveillance technologies, how can such a society control the introduction of these technologies? To address the issue of controlling experimental technologies, Van de Poel suggests monitoring the social effects of the new technologies when they are gradually introduced into society and improvements to the technology can be made accordingly (van de Poel, 2016: 670). Drawing on Dewey's approach to social experimentation, van de Poel proposes a set of ethical general principles to guide the introduction of new technologies: non-maleficent, beneficence, respect for autonomy, and justice. The non-maleficence principle requires the prevention of harm in so far as it is reasonably possible and to stop or reduce the damages if harm occurs (van de Poel, 2016: 678). Indeed, it would be unreasonable to require that no harm is caused because social experiments with new technology could give rise to unknown harm (van de Poel, 2016: 678). While the beneficence principle requires new technologies to add value to society, the principles of justice and respect for autonomy entail that social experimentations must be carried out while respecting the procedural justice and the autonomous choice of a group (van de Poel, 2016: 676–77).[7]

Critics may welcome van de Poel's ethical framework but complain that the relational idea of democratic experimentation with new technologies remains quite abstract. Assuming that democracy is 'a way of life' and the ethical principles suggested by van de Poel can be adopted to experimentally introduce and monitor new technologies, how would this democratic experimentation process look like in practice? For my relational democratic argument to work, I will explain how relational democratic experimentations with technologies would look like in such an

[7] In the pragmatic spirit, van de Poel stresses that these principles are not set in stone. They remain open to specification and possible revision according to the specific context of implementation (van de Poel, 2016: 684).

emergency. In the next section, I will discuss the case of South Korea's experimentation with new digital surveillance technologies during the first year of the pandemic.

3.4 The Case of South Korea

Several reasons suggest that South Korea is a good case study for the purpose of this chapter. Firstly, South Korea's population (~51 million) is similar to the Western democracies of medium size, such as Italy (~60 million population), Spain (~47 million population), and England (~56 million population). Secondly, a democratic political and legal framework shape the democratic life of South Korea. Thirdly, the relationship between the relational model of democracy and real forms of democracy in East Asia has been debated for a long time by East-Asian democratic theorists. Among all forms of democracy, several East-Asian scholars consider the relational conception of democracy to be the most compatible with the Confucian values and ideals that continue to shape the socio-political lives of contemporary East Asia.[8]

Despite being one of the first countries to experience a COVID-19 outbreak, South Korea is one of the countries that dealt with the pandemic most swiftly and efficiently. The South Korean containing strategy was defined as "a success" by international media and the term 'K-quarantine' has become synonymous with the South Korean successful management model (Yang, 2021). The results of the South Korean approach to the pandemic are impressive especially if they are compared with those of Western liberal democracies of similar sizes, such as Italy or Spain. These two countries detected their first COVID-19 patient almost one month after the South Korean's first COVID-19 patient and they went on to see far more deaths and cases than South Korea. On 1st January 2021, South Korea reported a total of ~62.000 cases and ~900 deaths (Worldometers, 2021a), while Italy counted more than 2 million cases and almost 75.000 deaths. Spain logged almost 2 million cases and around 60.000 deaths (Worldometers, 2021b, 2021c). In terms of social restrictions and limitation of movements, South Korea only enforced a partial lockdown and did not close its economy nor its borders. On the contrary, Italy experienced one national lockdown that lasted more than two months while Spain went through a lockdown that lasted 3 months. In 2020, the Korean GDP contracted by 2%, while the GDP of Italy and Spain contracted by almost 10% (European Commission (2021a, 2021b).

Several experts attribute South Korea's success in managing the COVID-19 pandemic to three main factors: (a) learning from the history of respiratory diseases, (b) an experimental approach to technologies within the limits imposed by a

[8] For instance, both relational democracy and Confucianism assume a relational conception of the self and value the relationship between citizen and state as valuable for non-instrumental reasons. For a detailed analysis of this issue, see Tan (2003).

democratic legal framework, and (c) social ethos. These considerations make South Korea's experiments with new technologies relevant to the discussion on the experimental relational democratic approach to techno-politics that could be adopted in emergencies.

3.4.1 Learning from the History of Respiratory Diseases

In 2015, South Korea was jolted by the MERS (the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome), which resulted in 36 deaths. This number may appear small to readers that have lived through the COVID-19 pandemic, but at that time it led to a strong public outrage in South Korea. The outbreak cost an estimated loss of US$2.6 billion in tourism revenue and almost US$1 billion on diagnosis, treatment, and other parts of its response. The mismanagement of the MERS outbreak was also one of the reasons for the election loss of the incumbent government (Oh et al., 2020). During the MERS emergency, the government shared information only among expert groups while keeping the public in the dark on several aspects of the crisis management (e.g. civilians were not aware of which hospitals were treating MERS patients). This secrecy made the handling of the emergency difficult for the government which soon lost control of the situation.

South Korea drew on the lessons learnt from this tragic experience in managing the COVID-19 pandemic. Right after the MERS crisis, the new South Korean government proposed 48 reforms to improve public health emergencies in the control of diseases and response to a pandemic. These reforms included the possibility for the government to collaborate with the private sector in the deployment of new digital surveillance technologies for health emergencies. I will return to the specification of these new technologies shortly. For now, I want to point out that, because these reforms were democratically turned into law, their introduction respected two of the general principles listed by van de Poel: justice (procedural justice) and autonomy (the autonomous choice of a group). Furthermore, their introduction mirrors the democratic idea that we discussed in the previous section. The decision to adopt digital surveillance technologies during an epidemic was the outcome of a democratic debate.

The new government also learned its lesson on public communication. Unlike the secretive approach adopted during the MERS epidemic, total transparency became the key for the government's communication with the public in the COVID-19 pandemic. As I explain later, this strategy had some negative consequences, but from a general perspective, the South Korean gradual experimentation with new technologies during the COVID-19 crisis is in line with the relational idea of democratic decision-making which aims to learn about what works and, at the same time, define the conditions under which a solution can be seen as working from the citizens' perspective (Anderson, 2009: 217).

3.4.2 *Experimentation with New Digital Surveillance Technologies*

As discussed in the previous section, some of the laws that the South Korean national assembly passed after the MERS emergency concern the regulation on the use of digital surveillance technologies in emergencies. These new digital surveillance technologies infringe the privacy and freedom of citizens because they gave access to the government to the private information of the citizens although the government committed not to reveal this information to the public.

Distinctive of the South Korean case is the number of digital surveillance technologies that were deployed at the same time and their areas of coverage. To control the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the South Korean government-commissioned private businesses to develop applications and online tracing maps to monitor the movements of COVID-19 patients who were supposed to be in self-isolation, to identify the persons who had come into contact with COVID-19 patients and share information on the crisis management (such as the supply of masks). These platforms gathered data through four main types of surveillance technological strategies: control of phone geolocation data, credit card location data, transportation card data, and CCVT footage. Through these technologies, health authorities could contact and trace thousands of potential patients, and test and isolate patients before they could unknowingly infect others.

To facilitate the identification of potential cases during the early stages, the Infectious Disease Control and Prevention Act was revised after the MERS crisis. The new document allows the government to collect citizens' data, while at the same time it guarantees South Koreans the right to be informed on what data the government is collecting about them. "This Act, therefore, serves as a social contract between the state and Korean citizens to control the use of tracking technologies" (Schwak, 2020: 19). However, in some cases, the case-related information that the government shared with the citizens was sufficient for some members of the public to determine the patients' identities as the information that was shared initially with the public included the patients' ages, the blocks of apartments where they lived, the names of the places they had visited recently, details on how they became infected, and where they were tested and treated (Yang, 2021). This allowed individuals who visited the same places to be quickly informed and tested, but it also contributed to the rise of malicious comments online on what the public perceived as irresponsible choices, like patients' decisions to visit many public places in one day. As Korea's number of deaths for COVID-19 remained low, many people became more afraid of online criticism than contracting the virus (BBC, 2020).

This online social stigmatization highlights the negative effect of the South Korean experiment with new digital surveillance technologies. Although it did not escalate into physical harm, it reportedly caused psychological harm to many COVID-19 patients who suffered cyberbullying. This phenomenon, therefore, reveals an unintentional breach of the privacy of the experimental subjects – a specification of van de Poel's principle of non-maleficence (2016: 679). However, the response of the

South Korean health authorities to social stigmatization and cyberbullying also goes some way to fulfiling van de Poel's principle of non-maleficence. This non-maleficence principle requires preventing harm as far as possible and suspending the experiment or taking measures to reduce harm. The National Human Rights Commission of South Korea took steps to address the rise of a digital 'witch hunt' and requested the government to revise its data management policy to ensure anonymity and protect the mental health of the COVID-19 patients (Schwak, 2020: 20). The Center for Disease Control and Prevention followed suit and issued new guidelines for patient data collection and disclosure: it decided to exclude personally identifiable information (such as work and home addresses) from public discourse, limit the patients' logs from one day before the symptoms occurred to the date of quarantine (or if asymptomatic, one day before the quarantine), and determine the range of contacts traced based on the patient's symptoms, exposure conditions, and timing (Jo, 2020). These decisions were based on the joint effort of the Korean state and other stakeholders to act according to the non-maleficence principle and rectify the damages caused by the introduction of the new technologies.[9]

The South Korean case illustrates how democratic experimentation with new digital surveillance technologies was carried out. As we have learned, such experimentation was not always smooth and despite its material benefits it was indeed also characterized by unforeseen negative effects and detrimental social phenomena. However, it is also an example of progressive and democratic decision-making process that learned from its mistakes and addressed new problems in ways it saw fit. More importantly, this progressive decision-making process did not follow a top-down approach; the public was indirectly involved in the process through democratic representation and more directly in providing epistemic input in the digital public sphere. This suggests not only technological experimentation was being monitored but also there was effective communication between the government and the members of the public.

My analysis of the South Korean case, based on Van de Poel's autonomy principle, reveals one shortcoming of the Korean digital surveillance experiment: the experimental subjects were not able to withdraw from the experiment (condition 13 of Respect for Autonomy, Van de Poel 2016: 680). However, the patients could submit a petition to review their logs. Unlike many Western liberal democracies, there was no public outrage in South Korea over the government's deployment of new digital surveillance technologies. According to a survey carried out in June 2020, South Koreans' valuation of their government responses to COVID-19 was

[9] Another important aspect of these reforms that South Korea approved after the MERS crisis concerned the reorganisation of the South Korean National Infection Prevention and Control System for the Purpose of Immediate Response to Emerging Infectious Diseases. These reforms ranged from the increase of the number of initial response systems to respond to an outbreak of emerging infectious diseases, to the establishment of a 24-h-a-day Emergency Operations Center to collect and monitor information on infectious diseases in real-time, a specialized diagnosis and treatment system with quarantine and isolation facilities to detect and prevent the outbreak of emerging infectious diseases, and the strengthening of the interactive telemedicine system (South Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2015).

the highest in the world (74%) after the one of mainland Chinese people (80%) (Lazarus et al., 2020). There may well be many reasons for this. First, in South Korea, the use of these technologies was regulated by laws that were democratically approved by the representative chambers and this, in turn, contributed to the public trust in the government's management of these technologies. Second, because the experience of the MERS crisis was still vivid in the memory of many South Koreans, many citizens deemed the temporary curb on their liberties as a necessary evil to control the pandemic. Third, experts believe that South Koreans' acceptance of digital surveillance technologies during the health crisis may be due to their social ethos, a distinctive aspect of their public culture.

3.4.3 Social Ethos

Communal values in South Korea were a big part of its success in the management of the pandemic. The introduction of the new technologies took place in a societal context that was characterized by strong public communal values (Stockwin, 2020). A high level of civic solidarity is suggested by the fact that 93% of the South Korean citizens maintained that they were practising social distancing well (Jaung, 2020). Scholars believe that social cohesion is a common characteristic in most of the East Asian region. According to Yves Tiberghien,"[i]n all East Asian countries, saving lives during a natural disaster is seen as the primary duty of the government" and the roots of these trends go back to historical and cultural factors and, perhaps, the long influence that Confucianism had in the region (Tiberghien, 2021: 31). Despite its ethnic and cultural diversity, there is a shared belief among East Asian societies that, "[w]hen a crisis hits, society must pull together" (Tiberghien, 2021: 37). This general belief, together with the early mobilization of centralized pandemic command centres, and the very high and general adoption of masks, allowed several East Asian countries to perform better than what observers expected (Tiberghien, 2021: 44).

Furthermore, the importance of the context in which the new technology was successfully used is evident in the South Korean case. The same success with technological experimentation would not have been possible without South Korea's digital infrastructure. At the beginning of the pandemic, South Korea was a highly technological country; it has the world most extensive broadband and mobile network. Almost all South Korean citizens own mobile phones, with 95% owning smartphones. Approximately 860,000 4G and 5G transceivers, which cover the entire country, record phone locations automatically with complete accuracy. In addition, in 2015, almost 1.5 million CCTVs covered public and private places (Yang, 2021).

Besides digital development, a second key aspect of the South Korean success concerned the democratic aspect of such an experiment. As we said before, social trust was reinforced by the democratic procedure through which such experimentation was legally approved. As pointed out by Juliette Schwak: "[i]t is Korea's

democracy that has proved efficient, rather than technology per se. If lessons must be drawn, foreign observers should be wary of picking tracking technologies as the only solution to the current health crisis" (Schwak, 2020: 21). The case of South Korea is ultimately a case of state digital surveillance, but the discussion of this case does not aim to defend forms of state digital surveillance. On the contrary, the aim is to explain how a democratic society can manage experimentations with digital surveillance by bringing the latter under democratic control.

3.5 Conclusive Reflection

How should democratic societies experiment and control digital surveillance technologies? This question has become more pressing than ever with the COVID pandemic, where different states around the world have implemented different approaches to digital surveillance in their battle against COVID. This chapter has argued that self-government is the core principle of democratic government, thus democratic societies must bring digital surveillance under the control of democratic institutions and the relational ideal of democracy is a useful paradigm from which a democratic approach to digital surveillance democracy can be developed. The relational ideal suggests a context-sensitive approach to experimentation, in which input from members of the public and public deliberations are key to managing technologies. To clarify my claim, I have discussed the case of South Korea's experimentation with new digital surveillance technologies to explain how this can be realized. The relational understanding of democracy does not deny the value of individuality. It aims to complement the liberal understanding of democracy, not compete with it. So going forward, we should not reject liberal values, but we need to re-assess their meanings. A change in the way we conceptualize democracy can not only mark a theoretical turning but also examine how democracy is practised. In other words, it calls us to revise our approach to politics as citizens and to transform the way we 'do' democratic politics.

More research needs to be done to define the exact value of the relational democratic model for experimentation with digital surveillance technologies. We should clarify what other approaches to digital surveillance technologies can be derived from alternative conceptions of democracy and then compare their strengths to those of relational democracy.

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