

Evaluating Closed Circuit Television in a Range of Contexts

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Outline

- What is CCTV?
- Why Evaluate CCTV?
- How Might CCTV Reduce Crime?
- The Current Research
- Methods, Problems and Solutions
- Concluding Comments

Introduction to CCTV

- a form of situational crime prevention
- visual surveillance technology monitoring variety of envts/activities
- most UK towns/cities, housing estates, car parks and public facilities
- growth estimated at 15-20% per yr (Davies, 1996: 183)
- UK ahead in implementing CCTV altho others are quickly following. US, Australia & some EU countries installing cameras in urban envts - unlikely a few years ago. Urban Eye Project

Why Evaluate CCTV?

- £1 billion spent by successive govts (Farrington 2002)
- 500 schemes/ 40,000 cams by end 2002 (Armitage 2002)
- Few and mixed findings (Welsh/Farrington '02; Painter/Tilley '99)
- “post hoc shoestring attempts by the self-interested practitioner” (Tilley in Norris/Armstrong, '99:94)
- Symbol of civil liberties vs. protection of society

How might CCTV reduce crime?

- Two main theoretical models...

Social Control

Increase in rec. crime as product of decrease in social control

Opportunity Reduction

Collective surv. ↓ opportunity for crime by signalling ↑ likelihood of detection. Assoc'd ↓ FoC

- generate mechs by which CCTV may ↓ crime (Armitage 2002)

- **Deterrence**
- **Efficient deployment**
- **Behaviour changes**

potential victims and potential offenders

- **Presence of a 'capable guardian'**

routine activities theory

- **Detection**

NB. These not mutually exclusive and there are also ways in which CCTV might increase recorded crime

The Current Research

16 projects (approx. 98 'schemes')

3 general objectives...

1. Identify and implement different measures to determine the (cost) effectiveness of CCTV
2. Explore and measure public perceptions of scheme operating in their area
3. To assess process by which schemes are implemented/managed

Methods, **Problems** and **Solutions**

- official statistics for intervention area; 'control' area; buffer zone (BZ)
- police recording systems; data protection
- schemes/BZs crossing administrative borders
- long 'run in'; long project duration

- control areas
- choosing a control area
- combining quasi-experimental approach with realist principles

- take account of confounding factors
- e.g. street-lighting
- times of offences (daylight/darkness); calendar of action
- resident/ street surveys – pre-intervention and 1 year post
- CR surveys – qualitative (Norris/Armstrong); quantitative
- focus groups with imprisoned offenders
- cost effectiveness analysis

Farrington's 5 validity criteria for methodological quality

Concluding Comments

The largest and most innovative study of its kind to produce some long overdue evidence to help policy makers decide whether and how to continue with CCTV as part of the CRP

To help answer...

Has the money been spent effectively and, now it has left the Exchequer can it be directed in some (more effective) ways than others?



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