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CRIME AND THE CITY

Public Attitudes towards Open-Street CCTV in Glasgow

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Britain has seen very substantial public and private investment in open-street closed circuit television surveillance in the 1990s. Part of the justification for this has been the assumed ability of CCTV to reduce both crime and the fear of crime. Recorded crime increased in Glasgow after CCTV was installed there. This paper reports the result of a major survey of crime fear levels experienced by locally resident visitors to a city centre both before and after that installation, and compares their responses to those given by locally resident visitors to two control locations. There is majority support for the installation of open-street CCTV, and a majority thought CCTV would make them feel safer. However, when actual, as opposed to prospective, feelings of safety are compared over time, there is no improvement after installation of CCTV cameras. Further, respondents believe that CCTV is better than the police at detecting crime, but that police patrolling are more effective than CCTV in making people feel safer. One way of interpreting this is to suggest that Glaswegians, along with many sociologists, prefer 'natural' to 'electronic' surveillance.

There has been substantial investment in Closed Circuit TeleVision (CCTV) schemes in Britain since the early 1990s. Central and local government investment in open-street CCTV in the UK between the years 1994 and 1997 has been estimated to have been in excess of £100 million (Norris and Armstrong 1998). Before this, some small scale research had indicated that CCTV had had an impact in various closed locations, such as: in shops (Van Straelen 1978; Burrows 1991; Gill and Turbin 1997); on buses (Poyner 1988); in car parks (Poyner 1991; Tilley 1993); on the London Underground (Mayhew *et al.* 1979); and in small businesses (Hearnden 1996). However, in general, instances of fully independent professional evaluation of open-street CCTV schemes has been rare, although Brown (1995) is something of an exception.

Scotland has since adopted town and city centre CCTV schemes with the same enthusiasm as the rest of Britain. There have been two distinctly different investment phases. The 12 schemes that were in operation on 1 January 1996 were all the result of the handiwork of sharp-eyed solitary moral entrepreneurs working in different locations and occupying different roles. Since 1996, funding has become institutionalized, with the Scottish Office playing a key role in encouraging the spread of CCTV by mounting two CCTV Challenge Competitions. In the 1996–7 round, 32 additional schemes were part funded by the Scottish Office (the total capital cost of the 32 successful schemes

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amounted to £4.859 million, of which the Scottish Office contributed £1.851 million), and in the 1997–8 round, 30 more schemes were part funded by the Scottish Office (the total capital cost of these schemes amounted to £4.953 million, of which the Scottish Office contributed £1.861 million).

In November 1994, 32 cameras were installed in Glasgow's city centre. Amongst other goals, the installation of open-street CCTV was targeted to reduce crime and the fear of crime. The effect that the introduction had on recorded crime is considered in Ditton *et al.* (1999); and compared with the rather more favourable outcome discovered in the small town of Airdrie in Ditton and Short (1999). In brief, when fully adjusted to take account of seasonality and other underlying trends, recorded crime in Glasgow rose by about 9 per cent in the year after CCTV installation. This paper considers another issue: whether or not CCTV in Glasgow affects the fear of crime, and at what cost (measured, where appropriate, in terms of perceived reductions of civil liberties).

Background

The most frequently cited opinion poll on public attitudes to CCTV was also conducted in Glasgow, but earlier, in April 1993. The finding that CCTV had a high level of public support has, until now, gone virtually unchallenged. For example, referring to this poll, one commentator has written, 'almost 90 per cent of people support public surveillance projects, with less than 10 per cent saying the cameras infringe their privacy. A mere 5 per cent strongly oppose an extension of CCTV' (Arlidge 1994: 4).

This is sometimes seen as a rather conservative vote of confidence, with, apparently, 96 per cent of the people of King's Lynn being 'happy with the cameras', as are 90 per cent of the residents of Harlow (Geake 1993: 19). The King's Lynn 96 per cent were 'residents interviewed by the local newspaper'. The Harlow data are reported in French (1996). There 1,000 questionnaires were 'randomly delivered to homes in Harlow', and 480 were returned, of which 90 per cent were in favour of CCTV being installed in Harlow. French distinguishes himself by also interviewing those convicted, where he finds that 68 per cent of juveniles with convictions are in favour of CCTV as are 75 per cent of adults with convictions (see, also, Short and Ditton 1998). Further, the Local Government Information Unit cites a 'recent survey' of '1,000 people who responded to a questionnaire in a council's newspaper', wherein 93 per cent said that they were not concerned that a CCTV scheme 'would have implications for civil liberties' (LGIU 1994). Since the early 1990s, 90 per cent in favour has become the popular yardstick.

Yet the data detailed below suggest that, overall, there is a majority support for open-street CCTV in Glasgow, but only at the two thirds rather than at the 90 per cent level. How can the discrepancy be explained?

It has not been possible to discover how the King's Lynn research was conducted, but as it was by a newspaper, it may have been based upon an unrepresentative sample. The 1993 Glasgow survey is both more relevant as a comparison, and was conducted by a respected market research company. Part of the difference might be explained by the fact that it was conducted among suburban residents and those living in other outlying areas, and chiefly focused on whether their willingness to visit the city centre would increase if cameras were installed there (20 per cent said that they would visit more

during the day if CCTV were installed, and 28 per cent that they would visit more at night).

When compared overall with the 3,074 interviewed in the study reported here, their respondents (N = 813) were more likely to be female (53 per cent of theirs were, but only 47 per cent of ours were), and much more likely to be older (71 per cent of our sample was aged 34 years or younger, as opposed to 37 per cent of theirs; 9 per cent of our sample was aged 55 years or older, as opposed to 34 per cent of theirs). As will be seen, older people, those who live away from the city, and women, are far more likely to accept CCTV.

It has to be concluded that their overall finding that 90 per cent of those questioned would not consider CCTV 'to be a personal infringement' of their 'freedom or rights' cannot be generalized to the population that actually uses the city centre whether during the day or at night.

Some support for believing city-using populations are not as enthusiastic about CCTV as some proponents would have us believe can be found in three professional–academic studies. First, Honess and Charman conducted a general population survey in four towns, and concluded, amongst other things, that 'the general survey showed that 36 per cent agreed that CCTV cameras do invade people's privacy', that males and younger people were more likely to be anti-CCTV, and that 'the over sixties are the least likely to take an "anti" CCTV position' (Honess and Charman 1992: 10, 11). Second, Squires and Measor (1996) found that 31 per cent of their sample (N = 779, conducted before CCTV was installed in Brighton town centre) 'criticized CCTV on "civil liberty" grounds', with this being much higher amongst the younger respondents, much lower amongst the older, and much less likely for women. Squires and Measor also point out (1996: 36) that 'these percentages of approval were significantly lower than those achieved by the Council's own two surveys', which demonstrated support at the now customary 90 per cent level.

Third, Bennett and Gelsthorpe (1996: 75, 86) interviewed a census-matched quota sample of 716 Cambridge residents and found, amongst other things, that 'almost two-thirds (64 per cent) of respondents said that CCTV was a good idea' and that 'less than one-third of respondents (28.9 per cent) said that they were worried about the civil liberties implications'.

To conclude that the more careful and targeted a survey is—particularly if it is conducted by professionally independent academic researchers—the less likely are respondents to accept or want CCTV is, on this evidence, persuasive.

Methodology and Sample

Three sweeps of a survey of locally resident visitors to three different, yet comparable, areas of Glasgow were conducted in late January 1994, again in late January 1995, and finally in late January 1996. The sweeps took place nine months before Glasgow's CCTV camera installation became operational in November 1994, and three months and 15 months afterwards. Each sweep took two days to complete, and was conducted on matched Wednesdays and Saturdays in each January.

The same three street interview locations were used each time, representing respectively the city centre (where CCTV cameras were installed), and two control locations,

both situated in busy areas of Glasgow, but not in the centre of the city, and well out of CCTV camera range. Each control location was chosen because pre-piloting indicated a sufficient pedestrian flow between the hours of 8.00 am and midnight, the period when interviewing was to be conducted. All three locations were similar, being crossroads, fronted on all sides by shops, and each having a nightclub located nearby.

However, a city can have only one 'centre', and centres have features that control locations cannot match. Two of these features may have a significant bearing on the results reported below. First, few people actually live in the centre, and people generally (but not always) feel safer where they live. Second, the city centre location was semi-pedestrianized. Pedestrianization has not hitherto been factored into fear of crime research, but this might be a sound idea in the future. It is possible that pedestrianization increases feelings of safety during the day, but decreases them after dark.

In a perfect world, those interviewed in the control locations would be similar to those interviewed in the experimental one. In the real one in which the research was conducted, those interviewed in the city centre were more likely to live in the suburbs and from locations ever further afield; and those interviewed in the two control locations, more likely to come from the residential areas surrounding the city centre.

Interviewers worked shifts in pairs at each location with typical shifts of four hours on followed by four hours off. They were instructed to interview adults aged 16 years and over, on a 'first past the interviewer' basis, after the completion of the previous interview. Groups and individuals were to be approached, selecting the individual to be interviewed as the one having the 'next birthday' if having to choose within a group. Interviewers were asked to aim to complete six interviews each hour, and then, if they wished, have a break before resuming interviewing at the beginning of the next hour. The start time of the interview was taken as the time of the interview. This rigorous procedure was adopted in order to generate a sample representative of those actually using Glasgow's city streets.

A total of 3,074 respondents were interviewed: 1,018 in 1994, 1,026 in 1995 and 1,030 in 1996. The refusal rate was low (less than 5 per cent), and approximately similar in all three sweeps, and in all three locations. The quota recruitment structure ensured a good balance of response at all times of the day, with the only slight variation reflecting the sheer difficulty of finding respondents to interview between 10.00 pm and midnight. This is shown in Tables 1 and 2.

The gender balance varied curiously (with more females available for interview in the city centre) but, again because of the quota recruitment structure, this strictly reflected the gender of persons available for interview. Tables 1 and 2 also show how the 3,074 respondents (by which survey sweep they participated in and then by which location they were interviewed in) varied in terms of the time of day at which they were interviewed, their gender, their area of residence and their age. The year to year comparisons show considerable consistency, and this may be taken as some verification that the recruitment strategy was relatively robust.

Accordingly, the data analysed below represent the views of an opportunity sample: those who are actually in the city centre and control locations between early morning and late at night, in other words, the actual, (as opposed to the potential) 'consumers' of open-street CCTV. Because of the way that these respondents were selected, the resulting sample illuminates the nature of city visitors. Women were more frequently interviewed in daylight (between 8.00 in the morning and 4.00 in the afternoon) and men more frequently interviewed after dark. The age skew was even more marked. Those aged

TABLE 1 *Sample demographics by year of sweep*

N (%/year for each of 4 question groups)	1994	1995	1996	Total
08–12 shift	237	290	273	800
	(23%)	(28%)	(27%)	(26%)
12–16 shift	269	261	306	836
	(26%)	(25%)	(30%)	(27%)
16–20 shift	255	278	304	837
	(25%)	(27%)	(30%)	(27%)
20–24 shift	257	197	147	601
	(25%)	(19%)	(14%)	(20%)
Male	572	538	515	1,625
	(56%)	(52%)	(50%)	(53%)
Female	446	488	515	1,449
	(44%)	(48%)	(50%)	(47%)
From city centre	104	124	129	357
	(10%)	(12%)	(13%)	(12%)
From city outskirts	541	520	541	1,602
	(54%)	(51%)	(53%)	(52%)
From city suburbs	293	276	288	857
	(29%)	(27%)	(28%)	(28%)
From elsewhere	70	106	72	248
	(7%)	(10%)	(7%)	(8%)
Aged 16–34	738	727	720	2,175
	(72%)	(71%)	(70%)	(71%)
Aged 35–59	221	250	239	710
	(22%)	(24%)	(23%)	(23%)
Aged 60+	69	49	71	189
	(7%)	(5%)	(7%)	(6%)
Total	1,018	1,026	1,030	3,074
	(33%)	(33%)	(34%)	(100%)

Where separable matrices do not sum to 3,074, this is because of a small number of missing responses for the relevant questions.

16–34 were interviewed with equivalent frequency in all four shifts. Those over 35 were far more likely to be interviewed in daylight, and this increased markedly with even older respondents.

Street-using Behaviour

Prior to enquiring about their attitudes and perceptions of CCTV, the interviewers asked all respondents how often they visited the location, how safe they felt there, whether or not they would ever avoid certain areas, and whether or not they ever worried that they might be a victim of crime where they were being interviewed. Later, they were asked whether or not they had, indeed, ever been a victim of any crime.

Very few (73; 2 per cent) claimed never to walk alone along the street they were interviewed in. Females outnumbered males 2:1 in claiming not to do so. Overall, men

TABLE 2 *Sample demographics by location of interview*

N (% by location for each of 4 question groups)	First control location	City centre	Second control location	Total
08–12 shift	241	324	235	800
	(25%)	(27%)	(26%)	(26%)
12–16 shift	261	335	240	836
	(276%)	(28%)	(27%)	(27%)
16–20 shift	276	294	267	837
	(28%)	(24%)	(30%)	(27%)
20–24 shift	197	252	151	601
	(20%)	(21%)	(17%)	(20%)
Male	579	546	500	1,625
	(59%)	(45%)	(56%)	(53%)
Female	396	660	393	1,449
	(41%)	(55%)	(44%)	(47%)
From city centre	149	130	78	357
	(15%)	(11%)	(9%)	(12%)
From city outskirts	638	437	527	1,602
	(66%)	(36%)	(59%)	(52%)
From city suburbs	152	470	235	857
	(16%)	(39%)	(27%)	(28%)
From elsewhere	33	168	47	248
	(3%)	(14%)	(5%)	(8%)
Aged 16–34	779	842	554	2,175
	(80%)	(70%)	(62%)	(71%)
Aged 35–59	170	287	253	710
	(17%)	(24%)	(28%)	(23%)
Aged 60+	26	77	86	189
	(3%)	(6%)	(10%)	(6%)
Total	975	1,206	893	3,074
	(32%)	(39%)	(29%)	(100%)

Where separable matrices do not sum to 3,074, this is because of a small number of missing responses for the relevant questions.

were much more likely than women to walk alone where they were interviewed, and younger people more likely than older ones. There was no difference in preparedness to walk alone along the street they were interviewed in between those interviewed in daylight and those interviewed after dark.

This is of some interest. Most of it is predictable, except that so many walk alone—equally frequently at night as during the day—in locations (near night clubs) which common sense would predict to be likely locations of criminal victimization. Those interviewed in the city centre were much less likely to be frequent visitors to it than were those interviewed in the other two locations. This pattern did not change after the installation of CCTV, and so presumably is connected to other features of the city centre (perhaps, for example, because only a few actually live there, this may reduce their preparedness or inclination to visit it).

Respondents were asked how safe they felt when walking alone where they were interviewed. Most (84 per cent) felt safe, with a greater proportion of men (88 per cent)

than of women (80 per cent) reporting feeling safe. The direction of this effect is predictable, although the difference is inexplicably small (although slightly statistically significant). The relationship between feelings of safety and age is slightly more complicated, with both men and women in the youngest age group (16–34 years) feeling less safe than older people of the same sex. This is partly because those interviewed after dark were twice as likely (22 per cent as opposed to 11 per cent) to feel unsafe, and these respondents were more likely to be young than old. Noticeably, those in the city centre were significantly more likely to feel unsafe (24 per cent as opposed to 11 per cent overall) and this remained at this level after the installation of CCTV.

Women were much more likely than men to say that there were times when they would avoid the location they were interviewed in when alone (66 per cent of the women said this, but only 30 per cent of the men), and here there was a distinct positive correlation with age, with the older age groups being much more likely to practice this sort of avoidance behaviour. However, from these data alone (respondents were not asked why they did this), it cannot be confirmed or refuted that older people avoid these locations because of concern about crime.

Again those in the city centre were much more likely than those interviewed elsewhere to say that there were times when they would avoid the city centre (overall 58 per cent said this in the city centre, as opposed to 40 per cent of those interviewed in the other two locations), and this did not improve after the installation of CCTV there. Indeed, it worsened considerably: with the percentages saying that they would avoid the city centre at some or other time increasing from 50 per cent to 59 per cent and finally to 65 per cent of those interviewed there in 1994, 1995, and 1996 respectively. The percentages of those interviewed in the control locations saying that they would avoid being in the control locations fell progressively through the three sweeps from 43 per cent to 39 per cent to 37 per cent. The improvements in avoidance behaviour in the control locations amplify the paradoxical worsening of it in the city centre.

When asked about the frequency with which they worried about becoming a victim of crime when walking alone in the location they were interviewed in at the time that they were interviewed, exactly 50 per cent of those interviewed indicated that they did worry at least occasionally (and this percentage was constant through the three sweeps). Women were more likely to worry about becoming a victim of crime than were males (59 per cent as opposed to 43 per cent), and again, surprisingly, the young more so than the old. Victimization worry was significantly more likely with those interviewed after dark (59 per cent, as opposed to 42 per cent of those interviewed during the day), and much greater in the city centre than in the other two locations (58 per cent in the city centre as opposed to 45 per cent combined for the other two locations). Unpacking this somewhat, the young were more likely to be in the city at night, and, sensibly, more likely to exhibit some concern.

Finally, all respondents were asked whether or not they had ever been a crime victim, specifically of theft from the person and/or personal attack. Fifty nine per cent had, a rather high proportion, with men more likely to have been victims than women (63 per cent as opposed to 54 per cent). Those who claimed to have been victims were, perhaps surprisingly, no more likely to feel unsafe than non-victims, were slightly more likely to say that they avoided the place where they were interviewed at certain times, but were no more likely to worry about being a victim of crime than non-victims. That prior victims feel no less safe than prior non-victims might be because they have changed their street-

using behaviour since victimization by, for example, avoiding various places at certain times.

In sum, the three sweeps of the survey have uncovered no evidence that the installation of CCTV cameras in Glasgow's city centre has positively had an effect on what is generally known as the 'fear of crime'. Comparing responses before and after the CCTV cameras were installed, preparedness to use the city centre has not increased, feelings of safety are lower in the city centre than in the two control locations and have not improved. The city centre is more likely to be avoided than are the other two locations, and this has increased. Worries about being a victim remain greater in the city centre.

However, it has to be said that attempting to assess change in fear levels over time by repeat cross-sectional surveying (as opposed to, for example, using a longitudinal design) is flawed insofar as slightly increased fear levels—however measured—might have been the result of sampling, in the post phase, respondents who, once too fearful to visit the city at all, are now venturing there for the first time. Samples recruited after CCTV installation may, thus, have included more of the chronically anxious.

In addition, the concept of 'fear of crime' both generally and specifically is now viewed with greater conceptual concern than when it first entered the criminological vocabulary in the mid-1970s. There is more and more debate about what is being measured, how to measure it, and—sometimes—whether it is measurable at all (see Farrall *et al.* 1997, 1997a, 2000; Ditton *et al.* 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2000; and Gilchrist *et al.* 1998). It is also clear that questions may be asked of what seems to be a blanket policy, certainly at the local level, of attempting to reduce it. This policy is apparently based on the by now well-known (but increasingly questioned) disparity between people's expressed subjective fears of becoming a victim, with their apparent objective risk of becoming one. For example, old women are believed vastly to overestimate their chances of becoming a victim of a 'mugging', and are thus believed to be disproportionately fearful of it.

The usual policy is to attempt to bring people's believed risks of victimization into synchrony with their actual risks, and so to reduce the apparent 'excess' of 'unnecessary' fear that exists in the community, leaving aside the fact that the same measurement problems that bedevil the concept, similarly affect attempts to evaluate the success—or otherwise—of policies aimed at reducing it. To which may be added that 'fear' is a natural and useful primary motivator, and those who believe that it should (quite apart from could) be reduced, risk trammelling with what might even be viewed as a basic instinct, oriented to self-preservation; of which, it might be claimed, we cannot have enough. It could even be asked, what might be the consequence of reducing fear? Might those now less fearful thereafter act less cautiously, and possibly open themselves more to the risks related to those otherwise deemed 'unnecessary' fears?

Public Acceptability of CCTV

Respondents were asked how much they 'minded' being watched by CCTV cameras in shops and banks, in car parks, and in the street. Even when prefaced with a fairly positive description of CCTV (concerns about civil liberties had not been mentioned to respondents at this point, and five fear-reminding questions had been asked), a third of this sample 'minded' being watched by CCTV cameras in the street (1,011; 33 per

cent)—noticeably more than 'mind' being watched in this way in shops or banks (634; 21 per cent), or in car parks (418; 14 per cent).

Respondents expressed more concern about being videoed in the street than being videoed elsewhere. In other public locations (shops, banks) people may have become accustomed to CCTV, or their acceptance may acknowledge that they recognize their presence on the property of others. CCTV in car parks is relatively new, however, and car parks, whilst not always private, are not as public as streets. Nevertheless, having one's (unattended) car on camera may be reassuring rather than off-putting, and there is some evidence from the 1994 British Crime Survey that fears about car victimization are quite different to those relating to other types of victimization (see Tilley 1993; and Hough 1996, especially ch. 2).

Those who 'mind' being watched by cameras in the street are compared with those who don't in Table 3, from which it can be seen that age and gender are relatively powerful predictors of 'minding' about being watched by cameras in the street, with degree of concern being strongly inversely related to age, and with males being far more likely to mind than are females. Perhaps surprisingly, neither expressed worry about being a crime victim nor the fact of having been a crime victim. It may seem surprising that crime victims are less likely to support CCTV than non-victims, but Squires and Measor (1996: 49, 51) also found this, especially for victims of violence, and even more noticeably for repeat victims of violence. Age is a relatively key factor again here: 57 per cent of young crime victims, but 73 per cent of middle-aged ones and 91 per cent of older ones don't mind CCTV. This might be taken to indicate that these concerns relate to civil liberties, rather than to crime issues.

Overall, support for police viewing of the tapes was high (at 94 per cent) and unwavering. However, respondents who reported that they had previously been crime victims were slightly less likely than non-victims to support police viewing of CCTV tapes, and they were less likely to support anybody else viewing them either (although they were slightly more likely to agree that the general public and the media should be allowed to view the tapes). Since one purpose of open-street CCTV is to reassure victims, this is yet again a somewhat surprising finding, particularly since both male and female crime victims were less likely to support police viewing of CCTV tapes than were non-victims of

TABLE 3 *Characteristics of those who don't mind/do mind CCTV*

	Don't mind (%)	Do mind (%)
Frequent walkers where interviewed	65	35
Those who feel safe where interviewed	66	34
Those who don't worry about being a crime victim	65	35
Those who have been a crime victim	63	37
Those aged 16–34	62	38
Those aged 35–59	76	24
Those aged 60+	94	6
Males	61	39
Females	74	26
All	67	33

TABLE 4 *Attitudes to CCTV*

	Disagree	Neither	Agree
1. 'CCTV will lead to fewer policemen on the beat'	1,189 (39%)	557 (18%)	1,298 (43%)
2. 'Only criminals need to fear CCTV'	1,122 (37%)	308 (10%)	1,637 (53%)
3. 'The more CCTV cameras, the better'	939 (31%)	533 (17%)	1,589 (52%)
4. 'CCTV might stop the innocent being wrongly accused'	490 (16%)	440 (14%)	2,130 (70%)
5. 'CCTV cameras won't reduce crime, they'll just drive it elsewhere'	797 (26%)	692 (23%)	1,552 (51%)
6. 'CCTV will erode civil liberties'	1,336 (44%)	651 (21%)	1,065 (35%)

Rows do not necessarily sum to 3,074 because of missing responses.

both genders, and crime victims in all age groups were less likely to support police viewing of CCTV tapes than were non-victims in those age groups. However, some of those classed here as 'victims' may also have been 'offenders'. It is impossible to be precise as the questionnaire sought no information on respondents' prior self-confessed offending, but this seems to be the most likely explanation.

As a final measure of overall acceptability of CCTV, all respondents were asked the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of CCTV-related attitude statements. These are listed, together with the responses, in Table 4.

It is not altogether clear what the responses in this list actually add up to, although it is certainly true that feelings on all these issues are mixed, and a large number are undecided in their response to each. Table 5 compares the responses to these questions by those in the previously constructed categories of those who 'mind' and who don't mind being watched by CCTV cameras in the street.

The responses to these statements clearly help at least partly (yet not wholly) to explain resistance to open-street CCTV surveillance. Overall, we are left with having to acknowledge the fact that about one third of the street-using population minds open-street CCTV (for a variety of reasons) and two thirds don't mind it. It should also be realized that to 'mind' is perhaps a curious term, which may mean different things to different people. To mind, however, is not necessarily the same as to object to, or to oppose.

TABLE 5 *Reasons for attitudes to CCTV*

	Those who don't mind CCTV (%)	Those who do mind CCTV (%)
Agree: 'CCTV will lead to fewer policemen on the beat'	39	50
Disagree: 'Only criminals need to fear CCTV'	23	64
Disagree: 'The more CCTV cameras, the better'	14	65
Agree: 'CCTV might stop the innocent being wrongly accused'	79	51
Agree: 'CCTV cameras won't reduce crime, they'll just drive it elsewhere'	45	63
Agree: 'CCTV will erode civil liberties'	18	69

All differences significant at $p<0.0000$.

The Anticipated Effectiveness of CCTV

Respondents were also asked 'if CCTV cameras were installed in this street, would you feel more safe or less safe alone at this time of day?' Some 42 per cent said that they would feel the same, and 56 per cent that they would feel safer (slightly more, 61 per cent, of those who were interviewed in the city centre, than those interviewed in the other two locations—at 53 per cent—said that they would feel safer). There was no significant variation over time. However, of the 56 per cent overall that said they would feel safer, most (81 per cent) had already said that they felt 'safe' walking alone where and when they were interviewed, and of those interviewed in the city centre who said that they would feel safer with CCTV, three-quarters (75 per cent) had already said that they felt 'safe' walking alone where and when they were interviewed.

Of course, however safe you feel, it is always possible to imagine that you could feel 'more' safe. But CCTV, here prospectively, is not making the unsafe feel safe; it is making the already safe feel safer.

Further, it is commonplace for crime prevention survey respondents to claim that they will feel safer after some proposed crime prevention measure is actually installed, and equally commonplace that such hoped for enhancements of feelings of personal safety do not materialize after the crime prevention measure is in fact installed.

For an example, see Ditton *et al.* (1991: 57–8). Here, respondents in a street lighting crime prevention experiment were initially asked whether or not pedestrian traffic, the number of unpleasant incidents, and the general fear of crime would all improve if new street lighting were installed. In each case, the percentages claiming that there would be an improvement were: 82 per cent, 73 per cent, and 68 per cent. After new street lights were installed, a similar street sample was recruited and asked, this time, whether or not there had in fact been an improvement. This time, the percentages claiming an improvement were, respectively: 47 per cent, 22 per cent, and 32 per cent. There is a considerable decline when reality is compared with expectation, although the real improvements are genuine and substantial. This extensive study is summarized in Nair *et al.* (1999). The same effect was noticed—albeit to a smaller degree—by Skinns (1997: 28) in his analysis of the effect of CCTV in Doncaster.

Accordingly, little should be made of such claims unless they can be post-tested (and shown to have been sustained by actual experience rather than optimistic expectation). The same can be said about respondents' claims that they would use such streets more often if CCTV cameras were installed. In fact, in this survey, only 15 per cent said that they would, with those who previously said that they felt unsafe (where and when they were interviewed) being more likely to claim this.

In sum, the effectiveness of CCTV in making people feel safer, and use public streets more often cannot be judged accurately by their responses to such questions. Even if analysis is restricted to those interviewed in the city centre and in the second two (post CCTV installation) sweeps, and then only to those respondents who were aware of the CCTV cameras, this group was no more likely to say they felt safer or used the streets more often than other city centre users.

A further series of questions were included in the survey to assess public opinion of the potential effectiveness of CCTV in relation to crime and disorder. Overall, 72 per cent of respondents thought CCTV cameras would be effective at preventing crime and disorder, 81 per cent that CCTV cameras would be effective at catching those responsible

for crime and disorder, and 79 per cent thought that CCTV cameras would be effective at making people feel that they were less likely to be victims of crime and disorder.

Age was positively correlated with all three responses, but gender with none. None was positively correlated with whether or not the respondent felt unsafe when walking alone in the location and at the time they were interviewed, or whether or not the respondent was worried about being a victim of crime at such times and in such places. Crime victims were significantly less likely than prior non victims to believe that CCTV would be effective at preventing crime and disorder, and at catching those responsible, and marginally less likely than prior non victims to believe that CCTV would make people feel safer. One implication is that those with experience of crime victimization appear less likely to believe that CCTV can prevent this happening again. Those interviewed in the city centre were no more likely to think CCTV would be effective in preventing crime, catching offenders or enhancing feelings of safety than those interviewed in either of the two control locations.

Respondents were then asked to consider the same three effectiveness questions, but in relation to whether they thought five CCTV cameras would be more effective than one extra patrolling police officer, or *vice versa*. Data are in Table 6. Interestingly, here, CCTV and police are seen as roughly equally good at prevention, CCTV as nearly three times as good at detecting crime, and the police over twice as good at making people feel safer. The old (and women) see five CCTV cameras as better than one police officer at prevention; the young (and again women) see five CCTV cameras as better than one police officer at detection; and the old (and yet again women) see five CCTV cameras as better than one police officer at making people feel safer.

Honess and Charman (1992: 19) found that 62 per cent of their sample thought CCTV was 'effective' at preventing crime, 74 per cent effective at detecting crime, and 53 per cent at making people feel safer. The (larger) Glasgow sample was less likely to think CCTV would be effective in preventing crime, or in making people feel safer, but a similar three-quarters thought it would be effective in detecting crime.

As for cost-effectiveness (as opposed to effectiveness in relation to crime) respondents were also asked which would be cheaper: five CCTV cameras or one extra policeman? (Roughly calculated, the cost of each is the same). Of the 2,881 respondents that answered this question, the majority (1,666, or 58 per cent) thought the cameras cheaper, with a substantial minority (1,215, or 42 per cent) thinking them more expensive. Older people were more likely to think the cameras were cheaper than were the young, and women significantly much more likely to think so than were men.

This part of the data seems to indicate that, one, the people that visit the city centre believe that CCTV is better than the police at detecting crime; but that, two, the police

TABLE 6 *Effectiveness of CCTV vs Police (N, % most effective)*

	5 CCTV cameras	1 extra police officer
At preventing crime	1,337 (47%)	1,526 (53%)
At detecting crime	2,225 (77%)	682 (23%)
At making people feel safer	901 (32%)	1,958 (68%)

are believed to be more effective than CCTV in making people feel safer; and, three, most people think that open-street CCTV cameras are much cheaper than, in fact, they are.

The Visibility of CCTV

Of course, CCTV cannot be effective at making people safer if those people are unaware of the cameras. In the second and third sweeps of the survey (i.e., after installation of CCTV in the city centre) all respondents were asked if there were CCTV cameras operating in the immediate location. Three months after installation, only 33 per cent of those in the city centre knew cameras were in operation: 15 months after installation, this had only risen to 41 per cent.

Some 6–7 per cent think there are open-street cameras in the location they are interviewed in when there are no cameras there. Subtracting those who think they are in vision but are not from those who say they are in vision and actually are, then it is fair to say that about a quarter of the ambulatory city centre population were aware that they were being viewed three months after installation, and about a third 15 months later. Honess and Charman (1992: 6) found that only one third of a sample they interviewed in an area covered by CCTV were aware of it (42 per cent men compared with 25 per cent women. The Glasgow survey found 37 per cent overall with 44 per cent for men and 25 per cent for women).

How do the 'CCTV-aware' respondents differ from the rest of the sample? Immediately after installation, fewer women were aware of the presence of cameras than were men (in the city centre 44 per cent of men, but only 32 per cent of women were aware of them), although the overall increase in awareness from 33 per cent in 1995 to 41 per cent in 1996 really reflects an increase in female awareness (which jumped from 25 per cent to 38 per cent of those women interviewed, whereas the proportion of males 'aware' was steady at 44 per cent). The young were more aware than the old, and, understandably, frequent users of the location more aware than those who visited the city centre infrequently.

There were no differences in awareness of CCTV between those who felt safe in the city centre and those who didn't; between those who would sometimes avoid the location and those who wouldn't; and between those who worried about being a crime victim and those who didn't. Victims were slightly more likely to be aware of the CCTV cameras than were non-victims.

Generally speaking, by the third sweep of the survey, those interviewed in the city centre CCTV location were significantly more likely to say that, thinking about the amount of crime and disorder in the area, things had improved in the past 12 months: 16 per cent of those interviewed in the CCTV location (compared to only 7 per cent of those interviewed elsewhere) felt that this had improved in the last year. There was no difference in this respect between those who were aware of the CCTV cameras and those who were not. This is, with the benefit of hindsight, a rather banal question (although typical of crime prevention evaluation surveys). It isn't known what people are thinking about when they are asked about 'things': all that can be said is that if they were thinking exclusively about crime, then 'things' had actually got worse.

Discussion

What can be made of all this?

First, if we simply take the most conservative estimate of the number who 'mind' being watched by CCTV in the street (1,011, or 33 per cent of the total sample), then overall, 67 per cent find CCTV acceptable. However, even this, too, may be over-inflated. In the survey reported here, several potentially 'fear-inducing' questions were put to all respondents before attitudes to CCTV were probed. As this might have had the effect of artificially and temporarily increasing acceptance of CCTV, the Scottish Centre for Criminology conducted a separate and additional experimental triple-split street survey to test for the effect. One third of the sample were asked to rate three pro-CCTV statements before being asked whether or not they were in favour of CCTV; one third were asked to rate three anti-CCTV statements before being asked whether or not they were in favour of CCTV; and the final third were just asked whether or not they were in favour of CCTV. Prefacing with pro-CCTV statements seems to add as much as 20 per cent to the number thereafter in favour of CCTV. These questionnaire effects are worthy of further test, but if they are sustained (and at this level) the 67 per cent in favour would be more realistically set at 47 per cent in favour. The full report of this experiment was published in Ditton (1998). Second, this varies, but not by much, for different groups, as shown in Table 7.

Evidence from the earlier opinion poll conducted in Glasgow showed that many older suburban residents do not visit the city centre, particularly at night, because they are apparently fearful of crime victimization there. The survey data presented in this paper suggest that those who do so visit walk those streets, often alone and at night, frequently, and with equanimity.

This, in turn, challenges what has become a lazy assumption: that British city centres are threatening, barren, dark concrete wastelands of victimization-probability, and related prospective citizen stress. This simple assumption might well be replaced with a

TABLE 7 *Summary of acceptability of CCTV*

Group	Acceptability N (%)
Those aged 60+	178 (94%)
Those who live furthest from the CCTV location	191 (77%)
Suburban residents	646 (76%)
Those who avoid the location interviewed in at times when alone	1,072 (75%)
Females	1,078 (74%)
Those who feel unsafe when walking alone in the location interviewed in	361 (74%)
Those who worry about being a victim of crime when alone in the location that they were interviewed in	1,065 (69%)
The whole sample	2,060 (67%)
City residents	227 (64%)
Crime victims	1,147 (63%)
Those aged 16–34	1,346 (62%)
Urban residents	990 (62%)
Males	982 (61%)

more useful dual one. First, of the existence of large numbers of locally resident town and city populations who don't visit city centres, particularly at night. These are people predominantly aged over 35. When asked, they are prepared to agree, usually to highly leading questions, that they are fearful of crime victimization. Nevertheless, no evidence is ever introduced that if such centres were transformed into havens of safety, such people would visit there at night any more frequently than they do at present. Second, there is a smaller population—young people—who regularly visit the city, particularly at night, and feel relatively safe when they do so. If the city centre were made safer, this might not be to their taste, and they might visit it at night less often. Accordingly, if any city centre is made 'safer', fewer people might thereafter visit it.

Conclusion

While the general message from this survey is clear and unequivocal (CCTV didn't make people feel safer in the centre of Glasgow), a number of puzzling findings emerged. Most of those interviewed were quite happy to walk alone there, even at night. Most, even women, felt safe there. More of the young than the old worried about becoming a crime victim. A majority had been victimized, but were no more likely to feel unsafe than were non-victims. Victims were least likely to feel reassured by the presence of CCTV, and were more likely to 'mind' it. And so on.

At a very general level, expecting something like open-street CCTV to have a simple and positive effect in the 'city' ignores what we know about cities, wherein 'ordinary fear may be seen as a functional, and even a creative, element' (Robins 1995: 60). Bannister *et al.* (1998: 25) concur:

> Fear is not necessarily a bad experience, rather it is associated with the emotional stimulus and provocation necessary if we are to avoid, both individually and socially, stagnation and stasis . . . It is important to emphasize that our usage of the term 'fear' relates to its generic sense, i.e., anxiety engendered through the confrontation of difference, associated more broadly with the condition of urban living, rather than a specific crime-related anxiety. In other words, to live in the city, to relish and learn from difference, necessitates the acceptance of uncertainty.

Why should CCTV be the 'answer' to the multiple 'problems' posed by city life any more than the mobile police radios that were first introduced to British policing in Glasgow in the 1930s? Or the highly expensive helicopters that have been introduced to some British cities since then? Or any other policing initiative, such as American style batons? Unit beat policing?

Part of the answer might lie in the ambiguous role that the city plays in the lives of all citizens. Since it has been the object of serious sociological study, the city has remained a puzzle—at least, remained a concept unamenable to strict pasteurization. It has been suggested here that there seem to be two groups of city centre users: older people who live in the suburbs who might use the city during the day, but rarely do so at night; and younger ones, who are almost the only ones who visit it at night.

Yet, even for the young, the city seems to possess an almost magnetic quality insofar as most of them are as attracted to is as they are repelled from it. This is perhaps because a sense of 'difference' lies at the city's definitive core: people want to *be* safe there—but

they don't necessarily want *it* to be safe. Put simply, the young are in the city at night looking for, or attempting to tie the knot with, their future life-partners. Cities, as Sennett (1977: 17) reminds us, are 'places where strangers might regularly meet up'. The young people interviewed in this survey were in the city to meet 'strangers' with whom perhaps they hope, one day, to be 'safe'. For them, as Robins (1995: 49) puts it, 'urban culture involves some kind of accommodation between provocation and stimulation, on the one hand, and security and stability on the other'.

The city, in a sense, is where these differences jostle for space, with disorder—the ultimate target of CCTV—merely reflecting what most expect to find there. Indeed, this may be why some—the young—see CCTV as a symbol of urban malaise: others—the old—as the saviour from it. In sum, at night, young people seek excitement in cities: not safety. And where can excitement be found without the possibility of danger? Alan Reeve (1998: 44, 45) puts it like this:

> The essence of the argument is that to take away the element of unpredictability, insecurity and a sense of risk from the public realm is to remove one dimension of public life which encourages individuals to tolerate and accept the presence of others different to themselves. Morally, politically and psychologically, the aestheticization and privatization of public space through such devices as electronic surveillance represents a significant retreat from *civitas* to *societas* in public life—from collective and individual responsibility, to self-interest and a culture of fear. In so far as CCTV and new forms of policing and surveillance contribute to this culture their largely unquestioned acceptance . . . in Britain today needs to be challenged . . . The danger is that this largely insidious move towards a particular and commercially driven conception of what public space is for may lead to management and even policing practices which reduce the social richness of public space and thereby reduce its potential to be genuinely civilizing and civic.

CCTV, in gradually becoming the 'electronic eye on the street' (Fyfe and Bannister 1998), threatens to erode what Jacobs (1961) memorably referred to as the 'spontaneous' or 'natural surveillance' by the 'mutual policing' by individuals in cities. Indeed, in relying on technology rather than on people, we run the risk of worsening, let alone failing to improve the situation. Graham *et al.* (1998: 25) comment:

> by encouraging people to have faith in some disembodied electronic eye, CCTV may actually undermine the natural surveillance in towns and communities . . . the result may be a further spiral of social fragmentation and atomization, which leads to more alienation and even more crime.

Well, crime in Glasgow's city centre did, after all, increase. Perhaps this is why?

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