

## Editorial

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# Revisiting the surveillance camera revolution: Issues of governance and public policy. Introduction to part two of the Special Issue

This collection of articles forms the second part of a double Special Issue of *Information Polity* devoted to the subject of surveillance cameras and systems, often referred to here as CCTV (Closed Circuit Television). Part One was previously published as Volume 16, Number 4, in 2011. Part Two features two articles, three case studies and two surveillance-themed book reviews. Studying a diversity of CCTV systems in Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain and England, the present collection captures both the contemporary complexity and rapid development of CCTV, and the methodological and conceptual diversity of scholarly inquiry into this subject. In this introduction, we set out an overview of each article, before moving to a discussion of three crosscutting themes that arise from this collection.

### 1. Contents of Part Two

Each of the first two articles develops an elaborate problematic related to issues of governance and public policy in the field of CCTV surveillance. The first article, by Pieter Wagenaar and Kees Boersma, '*CCTV-operator practices at Schiphol Airport*', provides a strongly ethnographic account of surveillance strategies and practices in the securitisation of Schiphol International Airport. Anchored in, and testifying to, the now well-established tradition of ethnographic control room research, the approach pursued here focuses on the micro level, locating the various policy issues surrounding CCTV in the context of a specific range of control practices and issues in a particular geographical locale. Yet, the aim is not only to provide isolated insights into the micro-politics of security and surveillance in the Schiphol context, but also to re-institute this question as part of a broader set of issues: how exactly does CCTV surveillance permeate particular places and moments? How and by whom are the aims of CCTV negotiated and defined and how do these then legitimise particular interventions?

Pete Fussey's article, '*Eastern promise? East London transformations and the state of surveillance*', is driven by a concern to understand the forces, processes and mechanisms shaping the contemporary intensification and extension of surveillance infrastructures in East London, the location of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. In recent years, developments of CCTV have been acknowledged and described by various scholars. Yet these studies often suffer from a lack of appreciation of how specific circumstances and contexts act as catalysts in shaping, accelerating and exemplifying novel trends and solutions in surveillance matters. Exploring the role of the 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics

in facilitating and pushing for the installation of novel CCTV systems in East London, Fussey's article addresses precisely this issue, thus also bringing to the fore some of the main driving forces underpinning contemporary CCTV policies.

In addition to these two full articles, Part Two of the Special Issue includes three slightly shorter and somewhat more descriptive case studies relating to video surveillance systems and schemes in Sweden (Stockholm), Germany (Hamburg) and Spain. These studies further develop and illustrate the conceptual and analytical challenges raised by the articles in the earlier part of Part Two and in Part One. Ola Svenonius' case study, *'The Stockholm Security Project: plural policing, security and surveillance'*, investigates the organisational changes induced by a EUR 55 m project in public transport security in Stockholm, including the installation of more than 20,000 additional high-tech cameras. The article argues that 'the project' produced very complex and contradictory effects with regard to the organisational structure in the policing of public transport in Stockholm, leading to increased privatisation and centralisation of decision making, whilst also maintaining and, in some sense, even reinforcing the chaotic diversity of the involved actors, interests and sources of authority. The case study also elucidates two further implications of the project: first, the induced shift in the approach taken towards transport security, from a focus on recorded crime-rates to passenger perceptions of risk and insecurity; and, second, the development of a more coherent normative framework underpinning and bringing together the actor-network involved in the control and securitisation of the Stockholm public transport system.

Nils Zurawski's case study, *'From crime prevention to urban development: Politics and resistance concerning CCTV cameras in a plaza in central Hamburg'*, presents the troubled story of CCTV in central Hamburg, where five cameras were installed in 2007 on a small plaza, but were taken down again two years later. Providing a focused discussion of the policy-makers involved, their mutually intertwined interests and positions, as well as the larger debates at the time, the paper exemplifies the 'interpretative flexibility' of CCTV systems as a vehicle for different actors with different agendas and arguments. The case study shows that CCTV cannot be reduced to a single meaning assigned by a single actor, but must be understood as the expression of processes involving a range of actors, guided by common goals, acting from mutually enhanced positions and driven by converging benefits, whilst also pursuing their own specific agendas and projects (in the Hamburg case, aimed at urban regeneration and crime prevention for example).

The final case study, by Gemma Galdon Clavell, Lohitzune Zuloaga Lojo and Armando Romero, is entitled *'CCTV in Spain: An empirical account of the deployment of video-surveillance in a southern-european country'*, and offers a 'country report' of CCTV in Spain, including the relevant legal framework, public perceptions of CCTV and related policy debates. In providing an account of how CCTV is used and negotiated in Spain, the case study also touches on at least two broader, yet fundamentally interrelated issues. First, the case study is concerned with urban policy mobilities in security and surveillance matters – namely, the transnational circulation and reproduction of best practices in the field CCTV surveillance – and, second, the study addresses the question of how specific national political traditions and memories (for example the memory of Franco's authoritarianism) shape contemporary trends in surveillance matters. Both questions are of fundamental importance if we are to understand the transnational commonalities, but also the remaining national and local specificities in contemporary CCTV policies.

Part Two of the Special Issue concludes with two book reviews of surveillance and privacy themed books written by Charles Raab and David Murakami Wood. Charles Raab, in his review of Edgar Whitley and Gus Hosein's *'Global Challenges for Identity Policies'*, acknowledges the important contribution the book makes to understanding the failed UK Identity Card scheme, and the multiple ID schemes available

across the globe, but is critical of the degree to which the book is grounded in commonly accepted concepts and theories relevant to the field of policy studies. Similarly, David Murakami Wood's review of Anthony Grayling's *'Liberty in the Age of Terror: A Defence of Civil Liberties and Enlightenment Values'* is supportive of the exploration of the western liberal democratic response to the challenges posed by the post-9/11 world, but is critical of the way competing perspectives are handled and presented in the volume. Both book reviews demonstrate that issues about surveillance, privacy, identity, and civil liberties are contested and are therefore likely to be the focus of further debate.

## 2. Crosscutting themes and issues

Of course, the specific insights gained from these articles and case studies might differ in other national and local contexts, depending on the precise circumstances of each system. Case by case, from CCTV system to CCTV system, interactions and relationships may vary in terms of the actors, strategies, interests, instruments, stipulations and regulatory mechanisms involved. Indeed, a central challenge for future research into CCTV surveillance will be to undertake further comparative empirical investigations into the ways in which different projects, in different cultural contexts, both resemble and differ from each other. Yet, the contributions in this collection also raise a series of more general, cross-cutting themes and issues that are worth highlighting. These can be organised under three broad headings, which are outlined below.

### 2.1. Fragmentation of authority and interacting forms of expertise in CCTV policies

On different conceptually and empirically informed grounds, the studies in this collection reiterate the need for the conceptualisation of CCTV surveillance to be constantly 'in the making', i.e., to consist of myriad micro-scale negotiations and decisions between various actors whose positions are defined by intertwined domains of expertise and forms of authority. The Special Issue thus provides much-needed accounts of both the fundamentally dynamic nature of surveillance – as a policy *process* rather than as a definitive and static policy *result* – and of the fragmentation of authority, shaping and developing from the planning, installation, and actual uses of CCTV systems.

Following on from this, perhaps one of the key issues emerging from the articles in this Special Issue relates to the role and importance of private actors and expertise – especially the technical know-how provided by technology companies – in contemporary security governance. For example, Svenonius' study shows that the Stockholm Security Project increased both the technical means and the weight of private actors and expertise in the securitisation of public transport.

Looking at current trends towards the ever-more complex assemblage of various forms and functions of surveillance, there is good reason to assume that the technical expertise of private companies is likely to become even more important in future years. This trend is particularly driven by rapid technological progress, which enables not only the growing combination and integration of various semi-coordinated, heterogeneous forms and functions of surveillance, but also the increased automation of 'intelligent' monitoring techniques, capable of identifying pre-programmed 'risk behaviour' or previously identified 'risk persons'. Increasingly, we can observe the emergence of what is sometime referred to as 'smart' or 'intelligent' CCTV systems. Typically these systems combine the optical technologies usually associated with CCTV systems with the processing capabilities of modern computers, thus effecting a convergence of information and communication technologies, allowing visual images to be cross-referenced with computer databases and other software. For example, digital-image software can be combined with

databases to achieve facial recognition or number-plate recognition. Computer algorithms can be utilised to assess current behaviour and to predict future behaviour, for example via crowd-analysis software or infra-red movement and noise-detection systems. CCTV systems can be combined with other new technologies, including listening and speaker systems, metal detectors and sniffing devices, geo-location technologies and Geographic Information Systems. At a more basic level, the technical standardisation and networking of systems permits the integration and convergence of systems. Most of these technical developments are being pioneered by private companies and the security industry. It is therefore of major importance to investigate further the wider socio-political effects of the largely unquestioned public-private interdependences in contemporary security governance, and to reflect critically upon the potential impacts of business interests in security and surveillance matters on everyday life of citizens and social groups.

## *2.2. Drivers of CCTV*

Second, and following directly from the previous point, the Special Issue underlines that CCTV surveillance responds to a range of different goals, benefits, agendas and projects. CCTV is the product of relationships that are mediated by various (resonating and conflicting) interests, motivations and needs. This of course also means that the aims and modalities of CCTV surveillance, as they are negotiated and defined by the involved actors, are not pre-given or value-free, but shaped by complex relationships and interactions, relying on various drivers and impulses.

Wagenaar and Boersma's study of CCTV practices in Schiphol addresses this problematic on a micro-scale, contributing in empirical depth to our understanding of the ways in which the practices of CCTV surveillance merge within a particular milieu, and of the ramifications of this. Zurawski's case study of CCTV in Hamburg also testifies to this issue. There are at least two key points to highlight. First, the blurring and shifting lines of argumentation in the political debates and decisions affecting the Hamburg CCTV project illustrate that, in conceptualising CCTV's driving forces, we need to recognise not only the overlapping coalitions of interest in contemporary security governance, but also the multiple tensions and conflicts arising from the ways in which specific systems are framed, approached and exploited for particular needs. Second, with regard to these tensions and conflicts, the Hamburg case study also reveals the weight of non-professional and non-political players (local community groups, academic experts, individual opponents, shopkeepers, etc.) in CCTV-related debates. In sum, the role of civil society should not be underplayed or forgotten completely in accounting for the policy processes and decisions concerning CCTV. The drivers of CCTV surveillance must be related not only to specific needs and interests, but also understood as a function of socially available and normatively loaded 'imaginaries of surveillance'.

## *2.3. Commonalities and specificities in contemporary CCTV policies*

The third crosscutting theme to highlight overlaps with the Special Issue's overall ambition to elucidate different national and institutional characteristics, whilst also highlighting broader transnational trends in current CCTV developments. Drawing upon the articles in this collection, there are a number of more specific points to highlight. For example, the case study by Galdon Clavell et al. underlines not only the impact of Spain's political past on current CCTV developments (i.e., national specificities), but also the country's current predisposition to learn from international experience and best practices (i.e., transnational commonalities and policy transfer). We must take into account both the contemporary and the historical background in a given socio-political context if we are to understand the converging and

diverging national dynamics unfolding in the field of CCTV surveillance. In a different way, Wagenaar and Boersma, and Fussey, in their respective articles on Schiphol Airport and on the 2012 London Olympics, address the same problematic. More generally speaking, security and surveillance at large sporting events and in the aviation sector are often approached from two complementary perspectives, as both the product of and as the producer of a broader set of developments in contemporary security governance. On the one hand, airports and ‘mega’ events are portrayed to be firmly embedded in transnational circuits of imitation and ‘institutional learning’. On the other hand, airports and large events are themselves understood as ‘laboratories’ for testing and developing novel surveillance solutions that are subsequently adapted for more normalised use. From both directions, airports and large events are understood as unique examples for studying the current dynamics and global re-calibrations of security governance.

Here we encounter an important ‘issue of scale’, which we believe, should be further pursued in future empirical investigations into the commonalities and specificities of contemporary CCTV projects and debates. Relevant questions to address are: how do specific places and times act as laboratories in the production of novel trends in CCTV surveillance? what kind of mechanisms, and what types of public and private interests, are mediating these ‘exemplification’ (trivialisation and normalisation) processes of surveillance? how, in turn, do specific forms of expertise and bodies of knowledge relating to CCTV become authorised to act in specific places and at specific moments? what are the resonances and dissonances between globally-established ‘CCTV solutions’ and locally-anchored surveillance practices as they are negotiated *in situ*?

Self-evidently, the two-part Special Issue makes no claim fully to answer these questions. From different conceptual and empirical angles, our ambition has been to bring to the fore some of the key aspects and issues accounting for the international diversity and complexity of CCTV, as it is practiced, understood, debated and studied. As such, the entire collection is also intended as an invitation for further research into the current and future politics and practices of CCTV.

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