



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

CCTV schemes in city and town centres have little effect on crime.

Alan Travis, Home affairs editor The Guardian, Monday 18 May 2009

Criminologists' research shows surveillance cameras are 'at their most effective' in cutting vehicle crime in car parks. The use of closed-circuit television in city and town centres and public housing estates does not have a significant effect on crime, according to Home Office-funded research to be distributed to all police forces in England and Wales this summer.

The review of 44 research studies on **CCTV** schemes by the Campbell Collaboration found that they do have a modest impact on crime overall but are at their most effective in cutting vehicle crime in car parks, especially when used alongside improved lighting and the introduction of security guards.

The authors, who include **Cambridge University criminologist, David Farrington**, say while their results lend support for the continued use of **CCTV**, schemes should be far more narrowly targeted at reducing vehicle crime in car parks.

Results from a 2007 study in Cambridge which looked at the impact of 30 cameras in the city centre showed that they had no effect on crime but led to an increase in the reporting of assault, robbery and other violent crimes to the police.

Home Office ministers cited the review last week in their official response to the critical report from the House of Lords constitution committee on surveillance published earlier this year. The peers warned that the steady expansion of the "**surveillance society**", including the spread of **CCTV**, risked undermining fundamental freedoms, including the right to privacy.

In their response the Home Office disclosed that the **National Police Improvement Agency** is planning new research into the effectiveness of **CCTV**. The Campbell Collaboration review, by Farrington and a Massachusetts University criminologist, Brandon Welsh, concludes that **CCTV** is more effective in reducing crime in Britain than in other countries – as the Home Office points out. But it also makes clear that of the 44 research studies the authors reviewed, only seven covered countries outside Britain and four of those involved the United States.

The Campbell Collaboration report says that **CCTV is now the single most heavily-funded crime prevention measure operating outside the criminal justice system and its rapid growth has come with a huge price tag**. It adds that £170m was spent on CCTV schemes in town and city centres, car parks and residential areas between 1999 and 2001 alone. "**Over the last decade, CCTV accounted for more than three quarters of total spending on crime prevention by the British Home Office**," the report says.

The Lords report said that **£500 million was spent in Britain on CCTV** in the decade up to 2006, money which in the past would have gone on street lighting or **neighbourhood crime prevention initiatives**.

Welsh and Farrington say there has been concern that all this funding has been based on a handful of apparently successful schemes that were usually less than rigorously evaluated, done with varying degrees of competence and varying degrees of independence from government.

Their research review, which was funded by the Home Office and the Swedish Council for Crime Prevention, says that **future CCTV schemes need high quality, independent evaluation.**

The PPP comments ... we said from the outset that these expensive and invasive systems would not deter crime. At best they divert it, and they have produced the hoody culture amongst our young people and glorified atrocious and very violent behaviour. The costs quoted above are only a fraction of the total and ongoing cost. Incompetent control freaks like Brunstrom have lied about their effectiveness and encouraged every little town to spend money they can ill afford. It is a repeat of the speed camera fiasco. In June 2008 he said in an NWPF blog “Research clearly and repeatedly shows that our citizenry in the UK is very comfortable with today’s surveillance society; **CCTV makes people (including me) feel safer. The research also shows the importance of local issues – a clean and tidy environment has a much bigger impact on most people’s quality of life than does the burglary rate. Law abiding taxpayers like an ordered society, and actively welcome **CCTV. The government’s funded CCTV expansion programme has been a very considerable success over the last decade or so.** The clamour for more cameras, and the active surveillance which logically follows, is deafening “**

In January 2007 in another blog he said “A fantastic **CCTV system, run in very close operational partnership with the police. **CCTV** has become an integral part of policing, and was directly responsible for several arrests during the night, as usual. **Never let anyone tell you that CCTV doesn’t work.** Meanwhile in the same town Police were investigating over **£14000 worth of damage caused to cars on a garage forecourt** near Wrexham & have today issued **CCTV** images of two youths**

In a country with approaching 5 million unemployed we need people in the car parks and the deterrence of REAL experienced and effective Police on the streets and highways.