

The to the utilitarian work of jeremy bentham



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

1. Introduction It was estimated that by the end of 2002 there would be approximately 500 systems with 40, 000 cameras in operation throughout the United Kingdom. Contrary to this, there are presently, around 500, 000 cameras in operation within the United Kingdom (BBC News, August 2002). Despite this growing phenomenon, there is little evidence to suggest that C. C. T. V is an effective crime reduction strategy. This report will attempt to critically evaluate the role of new technology such as C. C. T. V as a useful and cost-effective crime reduction tool. Is it right to trade our privacy for a perfect crime rate? The debate surrounding the impact of C. C. T. V in relation to Human Rights will also be discussed.

1. 1. The Theory of Surveillance The social control theory of surveillance can be traced back to the utilitarian work of Jeremy Bentham (1791) and his vision of rational social control. He devised an architectural device known as the ' Panoptican' and applied his design to prison and workhouse structures. The main principle being the constant surveillance of inmates and workers.

He believed it could be successfully adopted in any environment which involved some level of supervision (McLaughlin et al, 2002). The psychological objective being that the subjects would believe that their only logical option was to conform (Warrior et al, 2004). Michel Foucault (1926-1984), in his work ' Surveillir et Punir' (Discipline and Punishment), gives a modern interpretation of Benthams ' Panoptican'. For Foucault the ' Panoptican' represented a key spatial figure in the modern project and in the creation of modern subjectivity, in other words in the remaking of people

<https://assignbuster.com/the-to-the-utilitarian-work-of-jeremy-bentham/>

(and society) in the image of modernity. The drive to self monitoring through the belief that one is under constant scrutiny. 1.

2. Contemporary Surveillance The modern use of surveillance has been enforced through the use of Closed Circuit Television as a situational crime prevention, which has increased dramatically over recent years. C. C. T. V was primarily deployed within the private retail sector as a means of deterring potential shoplifters.

It was not until 1975 that the first system for the surveillance of citizens was implemented. In an attempt to combat robbery and assault on staff, London Transport introduced C. C. T.

V. cameras in the semi-public spaces of the London Underground system (Webb and Laycock, 1992). More recently, C. C. T.

V proved helpful to police investigating the murder of a child in Liverpool. The footage obtained during the abduction of 3 year old James Bulger, by two 10 year old boys, from a Bootle shopping centre in 1993, highlighted the fear for public safety. Smith (1995) is of the opinion that even if C. C. T. V had not prevented the murder, at least it contributed to the identification of the killers.

Similarly, the footage of the perpetrators responsible for the terrorist attack of '9/11' proved vital in identifying those responsible, although it failed to prevent the actual attack. 1. 3. Function of C.

C. T. V. The theory behind the function of C. C.

T. V is that it acts as a possible general deterrent to potential offenders. C. C. T.

V is defined as a 'Situational Crime Prevention' strategy, measured as being direct at specific crimes and reducing overall opportunities for crime.

Rational Choice Theory (Cornish et al, 1986) is the theoretical foundation on which 'Situational Crime Prevention' stands. The theory applies many of the Classical Criminology ideas, such as that of Cesare Beccaria (1767) - who believed that all individuals possess freewill, rational manner and manipulability. Rational Choice Theory defines offenders as active decision makers, who undertake a cost-benefit analysis of presenting crime opportunities.

The potential offender is aware of the camera, he then makes a rational decision by assesses the risk of being caught against the benefits of the offence. From the perspective of a potential victim, the camera acts as a reminder of the risks. Often- the threat of potential surveillance, acts to produce a self discipline in which individuals police themselves (Armitage, 2002). 1. 4.

CostC. C. T. V projects are implemented as an environmentally-centred crime prevention measure in a range of areas such as the central business district illustrated in the Chicago School of Sociology's 'Concentric Zone Model' of urban growth (Burgess, 1925).

Deployment of surveillance is mainly concentrated in city centres, town centres, car parks, residential areas and crime 'hot-spots'. Which are all places vulnerable to criminal activity. Although, it is helpful to remember <https://assignbuster.com/the-to-the-utilitarian-work-of-jeremy-bentham/>

that crime ' hot-spots' can be manipulated. This happens by enforcement of ' target-hardening' within a particular area, can create a new crime ' hot-spot' elsewhere. The psychological objective of C. C.

T. V is to provide public reassurance and therefore reduces the fear of crime. Resulting from the Home Offices drive for mass deployment of surveillance systems during the mid 90's, in an attempt to tackle community safety (McLaughlin et al, 2002). Most recently installed cameras have pan, tilt, zoom and infra-red capability.

The financial costs for such schemes are funded by the government on a national level. Between 1994 and 1997, the Home Office made available £38 million to fund 585 CCTV schemes. Between 1999 and 2003, they have made available a further £170 million for CCTV schemes. Over the period 1996 to 1998 (before the £170 million was allocated) CCTV accounted for more than three-quarters of total spending on crime prevention by the Home Office. Each pound of funding is matched by local authorities (Armitage, 2002). A contentious issue to consider is the cost of sustainability.

Not only the initial installation costs, but also, the ongoing cost of staffing and maintenance. 2. Effectiveness of C. C.

T. V. on Volume Crimes In terms of measuring the effectiveness of C. C. T. V in reducing crime, many contributing factors must be given consideration.

C. C. T. V can not wholly be attributed to the reduction of crime rates because crime reduction is often a multi-strategic approach involving a range of initiatives.

Also, crime rates are subject to social, economical, population changes and trends. Since the widespread introduction of C. C. T. V in the public domain, there has been much debate surrounding its effectiveness but very little substantiated research.

Bulos and Sarno (1996) report that very few CCTV schemes have been comprehensively evaluated by independent researchers. For the purpose of this report, we will examine the effectiveness of C. C. T.

V in relation to volume crime i. e. burglary, theft, vandalism and assault which make up 89% of all recorded offences. 2. 1.

Property Offences Hough and Mo (1986) are of the opinion that on the basis of British Crime Survey Data, attempted burglaries are prevented from being completed burglaries by the presence of crime prevention hardware.

Conflictingly, the research findings of Bennett and Wright (1984) have shown that burglars themselves rate the chance of being seen much more highly than the deterrent presence of crime prevention hardware. CCTV has also been shown to work effectively in public housing. Chatterton and Frenz (1994) evaluated the use of CCTV in a sheltered housing scheme where the elderly residents were frequently the victims of burglary. Cameras were installed in 15 housing units.

Between one and five dummy cameras were placed where they would be seen by offenders to act as a deterrent, and some operational cameras were concealed. Across the evaluation period, completed and attempted burglaries decreased by 79%, from 4.25 to 0.9 offences per month, a significant decrease. Before the implementation of CCTV, the police had arrested and charged 13 offenders compared with only three in the post-installation period. More recently, a study into the effects of C.

C. T. V. on property crime in three town centres, conducted by Brown (1995) revealed that, overall; property crime was reduced within the areas covered by C.

C. T. V. Although there was a reduction in property crime, thefts from vehicles and criminal damage increased, which suggests a 'displacement' of offences opposed to a direct reduction in crimes. Although a different result was concluded in Burnley, were an evaluation of C. C.

T. V. found that there were significant decreases in all property crime (burglary, car crime, criminal damage, handling of stolen goods and fraud) (Armitage et al, 1999). It is apparent that the majority of research into the effectiveness of C.

C. T. V has concluded evidence to suggest that surveillance systems have a marked effect on property crime rates but what is of more importance; do they have a considerable effect on crimes against the person? 2. 2. Violent Crime Whether the cameras deployed within town centres have a deterrent influence on people who have been drinking is of great concern as just over 40% of violent crimes, 78% of assaults and 88% of criminal damage cases

<https://assignbuster.com/the-to-the-utilitarian-work-of-jeremy-bentham/>

are committed whilst the offender is under the influence of alcohol (BBC News, 2005).

Do people under the influence of alcohol make rational choices? If they do not, this could possibly suggest that surveillance is ineffective as a deterrent in this respect. Assessments into the impact of C. C. T.

V on public order crimes such as assault have produced conflicting evidence. Browns (1995) study found that there was a small increase in robbery, theft from the person in Birmingham town centre, compared with a large increase of these offences in the rest of the police division (Phillips, 2000). However, according to recent government research contained within a Home Office Commissioned Report, which looked at evaluations of over 22 C. C. T. V schemes in Britain and in the U.

S- found that while cameras could have a marked effect on reducing vehicle crime, there was little evidence they prevented violent crime (Welsh et al, 2002). More prominently, street lighting has been proven to reduce crime more effectively than C. C. T.

V. A review carried out by the Home Office that looked at street lighting found a highly significant reduction in crime of 20% (Welsh et al, 2002). The rise in violent crime could possibly be attributed to the changes in recording methods. Offences are now based on the amount of victim's resulting from the incident, opposed to the amount of offences. Minor offences have also been reclassified (Real Story, 24th April, 2005).

The use of police discretion in regards to reporting domestic violence incidents could also account for the rise in violent crimes. 2. 3.

Disadvantages of C.

C. T. V There are many factors that could limit the operation of C. C.

T. V. Like most hardware components, camera capability is subject to advances in technology. Systems are expensive and quickly become out dated. The way the camera is operated and by whom, can influence whether the system can produce quality evidence. Often video tapes are used over and over, thus impeding the quality of image obtained.

The ' Panoptic' of a camera, or lack of, can lead to the partial filming of an incident, which could result in a wrongful arrest of an innocent person who could have been merely defending themselves. Also, the operation of the system is susceptible to human error, especially in the presence of ' discriminatory monitoring'. Ditton et al (1999) is of the view that ' those monitoring C. C.

T. V. systems have been known to adopt police catagories of suspicion when viewing the screen'. There have also been accusations of the misuse of surveillance systems by the authorities. Three workers from Sefton Council, Merseyside were suspended from work following allegations that they had used C.

C. T. V cameras as a ' peeping Tom' tool (BBC, 2005). They were believed to have pointed a street safety camera into a women's flat and were

subsequently suspended from their positions in the councils operation centre. 3.

Facial Recognition and Information Technology In the London Borough of Newham, a ' Facial Recognition System' known as ' Face It' has been introduced alongside the 140 C. C. T. V street cameras already in operation. The technology is based on Neural Network facial recognition which involves the camera identifying ' facial-patterns'.

The images obtained are then cross-referenced and compared with thousands of police images of known, convicted criminals contained within an extensive database. This system of collating information on known criminals is not a modern concept. Bertillon (1890) developed a system which involved recording specific identification data onto a standard form. Law enforcement officers would record detailed anthropometric measurements of convicted criminals onto a comprehensive data sheet known as ' A Portrait Parle'. This system of identification cards allowed the police to compile and effectively utilize greater numbers of records, ultimately bringing more criminals under state surveillance (Finn, 2002). The Metropolitan Police Force accredit ' Facial Recognition Systems' to reducing crime and Councillor Ian Corbett, Chair of Newham Council's Environment Department described it as ' protecting the civil liberties of the majority' (Reality TV, 2005).

Which is suggestive of the theory of hedonistic utilitarianism (Bentham, 1768) and the theory of ' Social Control'? That the Law presents the will of the people and there is a general consensus on the desirability of protecting

private property. Facial recognition systems obviously have a huge advantage over standard CCTV systems that require many man-hours to look through for a face that may not be there. However, are these systems 100% accurate, as there can be no margin for error as this could lead to a reasonable chance of mis-identification of an innocent person? Problems could possibly arise if the computer picks out similar faces. Another potential drawback is if the known offender has had plastic surgery. Another way, in which Information Technology is being deployed, is through a pilot scheme in Sunderland. In an attempt to prevent attacks on taxi drivers, security cameras are being installed for a six month trial, in taxis.

The cameras will store pictures of passengers and are able to transmit live images and audio to a 24-hour monitoring centre. Satellite tracking can also pinpoint the exact location of a vehicle (BBC News, 2005). Speed cameras are another form of crime prevention strategy, which involves the use of surveillance and information technology. They were introduced in the U.

K in 1992. It is estimated that there are around 5, 000 in operation today and that approximately half a million fixed penalty notices are issued every year and it has been met with much public disapproval. The Daily Telegraph (20th August, 2001) reported that four speed cameras on the same stretch of road are bearing the brunt of public resentment at the nationwide crack down on speeding. They were the latest in a string of incidents aimed at the proliferation of ' Big Brother' technology on the road side. Is this suggestive of an erosion of public tolerance? 3. 1.

Covert Cameras and Privacy Issues Technology is changing the way we are policed. What is the impact of such widespread deployment of surveillance in public spaces on our privacy as citizens? With improving technologies, come increased concerns about privacy and potential for abuses of civil liberties. The vast deployment of powerful technologies such as ' Facial Recognition Systems' and image databases have fuelled the debate about enforceable rules and regulations. The civil rights group, Liberty, have campaigned for the statutory regulation of surveillance. This has led to the Data Protection Act 1998, which states that CCTV systems that process data must be notified to the Information Commissioner (formerly the Data Protection Commissioner). When registering a system, the user must state what the purpose of the system is.

Once registered compliance with a number of legally enforceable principles is required (Armitage, 2002). The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, 2000 was established to provide a statutory framework for the covert investigative surveillance techniques of state agencies such as the police and security services. In particular, this means that where the police or local authority have used covert surveillance systems, they will have to demonstrate proportionality, legality, accountability, necessity and subsidiarity (McCahill et al, 2002). Police, local authorities, prisons, government departments and courts are also bound by Article 8 of the Human Rights Act, 1998 (Armitage, 2002). Although there is evidence to suggest that the police do not always follow their code of conduct.

This is typified in the case of Perry v's United Kingdom, 2003. The European Court of Human Rights held that a convicted armed robbers human rights

<https://assignbuster.com/the-to-the-utilitarian-work-of-jeremy-bentham/>

were infringed when he was secretly video taped by police after he refused to take part in an identification parade. Under article 8 of the Act- citizens have a right to respect for private life. This was subsequently breached by the police, as their covert video taping had gone beyond the normal use of their station camera and was not in accordance with the law. 3. 2.

ConclusionIt is clear from the findings of the report that the use of C. C. T. V has dramatically increased over the past two decades without any substantiated evidence to prove how effective it is in crime reduction terms.

Therefore, without this evidence to support the use of surveillance systems, how can the government justify such large amounts of public funding? Many of the comprehensive studies into it's effectiveness in relation to volume crimes have conclude that as an environmentally-centred crime reduction strategy, it is more effective in reducing property crimes and not as effective at reducing public order offences. This may be because C. C. T. V is more beneficial when used in conjunction with other crime reduction measures such as street lighting.

The placement of cameras can also affect the deterrent effects of surveillance. In relation to human rights and privacy issues, C. C. T. V monitoring can be subject to discrimination and human error, therefore resulting in the misuse of surveillance and the obtaining of illegal evidence.

Although, when obtained through legal means, some weight should be attached to the use of CCTV images for evidential purposes. Such images could be used either as evidence in court or to help extract a guilty plea, or to identify witnesses and victims at a scene of crime.