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Surveillance from All Angles ?: Some Observations and Comments

1st Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) Annual Conference
12th September 2007, Pollock Halls, Edinburgh

Professor Alex Hirschfield
Applied Criminology Centre
What is Surveillance?

“the processes of observing what happens in different locations and contexts and converting such observations into both intelligence and situational assessments directly linked to action and interventions.”
Surveillance of What?

- Individuals (Victims, potential victims, offenders, potential offenders)
- Groups of individuals (co-offenders, gangs, networks)
- Biometrics of Individuals (e.g. voice, fingerprints)
- Buildings (external and internal)
- Items of Property (electronic goods, mobile phones)
- Bags, packages, containers
- Means of Transport (on buses, trains)
- Places and spaces (town centres, streets, car parks, estates)
- Cyberspace
Forms of Surveillance

- Visual
- Voice
- Signal
- X rays and scanners
- Thermal
- Smell
- Chemical
- Radioactivity
- Biological
- Electronic (email, credit card/ bank transactions, downloads, web use)
- Documentary
- Telephony
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why ?</th>
<th>By Whom ?</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| • Intelligence gathering  
• Monitoring and tracking  
• Public reassurance  
• Guardianship & Deterrence  
• Crowd control  
• Identification of suspects  
• Identification of Offenders  
• Apprehension [before/during/after an offence]  
• Economic Gain  
• Personal Satisfaction | • Police  
• CDPR  
• British Transport Police  
• Customs and Excise  
• Bus companies  
• Banks  
• Business Watch  
• DSS / Inland Revenue  
• Burglars  
• Terrorists  
• Fraudsters  
• Bank Robbers  
• Neighbours |
Additional Considerations

• Differences in deployment of technologies (explicit, covert, concealed devices, miniaturisation)

• Different response time windows (immediate reaction to live events – studied responses – replays - analysis of visual images)

• Different ethical perspectives on surveillance
Stages in Surveillance

• A  Design & specification of technology
  [Overt, Covert, detection or deterrence ?]

• B  Targeting and Deployment

• C  Prioritisation & Interpretation of Surveillance images and data

• D  Communication & Data Sharing

• E  Police/ Practitioner Responses

• F  Offender Response

• G  Public Response
A Theory for Each Stage

Theories about:

• the reasons for surveillance [benign or oppressive ?]
• the role of surveillance [reassurance, crime detection, crime prevention]
• **offender response and behaviour** [defiance, avoidance, desistance]
• surveillance and crime reduction [how does surveillance impact on crime ?]
• **places and crime opportunities**
• criminal networks and organised crime
• **terrorism**
• public perceptions, risk and fear
• victims and vulnerability
• **crime displacement**
• community cohesion and support for surveillance
• **perception and cognition** [How does one distinguish the unusual from the mundane from a plethora of images?]
• inference of intentions from human movement (gait, gesture, motion)
• knowledge and action
• governance, power and control
Crime Theories

• **Routine Activities Theory**
  [Convergence of motivated offender, suitable target & absence of capable guardian]

• **Rational Choice Theory**
  [Offenders select crime targets by weighing up risks of being caught, costs/effort involved against the reward]

• **Crime Pattern Theory**
  [Emphasis on crime-prone locations – departure/arrival points (nodes), journeys between them (paths) and borders between neighbourhoods (edges)]

• **Social Disorganisation Theory**
  [Residents share few common interests and don’t look out for each other]
General Theory of Crime Attractors, Generators & Detractors

Crime Generators: Places that bring people together and create crime opportunities for offenders who also happen to be there (e.g. a bus terminal, a school)

Crime Attractors: locations, sites, properties specifically targeted by offenders (e.g. red light districts, crack houses)

Crime Detractors: a location that discourages offenders and offending (e.g. sites with good natural surveillance, strong cohesive communities)

‘Urban areas can be viewed as a ‘patchwork of crime generators, crime attractors, crime detractors, and neutral areas’ Brantingham and Brantingham (1995)
Mapping crime over time

Explain these Patterns?
Routine activities theory
Cohen & Felson, 1979

A Suitable Target
A Motivated Offender
Lack of capable guardians

Crime
Damage to Wirral Bus Shelters 2000

Bus Stop A
(29 Incidents)

Bus Stop B
(10 Incidents)

Point C
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Insights Provided</th>
<th>Surveillance Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routine Activities Theory</td>
<td>Crime Opportunities</td>
<td>Identify times and locations where guardianship is weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational Choice Theory</td>
<td>Offender Decision Making and Behaviour (Benefits versus Risks)</td>
<td>Target Known MOs, suspects &amp; Offenders (especially prolific offenders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime Pattern Theory</td>
<td>Patterns of movement down paths, across nodes along edges</td>
<td>Monitor transport corridors, bus routes, journeys to crime, ANPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime Attractors, Generators, Detractors</td>
<td>Venues, service delivery points, events that bring people together</td>
<td>Bars, stations, Taxi ranks, night clubs, shopping malls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Disorganisation Theory</td>
<td>Residents share few common interests. Unable to look out for each other or supervise young people</td>
<td>Anti social Behaviour, criminal damage to street furniture and cameras, Indifference/ hostility towards police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken Windows</td>
<td>Dereliction &amp; neglect, signals to offenders that nobody is control</td>
<td>Surveillance to support crackdowns and zero tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strain Theory</td>
<td>Criminal behaviour triggered by demoralising impact of societal inequalities</td>
<td>Target affluent areas bordering disadvantaged communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRIMINAL OFFENDERS</td>
<td>TERRORISTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nearly everyone commits crime at some point</td>
<td>• Generally far fewer offences &amp; offenders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Most offenders travel relatively short distances to commit crimes</td>
<td>• Use regional, national and international networks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Offenders commit crimes within their ‘awareness spaces’</td>
<td>• Terrorists gain knowledge of situations with which they are unfamiliar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offenders pick easy, familiar opportunities – one reason for repeat victimisation</td>
<td>• Terrorists seek opportunities that will maximise publicity, impact and fear.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Offenders tend to be generalists</td>
<td>• Terrorists tend to be specialists</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Risk to offenders is being caught after the act</td>
<td>• Risk to terrorists is being caught before the act</td>
<td></td>
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### Is There a Difference?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivated Offenders</th>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Terrorism</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic Gain</td>
<td>Harm to system, social/ cultural, ethnic groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Gratification</td>
<td>Ideology/ Religion</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Risk vs Reward</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suitable Targets</th>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Terrorism</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Property</td>
<td>Symbolic buildings/ places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>People in/ near to them (Indiscriminate)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vulnerable people</td>
<td>Establishment figures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Those “colluding” with the enemy</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capable Guardians</th>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Terrorism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residents, Visitors, Employees</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surveillance systems</td>
<td>Surveillance systems</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patrons (wardens, police)</td>
<td>Patrons (wardens, police)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Religious Communities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prof. Tom Troscianko (Bristol)
Illustrative Example

Loitering

Stationary

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