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Is Camera Surveillance an Effective Measure of Counterterrorism?

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Camera surveillance has recently gained prominence in policy proposals on combating terrorism. We evaluate the instrument based on a comparative perspective and previous evidence on crime. We expect camera surveillance to have a relatively smaller deterrent effect on terrorism than on other forms of crime. In particular, we emphasize that: (i) terrorists have more opportunities for substitution; (ii) targets under camera surveillance might become more and not less attractive if terrorists aspire media attention; (iii) real-time interventions are limited as behaviour is only understood as suspicious in the light of hindsight; and (iv) closed-circuit television might crowd out social surveillance.

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