



Universität
Basel

Research Project

B-108 Effects of Camera Surveillance

Third-party funded project

Project title B-108 Effects of Camera Surveillance

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Organisation / Research unit

Departement Wirtschaftswissenschaften / Politische Ökonomie (Stutzer)

Departement Wirtschaftswissenschaften / WWZ Forum

Department

Project start 01.05.2008

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Status Completed

Motivation and Objectives of the Project

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In recent years, a seemingly limitless expansion of electronic surveillance of public and private spaces can be observed. Camera surveillance (or Closed-Circuit Television, CCTV) is probably the most rapidly spreading and at the same time one of the most controversial instruments in security policy today. Previous scientific coverage of CCTV schemes lacks a comprehensive analysis of the behavioral reactions of the involved actors from a rational choice perspective that takes up insights from economics and psychology.

This project is based on research and insights gained from the preceding project on public security, also funded by the WWZ Forum (Project No. B-099, "Die Produktion öffentlicher Sicherheit zwischen Markt und Staat"). There, we provide a systematic review of existing CCTV literature and evaluation studies, propose several hypotheses about possible behavioral consequences in face of CCTV, and also lay out some thoughts on empirical issues when analyzing CCTV effects.

In this project, we seek to provide a theoretical and empirical analysis of the impact of camera surveillance on public security based on the following questions: (i) How effectively does camera surveillance reduce illegitimate or indecent behavior. (ii) How does it contribute to subjective security? (iii) Is this form of institutionalized control accompanied by undesired substitution effects and adverse behavioral responses? The conceptual focus in studying these questions will be on behavioral consequences of CCTV from a cross-disciplinary economic and psychological perspective. Consequently, the objectives formulated in the project proposal remain unaltered and the previous research has been performed accordingly.

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