

FROM: NO CCTV (www.no-cctv.org.uk)
Press Release 8th December 2009
Attn: News Desks



-- BEGINS --

NO CCTV DISCOVERS GLARING OMISSION FROM SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S CCTV REVIEW

On Friday (4th December) three reports were released looking at CCTV in Scotland. No CCTV have discovered a glaring omission in one of these reports – the review of CCTV published by the Scottish Government ('The Effectiveness of Public Space CCTV: A Review of Recent Published Evidence Regarding the Impact of CCTV on Crime' [1]).

The Scottish Government did not commission any new research into surveillance cameras but instead discussed the findings of several existing reports. Notably they did not include the most recent evaluation of CCTV. The Campbell Collaboration Report 2008 [2] (a meta-study of 41 CCTV evaluations) which found that:

"the evaluations of CCTV schemes in city and town centers and public housing [...] did not have a significant effect on crime."

The Campbell Collaboration Report was published in December 2008. So why did the Scottish government not include it? An explanation may be found in the review's criticism of the 2002 evaluation [3] by the same authors as the Campbell Collaboration Report (Welsh and Farrington):

"Of all the literature reviewing CCTV, Welsh and Farrington (2002) only found 22 studies to include in their review which met these criteria [4], and the majority of these studies were conducted in the 1990's. Since then, many technological advances have been made, which may have an impact on the effectiveness of CCTV in terms of crime prevention and reduction. It is therefore, important to review the results of more recent literature which may account for the effect of any improved advancements. The present review of the literature will only include studies that have been conducted since the year 2000."

The Campbell Collaboration report considered 92 evaluations of CCTV and found only 44 met their criteria for inclusion. Of those they rejected, 22 were since 2002! Of those that met the criteria for inclusion 23 of the 44 were since 2000. In other words the most recent and comprehensive review of CCTV that includes multiple post 2000 studies has been excluded from the review.

Despite the fact that the review of CCTV shows once again the ineffectiveness of surveillance cameras like a broken record the Scottish Government has the same old solution - upgrade the surveillance camera network!

Surely at this point in time, when the failings of CCTV cannot be denied and with calls for cuts to public expenditure, an investigation into surveillance cameras should have looked at the alleged trade-offs of security versus freedoms and costs. Hundreds of millions of pounds have been wasted on this failed experiment. It is time to roll back the experiment and use the money to actually reduce crime.

-- ENDS --

[See Page 2 for references and notes to editors]

References:

[1] 'The Effectiveness of Public Space CCTV: A Review of Recent Published Evidence Regarding the Impact of CCTV on Crime ' - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/294462/0090979.pdf>

[2] The Campbell Collaboration. 'Effects of Closed Circuit Television Surveillance on Crime' - http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/news_/CCTV_modest_impact_on_crime.php

[3] Home Office Study 252, 'Crime prevention effects of closed circuit television: a systematic review' (2002) - <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hors252.pdf>

[4] Home Office Study 252 selection criteria - Welsh and Farrington only included studies that met strict methodological criteria:

“that CCTV was the main intervention studied;

that there was an outcome measure of crime;

that crime levels before and after the intervention were measured;

that the studies included a comparable control area.”

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. No CCTV is a UK group campaigning against the excessive use of surveillance cameras in the UK. Their homepage is at www.no-cctv.org.uk

2. For further information contact Charles Farrier on press@no-cctv.org.uk