CCTV AS "NOT REALLY A PANACEA" FOR TACKLING URBAN INSECURITY AND POSSIBLE WAYS TO IMPROVE ITS PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM BUDAPEST AND MILAN

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Abstract

The paper bases its research on the contradictions between the construction of video surveillance as a tool of crime control and the improvement of subjective security and empirical evidence, showing, at best, a limited technology capacity to achieve these goals. The study examines empirical evidence from two different European cities, Budapest and Milan, to investigate how the effectiveness of video surveillance is constructed there and what ways to improve it are suggested. The research suggests that proper management of surveillance systems, systematic and repeated study of the territory, and sustainable communication from local authorities and law enforcement are major actions that need to be undertaken for video surveillance to achieve desired outcomes. Nonetheless, contextual factors may also play a role in these findings.

Key words: Budapest, CCTV, crime control, Milan, subjective insecurity, urban spaces

I. Introduction

Since the end of the XX century, local authorities in cities around the world have been installing video surveillance cameras. They have claimed that CCTV should reduce both crime insecurity and fear of crime, thus justifying the installation and further expansion (Welsh, Farrington & Taheri, 2015). These claims rest upon two hypotheses. Firstly, video surveillance is a technology facilitating crime prevention, as criminals are rational actors who estimate their risks from committing a crime as higher

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than the possible benefits (Piza et al., 2019; Ratcliffe & Groff, 2019). Secondly, CCTV is a technology of care capable of generating feelings of safety and protection in law-abiding citizens (Cerezo, 2013).

A surveillance society framework can be applied to analyse this rationalisation for introducing and further expanding video surveillance in a city. This theoretical approach is based on Foucault's ideas of discipline, surveillance, and control (Foucault, 1995) and their further development (Lyon, 2007; Wood & Webster, 2009). According to a surveillance society approach, video surveillance should gradually eliminate even a potential for crime and deviance as it would transform individuals so that they internalise and comply with the existing norms and rules (Graham & Wood, 2003). Additionally, there is a bureaucratic belief in the capacity of surveillance technologies to pre-manage risks (Kitchin, Coletta & McArdle, 2017; Lyon, 2011). In turn, this reliance is one of the reasons for the proliferation of surveillance technologies across societies.

However, empirical research shows a high level of inconsistency and provides contradictory evidence of the efficiency of video surveillance in fulfilling either crime control or calming the fear of crime. More specifically, the current body of research shows that the effectiveness of video surveillance for crime prevention is highly conditional (depending on the type of crime, the type of urban space, other interventions, etc.) (Alexandrie, 2017; Welsh & Farrington, 2009). Regarding the fear of crime and subjective insecurity, the literature provides evidence of a moderate ability of CCTV to improve these issues (Appleby-Arnold et al., 2018; Brooks, 2005). Furthermore, an excessive presence of highly visible CCTV cameras might raise privacy concerns, thus generating further insecurity.

Provided these inconsistencies in the literature, this paper aims to investigate how the performance of video surveillance for tackling urban insecurity is constructed in Budapest and Milan and, if there are any drawbacks, how it is suggested to overcome them. The rationale for choosing Budapest and Milan is that these cities represent, respectively, European post-Soviet and Southern regions that are frequently at the periphery of urban security research despite the importance of urban insecurity in the political discourse there (Baptista, 2013). The cities differed in terms of socioeconomic and political situation and were selected by applying the maximum variability approach (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Conducting the research in diverse contexts facilitates the discussion of possible common and contextual explanations for the ability of video surveillance to control crime and improve subjective security in urban spaces.

The remainder of this paper is structured the following way. The second section introduces a brief literature review on the effectiveness of video surveillance for crime control and improving subjective insecurity. It is followed by the description of the current urban security context in each studied city and the implementation of video surveillance there, presented in respective sections. The methodology of the current research is discussed in the next section. Then, the main research results are introduced in two sections, with one focusing on the construction of the performance of video surveillance for tackling urban insecurity and the other – suggesting ways to improve its efficacy in Budapest and Milan. Finally, the discussion of the main results and their implications concludes the paper.

II. Contradictory evidence on the effectiveness of video surveillance for tackling urban insecurity

Surveillance society theory considers video surveillance to inherit some of the features of an ideal prison – the panopticon, a project of a perfect prison developed by Jeremy Bentham – especially the potential for discipline and normalisation (Foucault, 1995; Lyon, 2011). This prison is ring-shaped, and in the centre, there is a tower with a hidden warden is located. So, the prison design provides for constant observation of inmates; simultaneously, the inmates do not know whether they are being watched at any given moment. Consequently, the inmates get disciplined by internalising the knowledge of being constantly observed and are transformed into "docile bodies" behaving in a normalised way (Foucault, 1995).

According to the proponents of the surveillance society approach, video surveillance is one of the modes of exercising discipline and normalisation (Lyon, 2007; Norris & Armstrong, 1999; Wood & Webster, 2009). Therefore, video surveillance cameras can be considered a crime control technology because a potential criminal is restrained from committing offences in areas covered by them and, ideally, gets normalised with time. Another pertinent feature of a surveillance society is technological determinism adopted by bureaucracies, as they are convinced of the capacity of CCTV cameras to pre-manage risks (Kitchin, Coletta & McArdle, 2017; Lyon, 2011). In turn, it is one of the factors in the proliferation of surveillance technologies across society.

Empirical research at least partially challenges these theoretical stances along with political and media claims of the positive effects of video surveillance installation. The analysis of the impact of CCTV on crime reduction shows ambiguous results, highlighting the conditionality of the effect and sometimes providing contradictory results. More specifically, the research shows that the efficiency

of video surveillance depends on the type of crime, the location of surveillance systems in the city, the organisation of a command room, and other factors.

So, the review of the literature shows that the presence of CCTV cameras can lead to the reduction and prevention of various premeditated crimes – thefts, break-ins, burglaries, street drug dealing, etc. (Alexandrie, 2017; Piza et al., 2019; Ratcliffe & Groff, 2019; Welsh & Farrington, 2009). The studies show that although the effect is relatively modest, it is statistically significant. Additionally, a study of the crime reduction effect of CCTV in Polish cities shows that this modest effect might also be durable (Matczak et al., 2021). Simultaneously, according to the literature, video surveillance is not capable of preventing impulsive and alcohol- and drug-induced crimes, crimes against a person (murder, violence, etc.) and public disorder and incivilities (Alexandrie, 2017; Gill & Spriggs, 2005; Piza et al., 2019; Ratcliffe & Groff, 2019; Welsh & Farrington, 2009).

As to the location of video surveillance, the empirical research is highly inconclusive and produces contradictory evidence. For example, Welsh and Farrington (2009) demonstrate in their systematic review that CCTV can lead to crime prevention in car parks while not affecting crime rates in other urban locations (city centre, public housing, public transport, etc.). In contrast, Alexandrie (2017) demonstrates that video surveillance generates crime reduction in central urban areas and public transport stops there, while car parks and peripheral train and metro stops remain unaffected by the presence of CCTV cameras. The systematic review done by Piza and colleagues (2019) provides evidence that some residential areas might experience fewer crimes after introducing CCTVs.

The same contradiction in the evidence can be found in the literature on the impact of video surveillance on crime hotspots. On the one hand, some studies provide evidence that installing CCTV systems in crime hotspots leads to crime reduction there, mainly affecting violent crimes (Piza et al., 2019; Shah & Braithwaite, 2013). The most efficiency is achieved when the police actively monitor CCTV and establish a solid connection between control rooms and street patrols. On the other hand, Gerell (2016) challenges these findings by showing that the installation of video surveillance in crime hotspots has no statistically significant effect.

Furthermore, the empirical research reveals two contradictory effects generated by the presence of video surveillance – crime displacement and the diffusion of benefits. The former relates to the transfer of crime from a physical space covered by CCTV systems to areas not covered by them (Alexandrie, 2017; Cerezo, 2013; Mucchielli, 2020). The latter effect refers to positive outcomes (for

example, measured through crime reduction) not only in the areas covered by CCTV systems but also in adjacent ones (Lim & Wilcox, 2017; Piza et al., 2019).

The proper work of a command room and their close collaboration with street patrols can significantly improve the performance of CCTV cameras and at least partially overcome the drawbacks outlined previously (Alexandrie, 2017; Norris & McCahill, 2006; Piza et al., 2019). Thus, the studies show that the efficiency of ground patrols increases when there is active monitoring of CCTV systems, so ground officers can react quickly to offences or even intervene before a crime is committed (Piza, Caplan & Kennedy, 2017). However, Mucchielli (2020) provides evidence that active monitoring might be demanding for police officers as they frequently experience boredom and fatigue. Besides, control rooms could also be understaffed, which impedes their work greatly (Laufs and Borrion, 2022).

The general public perceives video surveillance as lagging behind, compared with street patrols, when responding to offences (Brands, Schwanen & van Aalst, 2016). European urban population perceives video surveillance as an effective technology to tackle crime (Brooks, 2005); however, simultaneously, people are concerned that the presence of CCTVs leads to an invasion of their privacy (Appleby-Arnold et al., 2018; Cerezo, 2013). The latter might be generated by insufficient knowledge of how the collected data is processed, which in turn might create the feeling of a lack of control over one's data.

The perception of video surveillance is closely connected with the perception of urban spaces and marginal social groups, especially with their pre-existing stigmatisation. In particular, an excessive presence of video surveillance in an already stigmatised urban space might reinforce its identification as dangerous and, consequently, foster fear of crime (Zurawski, 2010). The same can be found in the literature studying a relationship between the presence of video surveillance and groups of "dangerous others" (Williams & Ahmed, 2009). Moreover, the installation of video surveillance might even lead to a deteriorated perception of the area of inhabitation as it might be a sign that the neighbourhood is not as safe as its inhabitants initially thought (Gill & Spriggs, 2005).

This section demonstrates that the current state of research is inconsistent in empirical evidence on the impact of video surveillance on crime and subjective insecurity. The literature highlights the importance of considering the technology in a specific setting contextualising for the pre-existing spatial and social stigmatisation, other interventions and measures that could impact the performance of CCTV systems, and other factors.

III. Budapest: Transition period and urban insecurity

In the 1990s, Hungary underwent a transition period, moving away from the Soviet regime to an open market and adopting neoliberal policies. This societal change greatly impacted various sides of the country's life, including urban insecurity, crime and ways to tackle them. More specifically, because of lax formal and informal control, the country faced a sharp increase in criminal activity. Moreover, an additional factor facilitating crime activity was aggravated anomie experienced by the Hungarian society during the transition period (Kerezsi, 2009; Los, 2003), which resulted in social marginalisation (also ascribable to increased alcohol and drug consumption) and turning to criminal careers (Kerezsi, 2004). Among the consequences of these adverse conditions was increased fear of crime and perception of insecurity in the country in general and, more specifically, in its capital.

The process of the country's neoliberalisation has not been straightforward due to various political, economic, and social reasons. The literature suggests that there are two main stages of Hungarian neoliberalism. The first one is frequently referred to as "embedded neoliberalism" (Bohle & Greskovits, 2007), which started with the fall of the Soviet bloc and lasted until 2010. Embedded neoliberalism is usually unstable as the government seek to balance between the welfare provision and market liberalisation. By 2010, this balance was hard to sustain on the background of the consequences of the 2007 economic crisis, and centre-right populist forces came to power.

In 2010, Viktor Orbàn became the Prime Minister of Hungary for the second time, and his party, FIDESZ, got the majority of the seats in the Parliament. The new government formed discourse on "illiberal turn", highlighting the drawbacks of neoliberalism (Dale & Fabry, 2018). The literature designates it as a starting point for the second phase of the Hungarian neoliberalisation. Some researchers consider it "authoritarian populism," highlighting the centralisation of power, increasing control over the media, loss of autonomy of the local authorities, etc. (Rogers, 2020). Others refer to this stage as "national neoliberalism" by pointing out the priority of national interests (as defined by the political elite) and simultaneous neoliberal economic policies (Ban, Scheiring & Vasile, 2021).

These transformations in the neoliberalisation of Hungary have some consequences for analysing urban insecurity there. The populist discourse facilitated stigmatising some groups of immigrants as dangerous and criminogenic, especially since 2015, when the country faced an influx of Syrian refugees (Bocskor, 2018). It is worth noting, however, that before the immigration crisis, there had been exclusionary discourses towards some ethnic groups in Hungary. In particular, it concerns the Roma people who have been consistently discriminated against in the public discourses and various policies (Kóczé, 2015).

Recent scholarship on urban insecurity in Budapest demonstrates that urban insecurity is constructed through fear of crime and visible signs of physical and social degradation (Barabás, Koplányi & Szigeti, 2018; Stefanizzi & Verdolini, 2018). A more in-depth analysis of the city reveals differences between marginal and affluent neighbourhoods in constructing urban insecurity. So, while the inhabitants of the former are concerned with criminal activity and a lack of formal control, those living in the latter generated their discourse on urban insecurity around the problem of the presence of people showing deviance in their behaviour (induced by alcohol or drug consumption, homeless, etc.) (Valente & Crescenzi Lanna, 2019).

In Budapest, this difference between marginal and affluent neighbourhoods might be attributed to social and physical segregation that has been going on since the Soviet period. Thus, during the 1960 – 1970s, wealthier people preferred to settle in the northern and western suburbs of the city, which were considered safer, greener, and, consequently, more prestigious (Brade, Smigiel & Kovács, 2009). Furthermore, after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, a tendency of the emerging middle class to inhabit fortified housing estates and gated communities outside the city centre, looking for more security and social homogeneity, facilitated this trend of social and spatial segregation (Cséfalvay, 2009).

As to video surveillance, it is possible to contextualise the usage of the technology for urban security purposes through the analysis of the relevant legislation. Thus, among the main aims of video surveillance are maintaining public order, the cleanliness of streets, the safety of public transportation and public and private property, and crime prevention (Act LXIII on Public Space Supervision (1999)). Various strategic documents in Budapest also discuss video surveillance similarly, highlighting that the technology should achieve multiple aims (for example, see Budapest 2030 Long-Term Urban Development Concept or Smart Budapest. The Smart Vision of Budapest).

Simultaneously, Hungarian legislation accounts for the privacy of its citizens. In particular, the data collected in public areas through any means of systematic surveillance (CCTV, drones with video cameras, etc.) is subjected to data and privacy protection. Additionally, to inform the public on the extent of video surveillance, the Act on Public Space Supervision (1999), §6(4), obliges mayors to publish the data on the places and the numbers of installed CCTV devices on their official websites. Lastly, the Act establishes that the public should be informed about entering the territory under video surveillance through appropriate signage.

IV. Milan: Neoliberalism and urban insecurity

Italy also underwent some socio-economic and political changes in the 1990s, although their scale was different from the Hungarian transition. In the political field, the First Republic, a party system that had existed since the end of the Second World War, ended due to an extensive investigation of political corruption ("Mani pulite" and "Tangentopoli"[2]) (Koff & Koff, 2000). The new government adopted a neoliberal course and started implementing austerity programs, cutting expenditures on social welfare (Ferragina & Arrigoni, 2021).

The Italian neoliberalism also has some peculiarities. Thus, some studies characterise it as selective, as institutional changes are frequently initiated at the margins of society. After being adopted there, they can gradually diffuse to the whole society. As a result, neoliberal policies affect more vulnerable and marginal social groups in the first place (Ferragina & Arrigoni, 2021), which might lead to their increasing precarity. Additionally, there is a policy continuation in Italy despite an interchange between centre-left and centre-right governments. It is attributed to a "catch-all" character of the Italian parties that seek more centrist positions, trying to attract as many voters as possible. Consequently, parties from both sides of the political spectrum implement neoliberal policies relatively continuously (Forestiere, 2009).

The end of the First Republic and neoliberalism affected Italian society, which faced rapid deindustrialisation, the disappearance of traditional social networks, intercultural and racial conflicts, loss of institutional trust, etc. (Melossi & Selmini, 2009). These changes were reflected in the discourse on urban insecurity in the country. Before the end of the First Republic, organised crime had been at the centre of security discourse; since the 1990s, the discourse on urban security has shifted to the matters of public security, urban crime and decay (Ricotta, 2016). This change can be attributed to socio-economic, political, and cultural factors (Ricotta, 2016).

Firstly, the end of the First Republic and the constitutional crisis led to the rise of populist political parties ("Forza Italia" (now "Il Popolo della Libertà")[3] and "Lega Nord" (now "Lega")[4]). Secondly, in 1992, Cosa Nostra, the Sicilian mafia organisation, perpetrated the murder of two anti-mafia judges (G. Falcone and P. Borsellino), which provoked a strong anti-mafia movement in Italy at the time. However, the mafia issue has gradually left the debate on security because mafia organisations

[2] "Clean hands" and "Bribesville"

[3] "Forward Italy" (now "People of Freedom").
[4] "Northern League" (now "League")

became more subtle in their activities and sought to avoid committing much-publicised crimes. Thirdly, there has been a gradual neoliberalisation of Italian economics, as described above. Lastly, during the 1990s, Italy's role in migration routes changed from a transitional to destination point. Populist forces used this situation to attract voters as they framed the discourse on urban insecurity in the country by marginalising various social groups, especially immigrants, and labelling them as criminogenic (Bonfigli, 2014; Melossi & Selmini, 2009; Ricotta, 2016).

The new discourse on urban insecurity facilitated the rise in fear of crime in urban spaces, spurring citizens' demand for more security in cities. As a response, local authorities demanded and eventually gained more responsibilities in urban insecurity (Ricotta, 2016). In particular, in 1993, Law 81/93 introduced the direct election of mayors. In 1994, the Città Sicure[5] project aimed to promote crime prevention was launched by the regional government of Emilia Romagna. In 1998, the first Protocols of Understanding were signed to distribute security provision responsibilities. The 2001 Constitution amendments gave local authorities more tasks in urban security provision based on the principle of subsidiarity. In 2017, Law 14/2017 provided for the installation of video surveillance systems by local authorities to prevent and combat crime and degradation.

In Milan, crime and incivilities remain acute problems, disturbing the local inhabitants and forming their perception of insecurity (Mireanu, 2020; Stefanizzi & Verdolini, 2018). Additionally, the right-wing political and media discourses draw a connection between urban insecurity and various marginal groups (homeless, ethnic minorities, immigrants, etc.), which is also reflected in the Milanese public's perception of urban insecurity (Bonfigli, 2014; Mireanu, 2020; Stefanizzi & Verdolini, 2018). Simultaneously, left-wing mayors mainly ignore the problem of urban insecurity, focusing on social interventions that might have urban security as a by-product (Bonfigli, 2014).

The research on the implementation of CCTV in Milan shows that the public authorities tend to install video surveillance systems silently without previous public consultations and without conducting an in-depth analysis of the needs of the territory and possible alternative interventions (Fonio, 2011). The author of the study explains such a situation by the fact that the Data Protection Authority does not evaluate and inspect the work of public surveillance systems in Italian cities, which creates favourable conditions for disregarding some of the rules.

Generally, the Italian legislation encourages the installation of video surveillance by highlighting its utility for crime prevention and investigation, combatting degradation, public order and safety, a

[5] Safe Cities

comprehensive redevelopment of urban spaces, and others (see, for example, "Pact for Security between the Ministry of the Interior and the ANCI[6]"(2007) and "Provisions in Relation to Video Surveillance" (2010)). Law 48/2017 states that CCTV systems improve control over the territory, especially in extraordinary situations.

Despite this positive construction of video surveillance, Italian law also underlines the importance of respect for privacy and individual rights. So, the Circular of February 8, 2005, "Video Surveillance Systems. Definition of Guidelines on the Matter", establishes the main principles that should be applied for installing CCTV systems to prevent data abuse and unnecessary ubiquity of video surveillance. These principles are a necessity, relevancy, no-exceedance in data collection and treatment, and prudent approach towards choosing places for installing CCTV cameras. Furthermore, the Provisions (2010) add one more principle: the proportionality in selecting a surveillance camera and its placement methods. Finally, Italian legislation, like the Hungarian one, also provides appropriate signage of areas under surveillance (Provisions (2010)).

V. Methodology

This article has two main purposes. Firstly, it aims to investigate how various actors construct video surveillance performance for tackling objective and subjective dimensions of urban insecurity in Budapest and Milan. Secondly, it aims to explore how the actors suggest improving CCTV efficacy and overcoming the drawbacks. During the fieldwork, interviews were conducted with various actors directly involved in dealing with urban insecurity in each city. These actors could be divided into two groups: experts (local policymakers, researchers, consultants, police officers, and others) and representatives of voluntary organisations (neighbourhood watch, victim support, and similar organisations). The previous research shows that interviewing experts might be beneficial for clarifying complex social phenomena, including urban security (Edwards, Hughes & Lord, 2013). Those engaged in voluntary activities, in turn, have a direct connection with local inhabitants and deal with the problem of urban insecurity in the immediate environment of its production (Bennett, Holloway & Farrington, 2006).

The method of semi-structured interviews was applied for conducting the empirical part of this research. The technique allows an interviewee to speak extensively but keeps the discussion focused on the topic (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In total, 15 interviews (eight in Budapest and seven in Milan)

[6] Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani (National Association of Italian Municipalities)

were conducted during the fieldwork (April – October 2020). Table 1 presents the field of expertise or voluntary activity of the interviewees in each city.

Table 1: Interviewees participating in the research.

Budapest	**Milan**
• Interviewee 1BE – an expert in Geographic Information Systems and mapping the fear of crime; • Interviewee 2BE – an expert in local governments and their role in urban security; • Interviewee 3BE – a police officer specialising in the implementation of CCTV; • Interviewee 4BE – an expert in technological solutions for urban security; • Interviewee 1BV – a representative of a neighbourhood watch organisation in Budapest; • Interviewee 2BV – a representative of a victim support organisation; • Interviewee 3BV – a representative of an organisation dealing with social hardship; • Interviewee 4BV – a representative of an organisation tackling the issue of spatial degradation.	• Interviewee 1ME – a researcher of urban insecurity, consulting regional and local governments; • Interviewee 2ME – an expert in crime prevention through urban design and planning in Milan, consulting local authorities; • Interviewee 3ME – a head of a police station in Milan; • Interviewee 1MV – a representative of a neighbourhood watch organisation in Milan; • Interviewee 2MV – a representative of an organisation tackling social and spatial degradation; • Interviewee 3MV – a representative of an organisation helping migrants; • Interviewee 4MV – a representative of an organisation dealing with the periphery of Milan.

The following topics were discussed during the interviews:

- The current situation with urban insecurity in a relative city;
- Changes in urban insecurity during the last 5 – 10 years;
- Measures and policies currently implemented to tackle urban insecurity (including video surveillance);

- Measures and policies they consider to be the most effective (even if not currently implemented) to deal with the problem of urban insecurity.

The interviewee data were subjected to critical content analysis (Bowen, 2009), applying the approach of code families (Campbell et al., 2013). The coding procedure was performed with NVivo 12 software.

VI. The perception of CCTV as a tool for tackling urban insecurity in Budapest and Milan

All the interviewees in both cities considered video surveillance effective for crime investigation for all types of crime. However, according to the interview data, the police in Budapest may not use CCTV footage for crime investigation in cases when a crime is widespread and has a low social and economic impact. For example, Interviewee 2BV put it the following way: *"Because I also think that there are lots of cameras and they don't necessarily use it, for example, […] for all muggings on trams because there are so many that they don't investigate."* In the interviewee's opinion, this can affect the overall public perception of CCTV cameras as some may view them as redundant if they are not used effectively for investigating crimes they are victims of.

As to the crime deterrence capacity of CCTV, the interviewees considered it limited to some types of crime. In particular, the interviewees named premeditated crimes (car thefts, burglaries, etc.) as the ones that could be prevented by the presence of CCTV cameras, which is in line with the previous empirical studies (Alexandrie, 2007; Piza et al., 2019; Ratcliffe & Groff, 2019). Furthermore, they connected the presence of video surveillance with a decline in the rates of these crimes in each city. Still, they accounted for other interventions that might have led to the diminishing incidence of premeditated crimes, highlighting human surveillance as a crucial element of crime prevention and control. Some recent research also underlines the role of human surveillance in crime prevention and its possibly higher efficacy than that of CCTV (for example, see Douglas and Welsh (2020) on the role of place managers).

The comparison of the interview data from the two cities shows that the dominant form of human surveillance differs between the studied contexts. Thus, in Budapest, formal surveillance implemented by law enforcement officers is considered more effective than video surveillance. For instance, the words of Interviewee 4BE can summarise a shared view of the Hungarian interviewees: "*There needs to be more police patrol and more control and maybe more CCTV, but I think the emphasis needs to be on the police patrols and them controlling the behaviour on the street."* In

contrast, informal and spontaneous surveillance implemented by the general public and passers-by is constructed as a crucial element of crime prevention in Milan. As Interviewee 2MV put it: *"This [the improvement of the feeling of security] can be done by my colleagues [volunteers], just like the mothers with children […] if there is the presence of some people who arrive and watch, they occupy the territory; it is the first step towards creating a safer environment."* It is in line with previous research providing strong evidence that the existence of social ties and community trust in the neighbourhood can not only improve the perception of security there but also leads to crime reduction due to the constant presence of unofficial observers and "eyes on the street" (Jacobs, 1961; Newman, 1996).

This difference might be attributed to the variation in political contexts in the studied contexts. Thus, in Hungary, there is a tendency towards centralising power; therefore, people might have more expectations about possible interventions from the police. In turn, in Milan, due to an ongoing neoliberalisation, there is a responsibilisation of local authorities and inhabitants also in the field of urban security.

The interview data also demonstrate that video surveillance is incapable of eliminating the potential for crime as is expected by the surveillance society approach (Graham & Wood, 2003; Norris & Armstrong, 1999). Thus, in both studied contexts, the interviewees construct CCTV as exercising some deterrence but not its disciplinary potential, especially towards criminals. It might be attributed to the construction of criminals as rational actors who displace their activity from increasingly fortified physical spaces. However, there is a variation in chosen crime displacement strategies in the studied cities.

Thus, criminals shift their activity to mainly virtual spaces in Budapest. In particular, the Hungarian respondents frequently referred to phone-based cheating of older people and called grandchilding[7]. The words of Interviewee 1BE are illustrative of this trend of crime displacement, especially to virtual spaces: *"[T]he crime is not on the street now, it moved to the Internet and this area. So, it's much easier to commit a crime on the Internet, so it's quite typical*."

There is also a tendency for crime displacement in Milan, but the interviewees mainly discussed the spatial dimension. Thus, some interviewees accounted for the displacement of sex workers and drug dealing from one area of the city to another (usually from the city centre to the periphery) or even

[7] A criminal phones an older person and states that their grandchild (hence, the name) is in distress (a serious injury, car accident, etc.) and needs a sum of money urgently. The criminal says where the money should be transferred to and then disappears.

outside the city after installing CCTV cameras. Another significant trend in Milan is that criminals, again considered rational, learn to bypass video surveillance. Firstly, some experts mentioned that despite the sophistication of surveillance systems, the ways of getting around it are quite traditional, as hiding a face by wearing a mask or a hood might significantly impede their identification. Secondly, CCTV cameras become a target for criminals, given that they are expensive and could be placed for sale on an unofficial market. Interviewee 2ME, referring to his work experiences, mentioned both issues: *"In the end, they bought a very expensive camera system, almost € 60,000 […]. The first theft after the cameras were installed was a month later; they stole the camera system. Also, because it's enough to put a hood on."*

Besides criminals learning to bypass video surveillance, the interviewees also related the mismanagement of surveillance systems with the reduced ability of video surveillance to control crime. This also lies in line with the previous literature on the topic. Firstly, in Budapest, law enforcement agencies often ask the municipalities to install CCTV cameras based on their perception of high-crime areas rather than conducting proper research, which can lead to inefficiencies. Although the Municipality of Milan has a more methodological approach towards installing CCTV cameras (identification of areas with low natural surveillance and high crime rates), the authorities of both cities do not conduct any research evaluating the effects of the installation of video surveillance. As a result, there is a lack of understanding about how these systems contribute to enhancing security in the cities.

Secondly, the cities share a problem of installing surveillance systems with some blind spots, that is, areas that are not visible through surveillance systems. The interviewees suggested that this issue adversely impacts the efficiency of control rooms, as they cannot monitor the entire site. In turn, it undermines their ability to inform the street patrols timely and provide them with all the necessary information.

The analysis of the interviews conducted in Budapest allows to discern several issues related to the mismanagement of video surveillance that do not appear in the discourses in Milan. Thus, the control rooms in Budapest are understaffed, and police officers' salaries are not high. Consequently, police officers frequently take additional shifts to monitor CCTV after their regular eight-hour work shift to increase their income. However, this can fragment their attention and make them less focused, which results in less active monitoring. These issues – understaffed control rooms and fragmented focus of police officers – are in line with research undertaken in other contexts (Laufs and Borrion, 2022; Mucchielli, 2020)

Furthermore, the interview data provides some evidence of the differences in resources that various districts of Budapest can allocate towards implementing surveillance systems. Despite district officials being cognizant of the crime displacement effect that may arise from installing CCTV cameras, some less affluent districts may not have the financial means to install surveillance systems to prevent the migration of criminal activity to their area.

Regarding subjective insecurity, video surveillance is generally considered effective in tackling it in both cities. So, interviewees from both cities accounted for the practice of inhabitants requesting the installation of video surveillance as the technology is considered an effective solution to address crime and safety concerns. The interviewees explained that this is due to the growing awareness of various threats, as well as a lack of formal and informal control, leading citizens to seek ways to fortify their places of inhabitation. In this quest for fortification, video surveillance can offer a sense of security and reassurance that someone is monitoring the community.

However, the positive effect of installing CCTV cameras is usually short-term as video surveillance blends into the urban landscape and becomes almost unnoticeable (Bigo, 2006). The interviewees offered some additional explanations for the diminishing with time impact of video surveillance on subjective security in the middle- or long-term. The Milanese interviewees related this short-term effect to the failure of both the police agencies and the Municipality to inform the population of the positive results achieved by the installation of CCTV systems. As Interviewee 1ME formulated it: *"[T]hey [the police] do not dedicate, in my opinion, enough time to, what in English is called, accountability towards the final beneficiaries. And this tends to delegitimise them because even if it is maybe a useful tool, but […] it diminishes with time."*

Provided the practice of requesting the installation of CCTV cameras and fulfilling these requests, it might be germane to discuss how bureaucracies perceive video surveillance. The gathered data provides some evidence that the local administrators strongly believe in technological solutions to tackle crime and insecurity, which aligns with the surveillance society logic and might explain the local authorities' construction of video surveillance as the technology of care (Lyon, 2007). However, they act on this belief differently.

In Budapest, it emerges that the local authorities have an unofficial practice of installing CCTV cameras that are not activated and do not actually work. In particular, Interviewee 3BE referred to his work experience: "*When I was an inspector, in the city centre, there were about 30 cameras, sometimes just about half of the cameras worked. So, we had cameras, but nobody cared whether*

they worked or not." The interviewees who mentioned it suggested that besides economic reasons (that is, a lack of expenses on the sustenance of the system), the authorities overly rely on the symbolic role of video surveillance in crime prevention and calming subjective insecurity.

This practice would be unproductive in Milan as criminals differentiate between activated and not activated cameras and sometimes target the cameras, as discussed earlier. However, Milanese authorities often think that *"putting two cameras can solve the problem"* (Interview 2ME). This inclination of the local authorities in both cities might be explained by their will to visually demonstrate their commitment to addressing crime and insecurity by creating a "stage-set security" (Coaffee & Wood, 2006).

In Budapest, the interviewees also generated a discourse on situations when video surveillance might cause or reinforce the perception of insecurity, as discussed by Williams and Ahmed (2009) and Zurawski (2010). Thus, installing CCTV cameras in an area with a robust reputation of being insecure can elicit mixed reactions from residents and visitors. Although it may imply that the authorities are taking steps to tackle the issue of insecurity, having numerous conspicuous cameras can also intensify the fear of criminal activity. As Interviewee 2BV put it: "*Therefore, I would also add that if you have lots of cameras, yes, especially these large ones, you feel that this must be a risky area so that they put these many cameras.*" So, it appears that in areas with a pre-established criminogenic reputation, people might perceive the technology as a confirmation of their pre-existing images of the area.

As to concerns of privacy invasion related to the omnipresence of video surveillance, generally, in both cities, video surveillance does not generate them. However, according to the interview data, it could be attributed to various reasons in the cities. In Budapest, as the interview data reveals, people are generally not concerned about the possibility of their privacy invasion. Opposite to it in Milan, people are apprehensive about the problem of urban insecurity, which leads to prioritising security concerns over privacy ones. Consequently, it facilitates acceptance of various modes to tackle insecurity, including those violating civil rights.

VII. Suggested ways to improve CCTV performance in Budapest and Milan

The previous section highlighted various perceived deficiencies and drawbacks in the performance of video surveillance for tackling urban insecurity. Therefore, it is germane to consider how interviewees suggested overcoming them and improving the efficacy of video surveillance. It is worth noting that the interviewees from both cities shared their views on directions for improving the performance of CCTV systems for crime control. Furthermore, the interviewees underlined the

importance of undertaking these actions simultaneously, rather than choosing only one or just a few of them, to achieve maximum efficiency.

Firstly, law enforcement should intervene in offences caught by a CCTV camera as soon as possible, which requires swift coordination between them and a control room. As Interviewee 1MV put it: *"Video-surveillance system works only if there's a continuum: there should be someone who is watching the screen and can send a signal to patrol officers, and so on, and so on. And people, citizens, should know, be aware that there is this continuum."* Therefore, as this quotation indicates, awareness about how the police utilise video surveillance might also improve the citizens' perception of security.

Secondly, the presence of video surveillance should be highly visible. According to the interviewees, highly visible signs of ongoing surveillance can contribute to the symbolic presence of CCTV cameras. The importance of information notices is especially highlighted in the Hungarian interviews. For example, Interviewee 3BV referred to the experience of the installation of CCTV cameras by a charity organisation she works in. Initially, they installed the cameras to prevent assaults on their clients, especially women; however, the mere presence of video cameras did not impact the assaults. According to her words, putting a highly noticeable sign about ongoing surveillance actually contributed to preventing the assaults. This confirms previous conclusions about the deterrence potential of information signs about ongoing CCTV surveillance (Mazerolle, Hurley & Chamlin, 2002).

Thirdly, video surveillance systems should be installed properly and located strategically in the city. It requires an in-depth analysis of the territory, knowledge of crime hotspots and their change over time, evaluation of the possibility of implementing other interventions, avoidance of blind spots, etc. For instance, Interviewee 3BE mentioned the importance of conducting research and updating the knowledge of hotspots: *"And the other problem is that hotspots can move all the time. Sometimes, they stop; sometimes, there's a new hotspot. So, we should change the place of the cameras all the time. Every year, we should study the city crime situation, and we should change the place of the cameras."* Additionally, as Hungarian experts suggested, predictive policing might improve the decision-making about the placement of CCTV cameras by highlighting future possible crime hotspots, etc.

Lastly, there should be regular maintenance and updates of video surveillance hardware and software to improve the performance of the technology. The words of Interviewee 3ME are illustrative of the

importance of updating camera hardware, especially concerning the quality of the images: *"For sure, we have to have high-quality video surveillance, as unfortunately, the quality of the recordings does not always allow to identify a culprit, but also to see what exactly happened. But when the video surveillance is of good quality, surely, it provides security."*

To tackle the issue of spatial crime displacement, the interviewees from both cities mentioned that one of the ways to prevent it is to install CCTV systems in such a way that the whole areas of the cities would be covered and could be visible, referring to the example of London. However, simultaneously, the respondents did not favour this measure, highlighting the importance of maintaining privacy in public spaces. The words of Interviewee 4BE illustrate this shared opinion: *"One of the solutions is to install cameras in the whole city like in England to push out the crimes outside the country […], but I don't think this should be the road for Hungary."*

As to improving the performance of video surveillance for dealing with subjective insecurity, the Milanese interviewees believed that communicating the positive effects of the installation of video surveillance might prolong the positive perception of video surveillance by local inhabitants. To support this argument, Interviewee 1ME referred to the positive experience of another Italian city: *"In some contexts, investment in video surveillance was appreciated even in longer terms, when the administration was also able to communicate the impact of it, precisely to communicate to residents."*

Another way to extend an initial positive impact from the installation of video surveillance, suggested by the Hungarian interviewees, is to raise awareness about a solid human-technology connection, that is, a link between CCTV cameras, officers in a control room, and those patrolling the streets. More specifically, there should be information campaigns about and specific evidence of an instant reaction of street patrols to an (attempted) crime caught by a surveillance camera. Therefore, as the interview data from both cities demonstrates, communication strategies should be one of the ways to sustain a positive image of video surveillance in the public's perception.

Additionally, the Milanese interviewees assumed that the citizens' quest to install video surveillance is partially related to a lack of knowledge of other means and ways of fortification or creating a secure space. Consequently, they suggested that informing citizens about the importance of a combination of video surveillance with such interventions as spontaneous surveillance, transparent spaces allowing for surveillance, etc., might not only reduce the citizens' request but also their disillusion with the technology once it has been installed but has not brought the expected results.

Furthermore, the Milanese interview data indicate that the authorities' mindset should be somewhat changed so that they would perceive a CCTV camera as one instrument in a series of interventions to tackle urban insecurity rather than a unique solution. Thus, Interviewee 1ME referred to an example of a park renovation and how the security situation could be improved there: *"It is not that if you put cameras in that park, it will start to be frequented; maybe you need to do something else along with the cameras. There should also be the involvement of residents, socio-cultural initiatives that bring you back there, even economic initiatives that encourage attendance."*

VIII. Discussion and conclusions

The study was set out to understand how the efficacy of video surveillance for tackling urban insecurity is constructed in Budapest and Milan and how it is suggested to improve it. The research results show that although the interviewees considered video surveillance capable of bringing some positive results in crime prevention and calming subjective insecurity, the technology is constructed as not an ideal solution to the problems given their complex and changing natures. The current study confirms the previous scholarship showing that the mismanagement of video surveillance is one of the main reasons behind the low efficiency of CCTV cameras, as was demonstrated by Norris and McCahill (2006), Piza et al. (2019), and Alexandrie (2017). Additionally, the study brings to light such reasons as the changing nature and evolvement of crime, the inability of video surveillance to adapt to it, and a lack of public communication on the performance of CCTV systems from the authorities and the police.

Although the main conclusions are homogenous for the two studied cities, various contextual factors might lead to them. For instance, the current economic situation might explain some specificities of the mismanagement of video surveillance in Budapest. Thus, apparently, there is a lack of resources to invest in hiring more police officers to monitor footage in control rooms, which does not seem to be a problem in more affluent Milan. Furthermore, in Budapest, poorer districts have less money to allocate to install and maintain video surveillance; as a result, poorer districts might experience crime displacement to their areas from the districts covered by CCTV systems. In contrast, in Milan, video surveillance is managed by the Municipality of Milan, not by the authorities of each city zone. This might also explain the availability of resources and more or less uniform distribution of CCTV cameras across the city.

Although the interviewees in both cities believe that video surveillance cannot substitute the presence of a human observer, there are some variations in the form of an observer – official or unofficial. The Hungarian interview data suggest that formal control realised through the presence of law

enforcement is more effective for both crime control and calming subjective insecurity, as these officers are perceived as being able to react faster to dangerous situations than video surveillance. Paradoxically, there is a low level of trust in the police and a common belief that the police would do nothing to intervene and help in case of a crime. It reflects the complex legacy of the transition period (Kerezsi, 2004, 2009) when, on the one hand, people lost trust in state institutions, but, on the other hand, there is still a request for state protection, which is facilitated by the discourse on "illiberal turn" and the current concentration of power.

In contrast, the Milanese interviewees underlined the role of informal surveillance implemented by the general public in the city streets. It might be related to the neoliberalisation process in Italy, due to which the responsibility of security provision has been gradually transferred to the local level, which also implies active citizens' engagement.

The political and media discourses might also explain the difference in the motivations for the lack of concerns about privacy invasion by video surveillance. Thus, in Budapest, due to the centralisation of power and the public's reliance on the authorities, people believe that the authorities install CCTV cameras because they can deliver various goals. On the other hand, the dominance of the neoliberal discourse on insecurity in Milan, emphasising various threats, leads to the public's prioritisation of security needs.

Lastly, the results of the current research have some practical implications by indicating ways to improve the efficiency of the implementation of video surveillance. In particular, the technology should be implemented as one in a complex series of measures to control crime and improve subjective insecurity. Policymakers should consider the problems of crime and subjective insecurity as complex and developing problems rooted in social and spatial phenomena and requiring complex solutions rather than reliance on technological solutions. Additionally, an in-depth study of the territory (social and spatial issues, crime hotspots, possible blind spots, etc.) and its needs should proceed with introducing or extending CCTV systems. Organising the control room and providing quick response to crime is another key element of improved efficiency of CCTV systems. The local authorities and the police should inform the local inhabitants of the ongoing surveillance, including through highly visible information notices and, more importantly, of the positive impact of video surveillance. This communication might reassure local inhabitants by clearly demonstrating that the claims of a security provision potential of the technology, commonly used to justify its installation, are fulfilled. Finally, the interview data highlights that it is essential to undertake these steps simultaneously rather than focusing on only one of these actions.

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