



Intersecting perspectives: Video surveillance in urban spaces through surveillance society and security state frameworks

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ABSTRACT

The current body of literature allows discerning two predominant approaches for comprehending technology-based surveillance in modern societies: surveillance society and security state, developing within the domains of surveillance studies and security studies, respectively. These perspectives offer diverging explanations for the implementation of video surveillance in urban spaces and rarely engage in dialogue. This paper explores whether applying both approaches might be beneficial for understanding the reasons behind the deployment of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV), as constructed in the legislation and perceived by those involved in tackling urban insecurity. The study focuses on two European cities, Budapest and Milan, selected as the most diverse cases, but sharing the problem of urban insecurity. The surveillance society approach offers a vantage point for the analysis of the legal documents, highlighting the positive construction of the technology as a multi-purpose tool, its symbolic role in security provision, and the central role of authorities in security provision. In contrast, the interview data indicates that both approaches might contribute to understanding social constructs existing around the implementation of CCTV in urban spaces. Although theoretical aspects within each approach are shared across contexts, the nuances of their manifestations in these cities are influenced by variations in historical, socio-economic, and political contexts.

1. Introduction

Since the end of the 20th century, the number of CCTV cameras installed in various cities around the world has been growing steadily (Welsh et al., 2015). Due to constant technological development, video surveillance is becoming increasingly sophisticated, allowing, for example, to read car plates and recognise faces and dangerous objects (Skogan, 2019). The authorities justify the introduction and further extension of CCTV surveillance through claims that the technology and its developments should improve the fight against crime and terrorism and reduce fear of crime (Bannister et al., 1998; Galton Clavell et al., 2012).

Therefore, the rationalisation behind an increase in video surveillance in urban spaces has a double logic. On the one hand, the technology is an instrument of control over, repression and prevention of crime and terrorism. On the other hand, it is constructed as an

instrument of care for citizens as it is a tangible sign of the state's concern with the problem of insecurity. At the level of theory, the comprehension of technology-based surveillance in urban spaces is induced by two approaches: surveillance society and security state. The former highlights that video surveillance, including its symbolic presence, should contribute to instilling discipline in the population, while the latter suggests that CCTV facilitates the identification of those who should be excluded or "banned" from the normalised population.

Both theoretical approaches are inspired by Foucault's ideas and their further development: surveillance society is based on the concepts of discipline and disciplinary power (Foucault, 1995), whereas the notion of the apparatus of security (Foucault, 2009) inspired the theorisation of the security state. Borch (2015) highlighted the importance of a dialogue between the theories for the analysis of CCTV in urban areas, indicating, however, that it is rarely done in empirical research. For instance, Kitchin et al. (2017) demonstrated a combination of different

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governmentality modes enacted by smart technologies to make them more context-adaptable, while Monahan (2010) showed that social constructs around the use of CCTV vary among inhabitants of affluent and low-income neighbourhoods.

This paper presents the results of a study aimed at exploring how applying the two theoretical approaches – surveillance society and security state – can contribute to understanding constructed and perceived reasons for CCTV implementation in urban contexts. In particular, the study focuses on discourses on video surveillance in legal documents and generated by actors directly involved in dealing with the problem of urban insecurity.

The current research explores the issue in two diverse cities – Budapest and Milan – selected from the contexts where the use of video surveillance is understudied – Southern and Central Eastern European countries (Galton Clavell et al., 2012; Matczak et al., 2021). Previous research shows that the comparison of the countries from these regions could be beneficial in highlighting the dynamics of EU core-periphery division in terms of economics (Boltho, 2020; Caraveli, 2017), the complexity of democratisation processes (Bunce, 1998), and the specificities of neoliberalism and urban insecurity (Mireanu, 2020; Stefanizzi and Verdolini, 2018).

The cities were selected¹ by applying the maximum variability approach as this approach allows highlighting the specificities and commonalities in the studied context (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The cities differ drastically in socio-economic and political situations (Los, 2003; Ricotta, 2016), but the cities have comparable population sizes and the perception of insecurity is high in both cities (Stefanizzi & Verdolini, 2018).

The remainder of the paper is structured the following way. The first section presents the main standpoints of the two theoretical approaches. The following section introduces the methodology of the research. The next two sections present the main findings by city starting with a brief account of the city's socio-economic and political context. Finally, the article concludes with a discussion on the similarities and differences in the studied contexts along with considerations on the limitations of the study.

2. Surveillance society vs security state: video surveillance and security

2.1. Surveillance society: CCTV and discipline

The surveillance society approach is based on Foucault's notion of discipline (Lyon, 2011). Disciplinary power is exercised through the surveillance of individual bodies and the normalisation of their behaviour with the aim of making them conform to the dominant norms of

society (Foucault, 1997). Therefore, the pre-established normative model is an essential part of disciplinary power (Foucault, 2007). Additionally, Foucault indicates that discipline is a spatial technology of power: the technologies of surveillance and inspection are employed to organise individual bodies into “a field of visibility” and adjust their functionality. Consequently, surveillance has a disciplinary potential, which is illustrated in “Discipline and Punish” (1995) on an example of a perfect prison, the panopticon.²

Ideally, disciplinary power should be exercised in an entirely transparent physical and social space where, however, agency and agents exercising power can remain invisible, thus preserving their anonymity (Forrester, 2014). Additionally, the organisation of the physical space should correspond to the pre-existing normative model to facilitate normalisation (Foucault, 1995). Therefore, according to Foucault, an enclosed and fixed physical space should be designed to allow the individualisation and normalisation of observed bodies (Foucault, 1995).

The challenges of factual intricacies and heterogeneity of visibility relations in the application of Foucault's concept prompted the development of various alternative opticons (Bauman & Lyon, 2013). For example, Poster (1990) developed the idea of a superpanopticon, in which subjects participate in self-construction as disciplining subjects. Bigo (2006) put forward the concept of the ban-opticon with a focus on profiling technologies' role in determining whom to put under surveillance and whom to grant the right to move freely.

Deleuze (1992), who developed a theory of control society based on Foucauldian ideas, suggests that, in a modern society, discipline has gone out of physically enclosed spaces (such as prisons, schools, and factories) and is exercised at a level of the whole society. It has happened because states aim to manage and control their populations. The development of technologies capable of collecting and accumulating data on the population makes these tasks possible by extending and deepening surveillance (Deleuze, 1992). Therefore, the state is interested in and invests in surveillance technological development, especially of those technologies that allow tracking movements, transactions, and other routine actions, intending to distribute surveillance technologies across society and make them omnipresent.

Foucault's ideas have also been developed into the theory of surveillance society. Just like a control society, a surveillance society relies not only on traditional surveillance practices but also on technologies and their constant development and adaptation (Haggerty & Ericson, 2000; Lyon, 2011). Within this framework, video surveillance is considered to be one of the modes of exercising disciplinary power and normalisation (Lyon, 2007). Thus, CCTV facilitates collecting, storing, and structuring information on individual members of society (Wood & Webster, 2009), which makes it possible for an observer to track deviance from “normal” behaviour (even post-factum). Hence, the proponents of surveillance society expect that individuals will internalise the knowledge of being watched over through CCTV devices and start behaving in a normalised way (Graham & Wood, 2003; Haggerty & Ericson, 2000; Norris & Armstrong, 1998). Consequently, video surveillance is an instrument of risk anticipation as it imposes disciplinary power by controlling over and producing self-control of individuals put under CCTV's gaze.

Authorities might be interested in increasing surveillance over specific groups of the population showing deviant behaviour to instil discipline and anticipate crime (Fussey & Coaffe, 2012). However, this

¹ First, the countries were selected based on the following criteria:

- GDP per capita (source: The World Bank) as a proxy for the economic situation in the country;
- median equivalised net income (Eurostat) – personal economic precariousness;
- democracy index (The Economist Intelligence Unit) – political situation;
- Human Development Index (The United Nations Development Program) – social situation;
- the ratio of urban/rural population (The World Bank) – the level of urbanisation;
- and the feeling of safety walking alone after dark (European Social Survey, ESS9 – 2018) – the perception of insecurity. Then, in the selected countries (Hungary and Italy), Budapest and Milan were further selected based on a comparable population size (Budapest – 1.75 million inhabitants, Milan – 1.4 million inhabitants) and the highest crime rates per capita in their countries (data on police registered crime from the Hungarian Criminal Statistics Systems and the Italian National Institute of Statistics). All the measures were taken for the year 2018.

² A ring-shaped prison with a guard tower with an unseen warden in the centre; thus, the design of the building allows for a constant observation of all cells. Thus, at any given moment, the inmates of the panopticon are not certain whether the warden is observing them or not. As a result, the inmates internalise the knowledge of being constantly watched over. In turn, this knowledge transforms the inmates who become “docile bodies” by behaving in a normalised way.

increased surveillance and creation of “disciplinary spaces” might provoke further disorder, misbehaviour, and signs of physical disturbances as individuals feel the need to “produce themselves for the observer” (Lyon, 2011).

Video surveillance takes the asymmetry between an observer and those who are observed after Foucault’s understanding of disciplinary power (Lippert, 2009). Just like in the panopticon, video surveillance makes it almost impossible to verify the presence and character of an observer, as they should not be physically present in the same space where the observation happens. Therefore, there is an “unobservable observer” whose identity might be preserved from subjects of surveillance (Koskela, 2002).

Simultaneously, video surveillance has some unique features that differentiate this technology from traditional forms of surveillance (Lyon, 2007; Marx, 1998). In particular, due to the technology development, CCTV cameras can:

- Transcend distance, physical barriers, and time;
- Require more investments as there is constant development;
- Require less labour force as fewer people are needed to perform surveillance;
- Be decentralised;
- Be of low visibility to subjects of surveillance.

The last point signifies a critical departure from the Foucauldian understanding of the discipline and its mechanisms. Thus, Foucault states that, to be transformed and normalised, individuals should be aware that they are under surveillance. Contrary to this, as CCTV cameras become subtler, individuals are less aware of being exposed to surveillance (Wood & Webster, 2009). For this reason, some authors highlight the role of CCTV signage as a modern embodiment of the panopticon as they remind subjects of surveillance that they are in a zone covered by CCTV (Lippert, 2009).

At the same time, subjects of surveillance could adopt counter-surveillance strategies, resisting, challenging and disrupting the observer–observed power asymmetry. The strategies encompass such activities as disabling CCTV cameras and mapping routes not covered by video surveillance (Kateb, 2001; Kohn, 2010; Monahan, 2006). However, their main critique is that they focus mainly on the individualisation of surveillance problems and do not tackle institutional, political, and cultural support of surveillance practices. The concept of *sousveillance* has been developed to show how individuals can engage in challenging surveying institutions and power imbalance. Thus, it refers to the use of surveillance technologies by individuals to hold those in power accountable for their actions (Thomsen, 2019).

Due to the disciplinary power inherent in video surveillance and the asymmetry between a surveyor and a surveyed, a surveillance society can be considered a threat to privacy and liberty. Simultaneously, government and public services construct CCTV as an instrument of the provision of better public services (for example, enhanced security and safety, improved fight against crime and terrorism, and traffic monitoring) (Lyon, 2007; Wood & Webster, 2009). To justify the spread of CCTV cameras, authorities might also resort to “stage-set security” (Coaffee & Wood, 2006) or “security theatre” (Schneider, 2008); that is, CCTVs should signify that the state is concerned about and addresses the problem of insecurity (crime, terrorism, and other threats). These two sides of surveillance – increased surveillance and provision of better service – are closely interlinked and leave no choice between a safe, efficient society and a surveillance society because they happen simultaneously (Lyon, 2007; Taylor et al., 2008).

2.2. Security state: CCTV and exceptionalism

Foucault’s notions of governmentality, security, and security apparatus inspired the theorisation of the security state. Foucault defines governmentality as a power modality with “the population as its target,

political economy as its major form of knowledge and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument” (Foucault, 2007). Therefore, governmentality envelops logic, rationality and techniques, which can change over time to correspond to the current needs and aims of the government (Foucault, 1991). It implies that reality is formed in a relativistic way.

This relativistic mode influences the work of security apparatuses, as there is no “ideal” reality they should aspire to accomplish. The normalisation process starts with the disaggregation of reality into the constituent components. Then, the apparatus of security identifies what normality is and seeks to improve the interplay of the elements of reality so that they follow the identified normality (Foucault, 2007). The process of normalisation is constant and constantly ongoing because it accounts for changes in reality.

Disciplinary and juridico-legal techniques are required to facilitate the proper work of the security apparatus by identifying conditions and boundaries within which the components of reality should be optimised. Thus, disciplinary techniques enforce control over individual bodies by, for instance, surveying them, classifying their mental structures and identifying pathologies (Foucault, 2009), while juridico-legal techniques codify and sustain force and strength relationships in society. Since governmentality aims at rationalising every practice, the government of such a society employs the apparatus of security for tackling and preventing risks that might arise within a population by rationally calculating risks. Simultaneously, preventive measures’ benefits should not exceed their realisation costs. Therefore, measures for tackling risks are chosen based on their poly-functionality and costs (Foucault, 2007).

These Foucauldian ideas have been developed into the theory of the security state. According to the proponents of this approach, a security state considers a society in a “permanent state of emergency” or “generalised state of exception” as it is engaged in a self-declared war against an invisible, permanent, and general threat – such as crime and terrorism (Agamben, 2017; Bigo, 2006). The character of this threat allows for the removal of the usual spatial and time limits of the state of emergency. Furthermore, a security state usually exploits security discourse, resorting to military discourse (for example, war on or battle with the crime) to create images of violence and threat, thus allowing for the dominance of the speed and efficiency in identifying a (potential) threat over liberal rights (Agamben, 2017; Bigo, 2006; Zedner, 2003). Therefore, being in a self-proclaimed state of emergency allows acting beyond the rule of law and justifying illiberal practices that violate civil rights.

Simultaneously, the government in a security state can adopt a liberal discourse to justify the privatisation of security, which is essential to rationalise growing expenditures on security provision (Braithwaite, 2000; Loader, 1999). This situation leads not only to the ubiquity of video surveillance but also to its privatisation (Braithwaite, 2000). In turn, it results in a multiplicity of actors, which obstacles reliable data protection (Zedner, 2003). Furthermore, paradoxically, this privatisation of video surveillance and security services, in general, does not lead to a diminishing penal state. On the contrary, states should introduce stricter penal codes, regulatory legislation, and provisions for licensing, inspection, and audit of private surveillance (Braithwaite, 2000; Zedner, 2003).

Another consequence of the proclamation of a permanent state of emergency is the exploitation of the governmentality of unease, consisting of exceptionalism, profiling, and containing “others” (Bigo, 2006). Therefore, a security state protects one part (“normalised”) of the population from another (“dangerous”). With time, the state of security and the governmentality of unease become unremarkable, mundane, and not even challenged (Agamben, 2005).

Rationality and pursuance of risk pre-management justify the practices of the governmentality of unease and facilitate the proliferation of surveillance technologies. In particular, the technologies, especially “high” ones, are constructed as instruments able to resolve all security risks and problems (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1983). This technological

Table 1

The list of legal documents addressing urban insecurity and the use of CCTV at their administrative level in Budapest (Hungary) and Milan (Italy).

	Budapest	Milan
National	Act XXXIV on the Police (1994) Act LXIII on Public Space Supervision (1999) Act LXXX on Asylum (2007) Act CLXV on the Civil Guard and the Rules of Civil Protection (2011) The Fundamental Law of Hungary (2012) Criminal Code, Act C (2012) The National Crime Prevention Strategy (2012–2023) Cooperation Agreement between the National Police Headquarters and the White Ring Public Benefit Association (2016) Act XC on Criminal Procedure (2017)	Legislative Decree 267 “Consolidated Text of the Law on the Organisation of Local Authorities” (2000) Circular of February 8, 2005 “Video surveillance systems. Definition of guidelines on the matter” (2005) Security Pact between the Ministry of the Interior and the ANCI (2007) Decree Law 92 “Urgent Public Security Measures” (2008) Ministry of the Interior Decree “Public Safety and Urban Security: Definition and Areas of Application” (2008) Law 94 “Provisions on Public Security” (2009) Law 95 “Treaty of Prum” (2009) Decree Law 187 “Urgent Security Measures” (2010) Provisions in Relation to Video Surveillance (2010) The Constitution of the Italian Republic (2012) Legislative Decree “Urgent Provisions on International Protection and Immigration, Public Security, as well as Measures for the Functionality of the Ministry of the Interior and the Organisation and Functioning of the National Agency for the Administration and Destination of Assets Seized and Confiscated from Organised Crime” (2018)
Regional (Lombardy)		Regional Law 6 “Regional Regulation of Local Police Services and Promotion of Integrated Urban Security Policies” (2015) Protocol of Understanding between the Lombardy Region and the Prefectures – the Territorial Offices of the Government of Lombardy for the Contrasting the Phenomenon of Violence against Women (2017) Agreement for the Promotion of Integrated Security between the Ministry of the Interior, the Lombardy Region and the Lombardy ANCI (2019)
Municipal	Budapest 2030 Long-Term Urban Development Concept (N ^o 767/2013 IV.24) Budapest Transport Development Strategy, 2014–2030 (2014) Thematic Development Programs (Project of KMOP-5.1.1/D2-13-2013-0001) (2015) Smart Budapest. The Smart City Vision of Budapest (2017)	The Statute of the Municipality of Milan (1991) Regulation of the Municipal Police Force (1997) Regulation for Interventions and Social Services of the Municipality of Milan (2006) Regulation of the Municipal Group of Volunteers for Civil Protection (2011) Boroughs Regulation of the Municipality of Milan (2016) Memoranda of Understanding between the Public Prosecutor at the Ordinary Court of Milan and the Municipality of Milan “Joined Actions in Favour of Vulnerable Victims” (2017) Memoranda of Understanding between the Prefecture of Milan and the Mayor of Milan “Project ‘Neighbourhood Control’” (2018) Contingent and Urgent Mayoral Ordinances (2016–2019)

determinism is especially tangible among bureaucracies and results in increasing investments into and adaptation of technologies (Norris and Armstrong, 1998). Additionally, it is facilitated by a lack of opposition from a population with a silent acceptance of and consent to video surveillance due to the employed discourses on violence and threats within the governmentality of unease (Bigo, 2006).

The security state's logic also affects urban design, facilitating urban fortification and intensified surveillance (Garland, 2001; Sorkin, 2008). Intelligence surveillance systems, checkpoints, defensive urban design and planning strategies are inalienable elements of contemporary urban spaces (Graham, 2008). Thus, the whole population is put under surveillance, and there is constant profiling allowing the detection of deviance from the norm in observable behaviour patterns. In addition, practices of exceptionalism penetrate urban design taking the form of gated communities and homogeneous gentrification as one part of the population seeks to protect from and ban those who are deviant (Sorkin, 2008).

3. Methodology

This research aims to explore whether applying two theoretical approaches, comprehending technology-facilitated surveillance in contemporary societies, can provide complementary insights into constructed reasons for the use of video surveillance in two European cities – Budapest and Milan. The study focused on constructs existing around the implementation of CCTV in legislation and discourses generated by stakeholders dealing with various aspects of urban insecurity. The fieldwork was conducted in March – May 2020. Therefore, the results did not comprehend the impact of the COVID-19 emergency given the research timeline and the difficulty in analysing the impact of the measures enrolled for containing the spread of the virus at the beginning of the pandemic.

The empirical study employs qualitative methodology focusing on the analysis of legislation and interviews with various actors directly dealing with the problem of insecurity in Budapest and Milan. For the analysis of legal documents, a complete list of relevant laws, legal decrees, regulations, programs, provisions and ordinances in power by December 31, 2019, and regulating the work of CCTVs was drawn. The choice of the timeline is connected with the beginning of the interview data collection in March 2020 and the beginning of the global pandemic in Europe. Given that the pandemic led to rolling over various surveillance technologies (Kitchin, 2020) that were not fully reflected in the interview data due to their novelty, it was decided to exclude legislation related to it. Table 1 presents the documents that entered the analysis.

Previous research demonstrates the benefits of recruiting experts (Edwards et al., 2013) and voluntary sector representatives (Bennett et al., 2006) to clarify complex social phenomena, including urban insecurity. To study their perspective, the semi-structured interviewing method was employed to focus narrowly on the studied topic but still encourage the production of rich narratives about the problem (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In total, 15 interviews were conducted with various actors that could be divided into experts and representatives of the volunteer sector during the fieldwork in 2020. The recruitment of experts was based on their research activity or institutional involvement in urban insecurity. The selection of voluntary organisations was based on the literature on the typology of the involvement of grassroots organisations in urban insecurity (open government policy, neighbourhood watch programs, citizen patrols, conflict mediation, and victim assistance) (Grabosky, 1992). In addition, voluntary organisations tackling the problems associated with urban insecurity in the legal discourses (for example, irregular immigration in Milan or litter in the streets in Budapest) were included in the sample. Table 2 presents a summary of the interviewees' backgrounds and their code names used in the next sections of the paper.

Table 2
Interviewees participating in the research.

	Budapest	Milan
Experts	Interviewee 1BE – an expert in Geographic Information Systems and mapping fear of crime in Hungary Interviewee 2BE – an expert in local governments and their responsibilities in urban security Interviewee 3BE – a police officer working in a CCTV control room Interviewee 4BE – an expert in technological solutions for urban security	Interviewee 1ME – a researcher in urban insecurity, consultant of regional and local governments Interviewee 2ME – an expert in crime prevention through urban design and planning, consultant of local authorities Interviewee 3ME – the head of a police station in Milan
Volunteer sector	Interviewee 1BV – a representative of a neighbourhood watch organisation in Budapest Interviewee 2BV – a representative of a victim support group Interviewee 3BV – a representative of a social service group Interviewee 4BV – a representative of a group tackling physical degradation	Interviewee 1MV – a representative of a neighbourhood watch organisation in Milan Interviewee 2MV – a representative of an organisation dealing with the periphery of Milan Interviewee 3MV – a representative of an organisation providing support to migrants (irregular or in socio-economic need) Interviewee 4MV – a representative of an organisation tackling physical degradation and helping those in social hardship

During the interviews, the following topics were discussed:

- The current urban security situation in the respective city;
- Changes in urban security situation during the last 5–10 years;
- Current measures and policies to deal with urban insecurity with a particular focus on CCTV;
- Measures and policies they consider the most effective for providing and maintaining urban security.

Given that the research was aimed at comparing constructs existing around the justification for the installation, implementation, and extension of video surveillance in two European cities, the interview and document data were subjected to critical content analysis focusing especially on the social construction of video surveillance and uncovering socio-political influences embedded within them (Crabtree & Miller, 1992). In particular, there were iterative cycles of coding and interpretation, that started with a pre-defined codebook that was then reviewed and enriched after coding some interviews. Next, following a coding approach suggested by Campbell et al. (2013), code families were created. After the coding stage, the relationships between the codes were studied (Bowen, 2009; Crabtree & Miller, 1992). The content analysis was performed in NVivo 12 software.

4. Budapest: video surveillance in a Post-Soviet Bloc City

4.1. Budapest: socio-economic and political landscape

At the end of the 1980s – the beginning of the 1990s, Hungary went through a transition from the Soviet regime to an open market. This societal change greatly affected every aspect of the country's life. One of the consequences of the transition was deteriorated anomie of the Hungarian population that experienced a loss of a value system, lack of social trust, a sudden drop in living standards and other after-effects (Kerezsi, 2009; Los, 2003). These factors fuelled social marginalisation, and more people turned to criminal careers. Against this background, along with an upsurge in crime, the perception of insecurity and, particularly, fear of crime increased in the 1990s (Kerezsi & Lévy, 2008).

Neoliberal policies were also introduced during that period (Dale & Fabry, 2018). However, the country's neoliberalisation has undergone some transformations due to changing economic, political, and social conditions. On the one hand, authors characterise Hungarian neoliberalism as “embedded” (Bohle & Greskovits, 2007), which aims at balancing two diverging political and economic approaches – the welfare state and market liberalisation. On the other hand, other researchers characterise the Hungarian neoliberalisation as “authoritarian populism” (Rogers, 2020), focusing on the centralisation of power, reduction of the autonomy of the local authorities and increasing control over the media, or “national-neoliberalism” (Ban et al., 2021), characterised by a

balance between neoliberal economic policies and policies prioritising national interests defined by the political elite.

These traits of Hungarian neoliberalism have some implications for understanding the problem of insecurity in the country. The rise of populism led to the increasing stigmatisation of immigrants as dangerous and criminogenic, especially since 2015 when Hungary became a transition point in global migration routes (Bocskor, 2018; Góbl & Szalai, 2015). However, even before that period, there had been an exclusionary discourse towards some ethnicities in Hungary, especially the Roma people, who are consistently discriminated against in employment, housing, and other policies (Kóczé, 2015).

Due to this stigmatisation, these groups are a part of the construction of insecurity in Budapest (Barabás et al., 2018). However, some other marginal social groups contribute to it: homeless, drug addicts, and others (Stefanizzi & Verdolini, 2018). Besides, such factors as crime (e.g., burglaries, petty crime), incivilities (e.g., anti-social behaviour, vandalism), and signs of urban decay (e.g., visible signs of physical degradation, lack of proper lighting) contribute to the discourse on insecurity in the city (Barabás et al., 2018; Stefanizzi & Verdolini, 2018; Valente & Crescenzi Lanna, 2019).

The research also reveals some differences between affluent and marginal neighbourhoods in constructing insecurity. Thus, local inhabitants of more affluent neighbourhoods search for more social homogeneity and, consequently, have a higher tendency towards the exclusion of people showing deviance (for example, beggars, public alcohol and drug users) (Cséfalvay, 2009; Kovács & Hegedűs, 2014; Valente & Crescenzi Lanna, 2019). As a result, they experience less fear of crime than inhabitants of more marginal neighbourhoods do. In the latter neighbourhoods, the discourse on insecurity entails visible signs of space degradation and socio-demographic isolation (Barabás et al., 2018; Stefanizzi & Verdolini, 2018; Valente & Crescenzi Lanna, 2019).

As Tóth (2023) shows in his review of the history of video surveillance in Hungary, the first public video surveillance systems were installed to contrast such criminal phenomena as prostitution, pick-pocketing, and car theft. In Budapest, in 2019, there were 2447 CCTV cameras managed by the police. The National Police Office data on video surveillance allows seeing that central and tourist districts (District I, Districts V–IX) of Budapest had a higher number of video surveillance cameras than more peripheral ones. In the periphery of the city, CCTV cameras were installed with higher density in the case of transportation hubs (for example, intercity bus stations and railway stations).

4.2. Legislation

Hungarian legislation constructs video surveillance as a multi-purpose tool. For example, the Hungarian “Act LXIII on Public Space Supervision” (1999) states that the aim of video surveillance is to maintain public order, cleanliness of streets, the safety of public transportation and public and private property, and crime prevention.

Various strategic documents in Budapest³ use similar rationales to justify an increase in the number of CCTV cameras along with other intelligent technologies such as automated traffic control and public lighting. These identified purposes reflect the construction of video surveillance as a multitasking technology, contributing to various aspects of public life, security, and order. This kind of construction of CCTV falls into the surveillance society approach (Graham, 2008; Wood & Webster, 2009). Additionally, the analysis of the strategic documents mentioned above shows a dichotomy between providing better services (for instance, better security and crime prevention, cleaner streets) and deepened surveillance encouraged by bureaucracies (Graham, 2008; Kitchin et al., 2017; Wood & Webster, 2009). As discussed previously, such a focus transition towards services justifies the expansion of surveillance.

Additionally, the crime prevention function of CCTV can be considered within the surveillance society approach as a sign of a bureaucratic belief in the disciplinary potential of the technology (Fussey & Coaffe, 2012). According to Lippert (2009), one of the ways to carry out this disciplinary potential of video surveillance is to remind the public of being put under surveillance, which can be achieved through highly visible signage. Signage sustains a discrepancy between an observer and those who are observed by providing the minimum amount of information on the observer (Goold, 2002). In Hungary, the “Act on Public Space Supervisions” (1999) obliges responsible authorities to inform the public about entering the territory covered by CCTV through appropriate signage. Additionally, the government obliges the local authorities to make public the information about the places of the installation and the number of installed CCTV cameras located in the respective territory to facilitate transparency on video surveillance implementation in the country.

4.3. Interview data

According to the interview data, video surveillance has some crime deterrence potential in Budapest. More specifically, the interviewees agreed that CCTV is suitable for preventing street crime, car thefts, burglaries, and other premeditated crimes. However, CCTV is usually considered one of the interventions to fortify spaces with surveillance realised by law enforcement officers constructed as more effective for crime deterrence than video surveillance.

Despite at least a partial crime deterrence effect, CCTV is constructed as failing to exercise its disciplinary potential in the city. Thus, from the interview data, it follows that the increased fortification of urban spaces (which includes video surveillance systems) leads to crime displacement, which could indicate that criminals are not disciplined but, instead, decide to dislocate their activities to spaces where it is easier to commit crime due to weaker controls. As Interviewee 3BE formulated it: “[T]hey [criminals] mostly won't commit a crime if they can see a camera. They don't want to go to prison. [...] in the shops, where there are a lot of cameras, there will be less crime, because nobody wants to go to prison.” Several Hungarian interviewees suggested that criminals mainly displace their activities to virtual spaces. Thus, one of the growing crime concerns in Budapest is grandchilding, a phone-based cheating of the elderly with the aim of money extortion.⁴ Interviewee 1BE explains it: “[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.”

Applying the surveillance society approach to the analysis of the Hungarian interview data allows to discern manifestations of “stage-set

security” (Coaffe & Wood, 2006) or “security theatre” (Schneier, 2008) in Budapest. Thus, security theatrics is realised through installing fake CCTV cameras, as mentioned by several interviewees. For instance, Interviewee 3BE referred to it: “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.” Hence, a local authority pays for the installation of a CCTV system, which is never activated, and saves money on the maintenance of the system. According to the interviewees, besides the economic reasons, it is done to prevent crimes and reassure the city's inhabitants that something is being done about their security concerns.

However, as the interview data shows, some practitioners also consider security theatrics effective in preventing some criminal phenomena based on their experiences. Thus, one of the representatives of the volunteer sector referred to their experience of installing a video surveillance camera to prevent attacks on their female clients. However, according to her words, a mere CCTV camera installation was not enough to prevent the attacks; therefore, they installed a highly visible banner informing about ongoing surveillance. As the interview extract illustrates it:

“I3BV: [W]e made cameras on the walls and made posters, information posters on the walls to warn people that they can be watched by cameras. And we think that these things were useful.

R: So, like, posters were more useful?

I3BV: Yes, that's right.”

Therefore, it shows the symbolic and theatrical role of video surveillance along with the highly visible signage in the deterrence of some criminal phenomena.

Analysing the collected data through the lens of the security state approach, in turn, shows that video surveillance contributes to social and spatial segregation in Budapest by facilitating exceptionalism through the exclusion of those perceived as dangerous from the normalised part of the population. Expert 3BE put it the following way: “You know that Budapest has two big parts: Buda and Pest. And it's a stereotype, but it's true when they say that Buda is much safer. [...] you can find just nice houses, and there are many more rich people.” The expert attributed safety in Buda to such factors as low crime rates and the presence of video surveillance in the area. The segregation indicated by the expert is also in line with some previous research on spatial and social segregation in Budapest, showing that wealthier social groups have historically tended to settle in the western (Buda) and northern parts of the city, while less affluent groups have lived in the eastern part of the city, especially, in the city centre of Pest (Csanádi et al., 2011; Tosics, 2006).

The interview data also confirms the literature findings that one of the main reasons for this segregation is a search for more secure and safer environments, leading to the social exclusion of those perceived as strangers or fearful. More specifically, in the case of Budapest, it concerns Roma people, the homeless, drug addicts, and others. Thus, Expert 1BE refers to her research results indicating the negative construction of Roma people in the following way: “I should also mention that in my research, [...] they [the respondents] say, so for example, places where they can find Roma minorities, it's again a problem for them. So, again, it's sometimes fearful.” As the security state framework suggests, such social segregation is associated with homogeneous gentrification (Sorkin, 2008) and might lead to a “stranger society” (Norris & Armstrong, 1998), eroding social interactions.

Furthermore, applying the security state approach to the interview data shows that there is a tendency for categorisation of the population in Budapest. More specifically, some groups of people are constructed as potentially dangerous and might require further and deepened surveillance. Besides the “dangerous” and “fearful” groups already mentioned, it also concerns those opposing video surveillance. As Interviewee 3BE stated: “If they don't like cameras, they have something to hide.”

Additionally, there is some economic rationality behind the installation of video surveillance in some areas of Budapest, including those

³ For example, see “Budapest 2030 Long-Term Urban Development Concept” or “Smart Budapest. The Smart Vision of Budapest.”

⁴ The most frequent form is when a criminal calls an older person and says that their child or grandchild is in some sort of a problem (for instance, a car accident, have an injury, etc.) and they need money urgently. The criminal asks to send money to their bank account and then disappears.

constructed as insecure. Thus, the Hungarian interview data offer evidence that some districts' governments resort to securitising the areas not only to create safer urban spaces but also to stimulate economic activity there. The words of Interviewee 4BE illustrate this phenomenon, also highlighting the visible exclusion of "others" from fortified spaces: "People in the VIII district felt much safer after this [the introduction of video surveillance]; they were okay to leave their houses at night because they couldn't see those people who were causing them trouble before, companies opened shops in the area." This stimulation of economic activity through installing CCTVs can lead to a technological designation of some city areas (Fussey & Coaffe, 2012), which is already visible in a higher concentration of video surveillance cameras in the city centre (including District VIII) and their lower presence in the periphery of the city.

Simultaneously, the conspicuous presence of video cameras in an area perceived as insecure can generate conflicting emotions among people living there or visiting it. On the one hand, people might feel more protected in an area perceived as insecure due to the presence of CCTV. On the other hand, if an area is full of video cameras, it might provoke the perception of an area as insecure because people could rationalise it by thinking that the district's government installed them because the area is criminogenic: "I absolutely think that it has this double effect. 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. [...] That's why I said that I must admit that they are effective, but they cause this feeling of stress" (Interview 2BV). Therefore, high visibility of video surveillance systems might facilitate unease by generating such feelings as suspicion towards others and insecurity, eroding social relations (Zedner, 2003).

5. Milan: video surveillance in a Southern European City

5.1. Milan: socio-economic and political landscape

Although Italy has not undergone the same societal change as Hungary, the 1980–1990s is also marked in the literature as a starting point of neoliberalism (Ferragina & Arrigoni, 2021) on the background of political and socio-economic changes unfolding in the country. Politically, in 1992, the First Republic, the party system that had existed since the end of the Second World War, ended due to an extensive investigation into political corruption ("Mani pulite" and "Tangentopoli"⁵) (Koff & Koff, 2000). The new government introduced austerity and privatisation programs (Ferragina & Arrigoni, 2021). This political change provoked rapid deindustrialisation, traditional social networks' disappearance, institutional trust loss, and intercultural conflicts (Melossi & Selmini, 2009). However, unlike in Hungary, this situation did not provoke a sharp rise in registered crime rates in Italy.

Italian neoliberalism has also not been straightforward. Firstly, both right and left parties and politicians seek to develop and implement neoliberal policies due to their "catch-all" character aiming to attract as many supporters as possible (Forestiere, 2009). Therefore, despite the interchange between the right and left wings, there is a continuation in the implementation of neoliberal policies. Secondly, the literature characterises Italian neoliberalism as selective because institutional changes begin at the margins of society. Only after their adoption there they gradually extend to the whole society (Ferragina & Arrigoni, 2021). Consequently, it affects greatly more vulnerable and marginal social groups.

These political and social changes have affected the discourse on security, including that of urban spaces. In particular, in the 1990s, the political security discourse shifted from organised crime to urban insecurity, focusing on street crime and urban decay (Ricotta, 2016). Since the beginning of the 2000s, urban security has been an umbrella concept, constantly expanding to various areas of urban policy – traffic,

migration, employment, and others (Maneri, 2018). Additionally, populist discourse substantially impacts the development of the new discourse on security in Italy (Bonfigli, 2014) by marginalising immigrants, especially those coming from outside Europe, and constructing them as dangerous (Bonfigli, 2014; Melossi & Selmini, 2009; Ricotta, 2016).

In Milan, the political orientation of a mayor seems to be an important factor in how the problem of insecurity is addressed in their public discourse. While right-wing mayors seek to connect security with migration issues, street begging, homelessness, and prostitution, left-wing mayors tend to ignore the problem of security in their official discourse; however, focusing on immigrants' integration, tackling social roots of homelessness, and other measures aiming at improved social integration (Ambrosini, 2013; Bonfigli, 2014; Mireanu, 2020).

The analysis of the discourse on security in Milan shows that besides the political discourse, the media also plays an important role in its formation (Maneri, 2018). The Milanese media, in turn, follow the populist discourse, connecting insecurity with irregular immigration, drug dealing and consumption, homelessness, and other marginal phenomena. Additionally, the media pays attention to crime, tends to over-represent it in the public discourse, and contributes to the stigmatisation of some locations within the city (Dal Lago & Palidda, 2010; Verga, 2016).

The reflection of these political and media discourses on insecurity in the city can be found in the empirical studies of the Milanese inhabitants. In particular, the previous research shows that the perception of insecurity is connected to the fear of crime, anti-social behaviour, and the presence of people showing deviance (homeless, drug addicts, immigrants, ethnic minorities) (Barabás et al., 2018; Mireanu, 2020; Stefanizzi & Verdolini, 2018).

According to the National Report on Local Police Activity (2021), there were 2003 CCTV cameras managed by the Municipality of Milan in 2020. However, there is no more detailed information on the distribution of CCTV cameras in the city since the Municipality of Milan does not publish this information. Furthermore, Fonio (2011) demonstrated in her research on the implementation of CCTV in Milan that the Municipality has a tendency to install video surveillance systems without public consultations and conducting a comprehensive analysis of the territory's needs in terms of safety and security.

5.2. Legislation

Like the Hungarian law, the Italian one also constructs video surveillance as a multi-purpose technology. In particular, the following functions of CCTV are mentioned in various legal documents ("Provisions in Relation to Video Surveillance" (2010), Law 48/2017, and "Pact for Security between the Ministry of the Interior and the ANCI"⁶ (2007)): a comprehensive redevelopment of urban spaces, protection and safety of individuals, urban security, public order and safety, and enhanced control over the territory (especially in extraordinary situations). Therefore, just like in Hungary, video surveillance is constructed to contribute to various aspects of public life, safety and order in Italy. It could be interpreted within the surveillance society approach, highlighting that the bureaucracies justify expanded and deepened surveillance through the construction of the technology as contributing to the provision of various services (Graham, 2008; Kitchin et al., 2017; Wood & Webster, 2009).

Further analysis of the legislation through the lens of the surveillance society approach shows that CCTV signage contributes to both disciplining the subjects of surveillance (Lippert, 2009) and maintaining the figure of an invisible observer (Goold, 2002). More specifically, the Italian law highlights the importance of appropriate signage for entering

⁵ "Clean hands" and "Bribesville."

⁶ Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani (The National Association of the Italian Municipalities).

the surveyed zone. However, the information notices should provide a “minimum” amount of information (the name of a data collecting body and the purpose of video surveillance) (Provisions (2010)). Therefore, the figure of the observer remains mainly hidden, which sustains a discrepancy between an observer and those who are observed.

Simultaneously, applying the security state approach to the analysis of the legal documents could provide further insights into the construction of video surveillance in Italy. In particular, it considers exceptional situations when data collected by the state through video surveillance and other biometric data collected can be merged (Provisions (2010)). The exceptional conditions include those posing risks to fundamental rights, freedoms, and the dignity of individuals. Consequently, authorities can increase surveillance and control over the population in extraordinary situations (Bigo, 2006).

Additionally, Italian legislation encourages liberal economic rationality in implementing CCTV for urban security needs, which also lies within the logic of the security state that highlights the importance of security privatisation (Braithwaite, 2000; Loader, 1999). Hence, to comply with the principle of the economy of resources, the Provisions (2010) make it possible to integrate video surveillance systems maintained by private bodies into those owned by the local authorities.

Lastly, the Circular of February 8, 2005, “Video surveillance systems. Definition of guidelines on the matter,” addresses the issue of ongoing advancements in the technology. It proposes that developments should be adopted with assurance of efficacy resulting from the deployment of CCTV and to enhance the promptness of the Police Forces' response during emergencies. Consequently, this stance might indicate the state's endorsement of technological progress and its continual adjustment, aligning with the aspect of the security state emphasised by Norris and Armstrong (1999).

5.3. Interview data

Just like in Budapest, the Milanese interview data also suggests that video surveillance is constructed as effective to deter crimes that are the most amenable by the technology – car thefts, burglaries, and other forms of premeditated crimes. However, according to the interviewees, video surveillance should be one of the measures to prevent crime with the main emphasis on social interventions and bystander surveillance. As Interviewee 1ME put it: *“It is not that if you put cameras in that park, it will start to be frequented [...]. There should also be the involvement of residents, socio-cultural initiatives that bring you back there, even economic initiatives that encourage attendance.”*

The social interventions are especially crucial, given that video surveillance is constructed as unable to discipline criminals. In Milan, the interviewees associated the installation of video surveillance with crime displacement, meaning that criminals seek to commit crimes in places where there are lower chances of being caught. While in Budapest, crime displacement happens from physical to virtual spaces, in Milan, it is mainly from one physical location to another one: from more to less fortified.

Furthermore, it emerges from the interview data that criminals also learn to bypass video surveillance. The interviewees highlighted that despite the increasing sophistication of video surveillance, the ways of bypassing it remain quite traditional: studying the blind points, putting a hood or a mask on to hide the face, and other measures of hiding one's identity. On top of it, some interviewees, referring to their experiences, said that video surveillance cameras are becoming crime targets, given how costly they are. Thus, Interviewee 2ME put it the following way: *“Obviously, the first thing the residents asked was to put cameras. [...] 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.”* The expert suggested that local inhabitants might ask to install CCTVs because there is a lack of knowledge of other methods of creating a secure space. Therefore, the security market fills in this gap by promoting their products and further fortification, which, however,

might not protect the population (Zedner, 2003).

Analysing the interview data within the surveillance society approach indicates that video surveillance is a part of security theatrics (Coaffee & Wood, 2006; Schneier, 2008) in Milan. In particular, several interviewees referred to the practice of requesting the installation of CCTV systems by local inhabitants. As Interviewee 1MV referred to it: *“And video surveillance is a very much requested thing [...]. Yes, actually, that's why the Municipality has installed it.”* Thus, CCTV plays a symbolic role in being a visible representation of local authorities' concern with the problem of insecurity and the needs of the local inhabitants.

Additionally, the surveillance society approach allows discerning bureaucratic “belief in the power of technology” (Norris & Armstrong, 1998). Thus, local administrators share technological determinism as CCTV is perceived as a quick solution to Milan's urban insecurity problem. For example, Expert 1ME referred to his experience of consulting the local politicians the following way: *“I work with the administrators for years, and regardless of their political stand, they are centre-left and centre-right, the fascination towards technologies, towards control, is powerful in the administrators.”*

As to applying the security state approach to the data, it emerges that the governmentality of unease is implemented in the country since the Italian population is highly concerned with the problem of insecurity and the authorities, especially the right-wing, seek to leverage these concerns. Thus, Interviewee 1ME formulated it: *“So it has surpassed many issues, the issue of security in the cities. I always say this to the mayors: it is always on the podium. That is, a new topic can arrive and drive it from the first to the second place, but driving it to the third or fourth place is almost impossible.”* Partially, the interviewees ascribed this high level of subjective insecurity to the media and political discourses focusing on the issues of insecurity and stigmatising some social groups (immigrants, Roma, homeless) and places as dangerous, which, in turn, generates a high level of the perception of insecurity. This explanation aligns with the previous literature on urban insecurity in Italy, showing the impact of the media and political discourses on subjective insecurity (Bonfigli, 2014; Melossi & Selmini, 2009; Ricotta, 2016).

One of the results of this governmentality of unease is that the city is constructed as having a high level of securitisation and fortification (also through CCTV cameras), which might be explained through the lens of the security state approach. Thus, according to this approach, every place may be considered a potential place of crime; therefore, there is a request for fortification (Sorkin, 2008). Moreover, some experts believe that the current level of fortification is excessive and, paradoxically, leads to further crime, as shown by some previous research (Welsh et al., 2015). Expert 2ME drew the following example of an excessively fortified shop: *“It's the opposite of what you should do because when someone comes, a shop bell rings. Obviously, if a distinctively normal person comes, I let him in; I think it is a customer. The moment I let him in, this is a thief - very well, the door closes behind, so no one can enter anymore, [...] he takes me to the most hidden place where the cashier is, and he takes everything and can go away without being seen by anyone from outside.”* This paradox of excessive fortification that actually does not protect from crime and increases vulnerability is also in line with the literature (Zedner, 2003).

Additionally, according to the Milanese interviewees, fortification is stimulated by the perceived lack of state control and protection from various dangers and risks. As Interviewee 2MV put it: *“They [the inhabitants] fenced off because ‘whoever is in duty’ didn't guarantee security.”* Thus, due to the perceived failure of the state to defend inhabitants from dangers, the population turns to private providers of security to fortify their places of living. This marketisation of security also lies within the logic of the security state (Braithwaite, 2000).

Another consequence of the governmentality of unease is a high acceptance rate of video surveillance among the Milanese population as the technology is constructed as a tool of security provision, which is a feature of the security state approach (Bigo, 2006). Therefore, according to the interview data, by prioritising security needs, the Italian population is ready to give up some part of their liberal rights without almost

any resistance to the extension of surveillance: *“I believe that if the city was filled up with cameras tomorrow, someone would protest, but in the end, it would go pretty much according to the plan”* (Interview 2ME).

The security state approach allows discerning signs of social and spatial segregation in Milan that are partially attributed to social and spatial stigmatisation (Sorkin, 2008). Unlike Budapest, the wealthier part of the Milanese population tends to inhabit the city centre or new fortified housing projects outside the downtown. In contrast, less affluent groups inhabit the periphery of the city. The words of Interviewee 3MV might illustrate it: *“There is this apparent well-being in the centre, but if you go to the periphery, you realise that the real social hardship is in public housing.”* The Municipality of Milan also facilitates segregation and stigmatisation by displacing some problematic phenomena to the periphery of the city, consequently marginalising these areas further. Interviewee 2MV summarised the Municipality’s approach the following way: *“So there is a perception that Milan has problems, and they should be sent to the periphery. Let’s free Milan; they [the problems] are over there.”*

6. Discussion and conclusions

This paper set out with the aim of exploring whether applying two theoretical approaches to comprehending video surveillance can produce complementary insights into the use of CCTV in urban spaces. The issue was explored by analysing relevant legal documents and interview data with people directly involved in tackling urban insecurity in Budapest and Milan – two European cities selected as the most diverse cases.

The current research shows that the surveillance society approach offers a vantage point for the analysis of legal documents, highlighting that the authorities construct video surveillance as a multi-purpose tool facilitating better services provision (e.g., maintaining public safety, preventing crime, and keeping streets clean). Simultaneously, the approach underlines that the extension and deepening of video surveillance is constructed to be indispensable for providing better services. Additionally, the document analysis through the lens of the surveillance society approach, shows that the authorities in both cities seek to preserve the identity of those collecting the data by providing a minimum amount of information about a data-collecting body, thus maintaining a figure to “unobservable observer.” Therefore, these findings might indicate that the authorities in both cities seek to discipline their populations and video surveillance is one of the tools for achieving it. Furthermore, the authorities adopt the positive construction of the technology, highlighting that it can be applied to improve various aspects of social life, which can serve as justification for further extension and deepening of surveillance.

The approach of the security state provided some insights into the analysis of the Italian legislation. In particular, this paper showed that Italian law provides for some exceptional situations when surveillance can be deepened by merging different databases. Furthermore, the state seeks to involve private actors in surveying the population by encouraging cooperation between local authorities and private agents employing video surveillance.

The economic rationale behind the extension of video surveillance networks might be partially attributed to the development of neoliberalism in Italy. More specifically, neoliberal states seek to cut their expenditures and transfer some state responsibilities to private actors, including in the security sphere. Given the complexity of neoliberalism in Hungary and the increasing role of the state, the analysis did not reveal similar attempts to involve the private sector in security provisions in the legislation there.

The analysis of the interview data shows that both approaches can provide some insights into the reasons for the implementation and extension of video surveillance in both cities. Although some of them can refer to the same aspects within the approach, their manifestations might take different forms due to historical, social, economic, and political contexts. For example, there are clear signs of security theatrics in

both cities. In Budapest, local authorities might install fake CCTVs to increase the visible and symbolic presence of control, which might be related to the currently ongoing “illiberal turn” and concentration of power aiming to show that it takes care of its citizens. In Milan, the Municipality installs at least some video cameras upon citizens’ requests to calm their subjective insecurity. Consequently, there is a difference in an actor initiating security theatrics: while in Budapest it is the state, in Milan citizens request the visible presence of video surveillance, which is perceived as the technology of protection. Partially, this citizen’s initiative in Milan might also be considered a sign of a neoliberal state in which citizens can take responsibility for their security, while the installation of fake CCTVs in Budapest could be attributed to the centralisation of power in the country when the state seeks to show that it takes care of the needs of the population.

The surveillance approach also showed that there is a bureaucratic belief in the ability of technology to tackle insecurity. In Budapest’s case, installing fake CCTVs might be the evidence of such a belief since even fake CCTV should reduce crime activity and calm perceived insecurity. The Italian data shows that many mayors, despite their political orientation, tend to reach out to technological solutions, considering them effective and quick ways to achieve goals, which might be needed to win the next elections.

Interestingly, the practice of installing fake CCTVs in Hungary could be one of the manifestations of the economic rationale because local authorities do not need to pay for the maintenance of surveillance systems. Besides, local authorities seek to create more secure and safer spaces to attract more investors and stimulate economic activity by installing CCTV systems among other measures in their districts, thus benefiting from their investment in security. However, this approach differs from that of conferring responsibility to other actors (private businesses and citizens) in neoliberal logic as it still shows that the authorities take responsibility for providing security, public order and safety, simultaneously seeking to cut on expenditures. It might be attributed to the tendency of the concentration of power in the country (Rogers, 2020).

As to the security state approach, the analysis shows that the cities share the aspect of social and spatial segregation; however, with some variations. In particular, social segregation concerns various groups: in Budapest – the Roma people; in Milan – migrants. This difference might be attributed to the public discourses discriminating against the respective groups in each context (Bonfigli, 2014; Kóczé, 2015). Spatial segregation is also related to the historical development of each city. In particular, this study also provided some evidence that wealthier people tend to inhabit the western and northern parts of Budapest and the city centre in Milan – trends that are in line with the existing literature on the topic in each city (Csanádi et al., 2011; Tosics, 2006).

Lastly, the security state approach allows discerning signs of governmentality of unease. In particular, leveraging the governmentality of unease leads to the excessive fortification and securitisation of the city, which, paradoxically, does not lead to an increased perception of security among citizens, but rather leads to the erosion of trust and social relations. As interview data suggests, in Budapest, the presence of conspicuous CCTVs in an area with a robust perception as unsafe could lead to the perception of others as dangerous. In Milan, people are highly concerned with their security and safety due to persistent media and political discourses on insecurity leading to increased suspicion towards some social groups.

The results of the current research allow to draw two conclusions. Firstly, applying two theoretical approaches to the analysis of surveillance and security allows for discerning various constructed reasons for the implementation of video surveillance in the cities. Therefore, applying both standpoints might be beneficial in terms of gaining insights from the empirical data and deepening the knowledge about the use of CCTV in urban spaces. Secondly, although there might be some references to the same aspects of each theoretical approach, their specific manifestations could be attributed to various aspects of historical,

socio-economic and political contexts.

The study, although exploratory in nature, allows to discuss some preliminary practical implications of its results. In particular, as the empirical data shows the mere installation of CCTV is not enough to achieve the aims of either surveillance society or security state. Hence, it does not lead to disciplining all the members of society and it does not effectively prevent and combat all forms of crime. As the interview data suggests, video surveillance is useful for tackling the issues most amenable to the technology – such forms of street crime as car thefts and burglaries. Simultaneously, the data indicates that criminals learn how to go about the technology: displacing criminal activity from one physical place to another or virtual ones; invoking strategies of surveillance evasion or disruption; targeting CCTV cameras themselves, and others. Therefore, video surveillance by itself might not be enough to fulfil the promise of public safety and security as suggested in the legal discourses. In turn, the authorities could seek to combine the implementation of video surveillance with other social interventions aiming at improving security in the cities by, for example, stimulating economic and social life in areas, studying systematically and repeatedly the territory and its inhabitants' needs, and others.

The paper also has several limitations that could be affronted in future research. While comparative research design with the most different cases can be valuable for its ability to highlight diverse contextual nuances, one of the main challenges is the difficulty of controlling for external factors that can contribute to observed differences across cases (Seawright & Gerring, 2008). Therefore, future research might be undertaken to increase control over them by analysing the constructs behind the use of video surveillance in cities with similar political, social, and economic backgrounds.

Another limitation is a lack of account of the individual citizen's perceptions of the reasons for the use of video surveillance in the cities. It would be especially relevant because such issues as identity, producing oneself to an observer (Lyon, 2011), pre-existing perceptions of various social groups and spaces, adaptability, and willingness to cooperate with authorities might impact on the relationship between the observer and the observed. Therefore, future research may engage with exploring the individual level of perception of technology-based surveillance and analysing it through two theoretical approaches.

Another possible direction for future research is studying the impact of various emergencies, such as COVID-19 pandemic or the Russian invasion of Ukraine, on the extension and deepening of technology-based surveillance in European urban areas along with the ways of justifying it through the lens of the two theoretical approaches. Such research may lead to the production of deeper insights and understanding of the role of surveillance in contemporary cities.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Tatiana Lysova: Writing – original draft.

Data availability

The authors do not have permission to share data.

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