



## Surveillance of Public Space : CCTV, Privacy and Sense of Safety

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### ABSTRACT

*Closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance can be used to effectively combat and prevent crime and enable people to feel safe. Because most countries tend to emphasize safety over privacy when installing CCTV, this study proposed an analysis framework in an attempt to reverse the phenomenon of safety outweighing privacy. By using this analysis framework, this study compared and contrasted CCTV legislation and privacy protection among the three countries. The comparison results indicated that the largest disparities in CCTV policy among Taiwan, Japan, and the UK were related to dissimilar regulations and cultures.*

**KEYWORDS :** closed-circuit television (CCTV), privacy, sense of safety

As culture and society have evolved, people's requirements for a safe and high-quality living environment have increased, resulting in the prosperous development of various measures and equipment used to facilitate safety. In particular, using closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems that are perpetual, conspicuous, and omnipresent has rapidly increased for creating a safe living environment. Williams and Ahmed (2009) contended that the open-street public CCTV systems represent a common feature of modern urban landscape. In fact, employing various CCTV systems has become part of today's material culture that is increasingly crucial in social control and service.

In 1791, Jeremy Bentham published the design of the panopticon prison, which could not be built at that time because of technology limitation. In contemporary society, however, using numerous CCTV cameras has enabled a panopticon society under electronic surveillance to emerge (Hope, 2009). In simple terms, CCTV systems are used to collect images, such that images of specific sites are transferred to monitoring and recording devices for surveillants to watch, review, or store (Gill & Spriggs, 2005).

Based on the above three research issues and corresponding solutions, this research conducted a comparative review of CCTV studies originated in the UK, Japan, and Taiwan with a focus on the balancing measures on the phenomenon of safety outweighing privacy. A proposed analysis framework was applied to the three countries to examine CCTV development and research, analyze privacy protection, and identify the similarity and difference among CCTV legislations. Through the cross-country comparison, future research topics and trends can be determined.

### BACKGROUND LITERATURE

In the literature, The British CCTV studies are among the earliest and the most diversified. In addition to the aforementioned UK studies, Keval and Sasse (2008) investigated factors that reduced the CCTV effectiveness as well as Morgan (2013) discussed implementing a surveillance policy for effectively regulate CCTV use.

In Asia, Oram (2011) investigated the CCTV surveillance used in Japan and the UK on the balance between privacy and safety. Wu et al. (2012) noted that the most crucial factor influencing the intention to install CCTV was the sense of safety in daily life, including the intangible and tangible sense of fear, followed by concerns about privacy.

Privacy, which has been regarded as a human right with a disputable circumscription (Michael, 1994), is a subjective value that cannot be clearly defined, and thus the protection of personal information differs by jurisdiction, race, and gender (Bennett & Raab, 2007). Various countries have established laws to protect privacy; for example, in the UK, laws ensure the privacy of personal life, family life, and mail. Therefore, governmental authorities are obligated to protecting the privacy rights of citizens (Fenwick, 2007). In Spain, the law protects

the citizen rights to use public space, which is free from interfered (Clavell et al., 2012).

Currently in Taiwan, the Personal Information Protection Act, which directly regulates the collection, disposal, and use of personal information, does not clearly regulate the use of CCTV (Ministry of Justice, 2013). In other words, no regulation has been established to determine whether CCTV can be arbitrarily used to monitor people in public spaces as well as the use of CCTV images remains unregulated. However, people in Taiwan have expressed misgivings about whether CCTV violates human rights.

### RESEARCH METHOD

This study examined CCTV literature from various countries and conducted a cross-country comparative review on relevant literature from Taiwan, the UK, and Japan by using a proposed analysis framework that reevaluates the phenomenon of safety outweighing privacy.

In this study, secondary data collection was employed to collect papers from journals and conferences that pertain to review mechanisms, relevant regulations, and statistical data. Content analysis was conducted to observe the similarities and differences in the three categories among the three countries.

### CONCLUSIONS

The comparison among Taiwan, the U.K., and Japan suggested that the prevalence of CCTV cameras in public spaces has become a feature of the modern urban landscape, and CCTV is regarded as a crucial tool used to effectively control public order and satisfy people's need to feeling safe. However, because more value is placed on maintaining social order and safety, public privacy is frequently violated. British scholars suggested the requirement of a CCTV risk management mechanism, an independent organ, and effective CCTV legislation. Japanese scholars argued that rational public discussion before CCTV installation and explicit CCTV regulations should be in place. Taiwanese scholars contended that CCTV legislation should be specific and conform to the principle of proportionality, and that the government should formulate assessment standards, regulate CCTV installation procedures and management principles, and establish an independent CCTV management organ. In summary, the three countries have substantially dissimilar cultures and CCTV regulations; however, they all consistently value the principle of protecting public privacy.

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