

# **CCTV Surveillance and the Poverty of Media Discourse: A Content Analysis of Canadian Newspaper Coverage**

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*Abstract:* This article examines newspaper coverage about closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance in Canada and considers its implications for public opinion and policymaking. The study addresses several issues, including the rise and fall of media attention to the themes that structure the news coverage and patterns of source access and the implications of these themes for how citizens understand the role of surveillance in their lives. As more Canadian cities explore using CCTV surveillance as a policing tool for monitoring public space, news coverage should strive to enhance the public conversation about surveillance. The data reported in this study show that the coverage has been a very poor resource for helping citizens and policymakers to understand the complex issues involved in the surveillance of public areas in Canada.

*Keywords:* Surveillance; CCTV; Content analysis; Framing; Privacy

*Résumé :* Cet article examine des reportages dans les journaux sur la surveillance par télévision en circuit fermé au Canada et considère leurs implications pour l'opinion publique et la formulation de politiques. Cette étude traite de plusieurs questions, y compris l'essor et la chute de l'attention portée dans les médias aux thèmes pertinents qui organisent les reportages et l'accès aux sources, ainsi que l'effet de ces thèmes sur la manière dont les citoyens comprennent le rôle de la surveillance dans leurs vies. À mesure que de plus en plus de villes canadiennes se tournent vers la télévision en circuit fermé comme outil pour surveiller les espaces publics, les reportages devraient s'efforcer davantage de contribuer à la conversation publique sur la surveillance. Les données rapportées dans cette étude montrent que les reportages à ce jour se sont

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avéré une ressource assez pauvre pour aider les citoyens et les responsables politiques à mieux comprendre les enjeux complexes relatifs à la surveillance de lieux publics au Canada.

*Mots clés* : Surveillance; Télévision en circuit fermé; Analyse de contenu; Cadrage; Vie privée

The images we hold of surveillance methods are incomplete and partially independent of the technology per se. Images are social fabrications. . . . Images speak to (and may be intended to create or manipulate) needs, aspirations, and fears. They communicate meaning.

—Gary T. Marx (1996, p. 107)

More than a decade ago, Gary Marx called on scholars to think critically about the cultural resources that citizens use to make sense of and understand surveillance. Scholarly responses have considered how media representations of surveillance influence the ways that people understand the technologies and practices used to monitor their daily lives (Coleman & Sim, 2000; Doyle, 2003; Nellis, 2007) and the lives of others (Albrechtslund, 2008; Andrejevic, 2002; Bugeja, 2006). Ranging from the dystopian societies depicted in film (e.g., *Blade Runner*, *Minority Report*, *Enemy of the State*, et cetera) to the voyeurism invited by varieties of reality and dramatic television programs (e.g., *COPS*, *Big Brother*, *Law & Order*, *Spooks*, et cetera), media portrayals of surveillance both legitimize and problematize the pervasiveness of information-gathering and social monitoring in everyday life (Albrechtslund, 2008; Andrejevic, 2002; Doyle, 2003; Kammerer, 2004).

Growing interest in media representations of surveillance is a positive scholarly development. Examining representations of surveillance in popular culture provides important insights into the prevalent views of the world, its deepest values, and the resources and materials that help people constitute a common culture.

Notwithstanding these contributions, we argue that surveillance and communication scholars have maintained less focused attention on the forms of media discourse that may offer clearer insight into the political and definitional struggles that animate the policy dynamics of surveillance, particularly the activities surrounding the monitoring of public space. Elected officials, privacy advocates, security and police personnel, activists, and community groups engaged in the struggle around surveillance generally seek to influence policy and public agendas through the mass-circulation news media. Scholars have not ignored news framing of surveillance and its implications for policy entirely. Surveillance researchers often look to news reporting for illustrative cases of how surveillance practices and technologies help reproduce elite power (e.g., Coleman, 2004, 2005; Coleman & Sim, 2000; Norris & Armstrong, 1999; Walby, 2006). Yet systematic empirical analyses of how news media frame surveillance practices and technologies are surprisingly limited (but see Wiecek & Sættnan, 2002).

In increasing numbers, video surveillance is being explored by police, local government, business, and other community leaders as a tool for crime prevention and control (Deisman, Derby, Doyle, Leman-Langlois, Lippert, Lyon, Pridmore,

Smith, Walby & Whitson, 2009; Haggerty, Huey, & Ericson, 2008; Hier, Greenberg, Walby, & Lett, 2007; Hier, Walby, & Greenberg, 2006; Walby, 2006). Yet they appear to be doing so in the absence of clear empirical research about the efficacy of surveillance in reducing crime (Armitage, 2002; Gill & Spriggs, 2005; Welsh & Farrington, 2003). In this context, it is important to ask questions about the cultural resources citizens and policymakers use to understand the myriad issues that are involved in public closed-circuit television (CCTV) monitoring programs. Although news discourse is not the only example of such a resource, it is integral to public conversations and to policy discussions.

Our aim in this article is primarily empirical. We present an analysis of video surveillance discourse from several hundred news articles in 11 Canadian newspapers during the period 1999–2005. The insights we provide are gleaned from five analytical questions. These insights allow us to offer a more complete picture of the media conversation about CCTV surveillance and what it might mean for how people understand and negotiate meaning about surveillance practices in everyday life. As the data show in this study, news discourse in Canada has been a poor cultural resource for informing public opinion and policy discussion about the many complex factors involved in CCTV surveillance of public areas. The study concludes with recommendations for future research to scholars who have an interest in how media discourse about surveillance shapes and is shaped by political and cultural processes.

### **Theoretical framework: Framing, power, and influence**

Social and political issues are shaped, defined, negotiated, and contested in numerous arenas. Ongoing discussion in Canada relating to surveillance issues—from video monitoring of public spaces to the privacy implications of social networking sites (such as Facebook)—occurs in school classrooms, town and city halls, within the courts, in the context of election campaigns, and in different public consultation forums. Despite the significance of these varied locations, the news media arena arguably “overshadows all others” when it comes to debates about social and political issues of public importance and for which policy intervention is either expected or desired (Gamson, 2004, p. 243). News media play an integral role in policy and public debate not only because the key players in the other arenas are also part of the media gallery, but also because these players often operate under an assumption that media reporting is a key mechanism for “spreading changes in language use and political consciousness” (Gamson, 2004, p. 243; see also Ryan, 1991).

This study is informed in part by key insights from the agenda-setting tradition in political communication (e.g., Soroka, 2002). Research questions in the agenda-setting literature do not focus on people’s opinions about different social issues per se, but rather on levels of issue salience and their implications for public opinion and policy action. Cohen’s (1963) conclusion that the mass media are more successful in telling the public “what to think about,” rather than “what to think,” is regarded as the central hypothesis in this tradition. Cohen’s work sparked a series of studies on public agenda-setting that demonstrate how increased levels of issue salience for the media increase the levels of issue salience for members of the public (e.g., Dearing, 1989). In other words, even if citizens do not agree with what they read about in the press, hear on the radio, or

watch on the evening news, the media's "ranking of the relative importance of various public issues" (Dearing, 1989, p. 310) does exert influence over peoples' topics of discussion. This is because from the vantage point of the media audience, the news media serve as both a filter and an alert system, "canvassing events and developments to determine which best satisfy news values and therefore merit placement among the reported stories of the day [and announcing] that by the very nature of inclusion in the news these are things that matter" (Comstock & Scharrer, 2005, p. 171).

In addition to the signalling role news media play, it is important to recognize that beyond reflecting what is happening in the "real world," news organizations and media professionals play an active role in shaping public conversations about social and political issues. According to Kosicki,

media "gatekeepers" do not merely keep watch over information, shuffling it here and there. Instead, they engage in active construction of the messages, emphasizing certain aspects of an issue and not others. This creates a situation in which the media add distinctive elements to the stream of public discourse instead of merely mirroring the priorities set out by the various parties or candidates. (1993, p. 113)

The way that journalists frame news stories influences what viewers and readers think about issues and the solutions they will consider when it comes to resolving them. The news frame draws attention to specific parts of the issue, de-emphasizes other elements, and leaves some aspects out of the picture entirely. This is what Neuman, Just, and Crigler (1992) mean when they write that media frames "give the story a 'spin'" (p. 120). Entman (1993) makes a similar argument by describing framing as a process of selecting "some aspects of a perceived reality [to] make them more salient in a communicating text" (p. 52). Frames help to define problems, to diagnose causes, to make moral judgments, and to suggest remedies. Although news frames can never guarantee how readers will interpret or comprehend a communicating text, they provide insight into the range of likely decodings news readers will obtain. They do so by shedding light on the prevailing field of social intelligibility within which meaning about the world is constructed and problematized (Greenberg & Knight, 2004).

Media framing is an interpretive process, but it is also a political process that reflects wider power struggles and material inequalities in society. In a foundational article, Becker (1967) argued that modern societies tend to include a hierarchical ordering of individuals and groups that shapes the political and cultural milieu and thus our understandings about the world. Moreover, he argued that individuals will "take it as a given that members of the highest group have the right to define the way things really are" and that "credibility and the right to be heard are differentially distributed through the ranks of the system" (p. 241). Becker's notion that a hierarchy of credibility exists in the ordering of public discourse is a useful concept for studies examining the link between media coverage, public understanding, and policymaking because it explains how actors in positions of political, economic, or cultural authority are more likely to be seen by journalists working within mainstream news organizations as the most credible, reliable, and dependable sources of record when it comes to reporting important

social and political issues and events (see also Greenberg, 2005; Hackett, Gruneau, Gutstein, & Gibson, 2000; Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Robert, 1978). Seen in this light, the ability to exercise influence, including the capacity to steer the direction and tone of media coverage, should be seen to be a part of the political system—it is a “species of power” (Mayhew, 1997, p. 119) because it relies on authoritative status and coercion, rather than just the normative force of effective argument and persuasion.

### **Methodology**

The focus of this paper is on the framing of CCTV surveillance in the Canadian press between 1999 and 2005, with a special focus on public-area video monitoring. We examine coverage appearing in 11 regional Canadian English- and French-language newspapers<sup>1</sup> with diverse circulation figures and editorial perspectives. All of the newspapers in the sample are based in cities where video surveillance has been the subject of public discussion and policy consideration and thus generated considerable levels of media attention. At the time of the research, a video surveillance program had been established in some of these cities (e.g., Sherbrooke, Québec, and Sudbury, London, and Hamilton, Ontario); in others, public-area CCTV proposals had been introduced but rejected (e.g., Peterborough and Brockville, Ontario); and in others, monitoring programs were in the process of establishment (e.g., Vancouver, British Columbia; Calgary, Alberta; Winnipeg, Manitoba; Montréal, Québec; and Windsor, Ontario). The City of Hull, Québec, is unique in the sample: it is the only city in which a streetscape CCTV surveillance program was established (in 1993) and later abandoned (in 1999).<sup>2</sup>

Several news databases were used to generate a list of reports for analysis. We used the keyword string “‘CCTV’ or ‘video surveillance’ or ‘security cameras’” on LexisNexis, Factiva, Canadian Newsstand, and Virtual News Library to locate a representative sample of reportage that would provide insight into how CCTV surveillance was framed. The search initially yielded 1,094 news items. This population of coverage was examined manually and reduced to a sample of 595 discrete news items by eliminating duplicates, stories that did not pertain to CCTV surveillance for human monitoring (e.g., wildlife research usage), stories that were shorter than 100 words of text, and stories in which the presence of “CCTV” in the report referred to issues or organizations unrelated to surveillance practices and programs in Canada (e.g., China’s national public broadcaster, the China Central Television station, which is also abbreviated as CCTV).

Five empirical questions guided the research process:

- How many stories were published about CCTV surveillance generally in the Canadian press over the sample period, and what factors may account for peaks in the coverage?
- What are the locations (streetscapes, banks, hospitals, airports, retail stores, et cetera) where CCTV surveillance is discussed most frequently in the news coverage, and what might this tell us about how we think of public and private space?
- What are the primary thematic focuses of stories about streetscape CCTV surveillance?

- Do stories about CCTV surveillance (of streetscapes and other locations) explore ethical, political, or economic problems/concerns? If so, which ones and to what extent?
- In the news coverage about CCTV surveillance (of streetscapes and other locations), which sources have their interests and perspectives prioritized?

A content analysis was conducted to help us identify and quantify salient features of the coverage. It also allowed us to make broader inferences about how people might make sense of video surveillance in public spaces and how they understand and discuss the social and political issues and “problems” for which increased surveillance is presented as a desirable solution. As a methodology, content analysis enables the researcher to produce a comprehensive map of a given field of discourse, that is, to delineate trends, patterns, and absences over large aggregates of text (Deacon, Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 1999). As Winston (1990) argues, we cannot with any degree of certainty assess the “cultural skewedness” of discourse on the basis of one-off examples of misrepresentation (p. 62). Content analysis thus allows us to deal with the mass-ness of mass media (Deacon et al., 1999) and is the “only available tool for establishing maps, however faulty, of [media] output” (Winston, 1990, p. 62).

A team comprising the lead author and three research assistants first examined a subsample of the coverage (approximately 10%) using a coding sheet developed by the lead author. The team then met to discuss the results and fine-tune the coding instrument. Each research assistant subsequently read and coded each news article separately and again met to discuss the results. Although a formal intercoder reliability test was not completed, there was a consistent high level of agreement among members of the team regarding the results of the coding. In no instances were there major disagreements about how a news story had been framed.

## Research findings

### **Question 1: How many stories were published about CCTV surveillance generally in the Canadian press over the sample period, and what factors may account for peaks in the coverage?**

Table 1 illustrates the total number of stories that were written about CCTV surveillance across all of the sampled newspapers from 1999 to 2005. There are three discernible peaks in the sample during the years 2001, 2002, and 2005. Not only are the peaks based on coverage of streetscape CCTV surveillance, but they are also indexed to the mediation of local, national, and global episodes or events that function primarily as warning signals for future crime risks and for threats to the integrity of personal privacy. In other words, peaks in the coverage are framed principally (but not exclusively) in *episodic* terms that reflect the immediacy of events, rather than thematically as issues comprising multiple and conflicting themes and arguments or stemming from wider efforts to establish responsive public policy (see Iyengar, 1991).

The first noteworthy spike in reporting occurs in 2001, where all but one newspaper (Montréal *La Presse*) show an increase in CCTV surveillance stories over the previous year. The most dramatic jump occurs in the *Vancouver Sun*, where there were 22 stories in 2001 over the 3 stories reported in 2000. *The*

*Calgary Herald* also saw a major spike in coverage (rising from 1 to 10 stories), as did the *London Free Press* (jumping from 14 to 23 stories). In almost every case, the rise of issue attention in 2001 reflected a growing discourse about the need for greater “security measures” in public space following the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. However, the rise in issue attention also reflected various local dynamics, for example the debate in British Columbia about the RCMP’s use of public area surveillance in Kelowna (see Table below).

**Table 1: News stories about CCTV surveillance in Canada (1999-2005)**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<i>Winnipeg Free Press</i>	3	1	2	3	1	1	1
<i>Windsor Star</i>	0	2	4	4	9	8	8
<i>Vancouver Sun</i>	9	3	22	8	8	3	7
<i>Sudbury Star</i>	4	4	8	11	6	3	1
<i>Peterborough Examiner</i>	n/a	5	10	3	1	17	8
<i>London Free Press</i>	11	14	23	9	3	2	2
<i>Hamilton Spectator</i>	n/a	n/a	n/a	26	12	12	2
<i>Calgary Herald</i>	1	1	10	9	9	3	0
<i>Brockville Recorder Times</i>	20	0	0	0	5	0	1
<i>Montréal La Presse</i>	31	16	14	25	11	27	38
<i>Hull/Ottawa Le Droit</i>	8	13	16	14	14	13	34
<i>Totals</i>	87	59	109	112	79	89	102

Whereas the average number of stories over the sampling period is 85 per year, in 2002 and 2005, the issue of CCTV surveillance was the focus of 117 and 109 stories, respectively (there were 72 stories in 1999, 62 stories in 2000 and 2001, 81 stories in 2003, and 92 stories in 2004). The spike in 2002 can be explained by the mediation of two local and national episodes concerning streetscape CCTV surveillance. First, the very high number of stories published in *The Hamilton Spectator* (n=26) reflects the fact that the establishment of this city’s streetscape CCTV surveillance program gained momentum in 2002. In early January 2001, Alexandre Hamil, an 18-year-old skater competing in the Canadian Figure Skating Championships at Hamilton’s Copps Coliseum, was “mugged” and robbed of \$100 while walking around the downtown city centre. In 2002, the Hamilton CCTV surveillance program began to gain momentum. Not surprisingly, the Hamil mugging came to operate as one high-profile example of Hamilton’s degenerating downtown. The news coverage detailed the perceived endemic risks to the city-centre area, ranging from pervasive drug use and property crime to violent assaults, and it was instrumental in creating an image of social disorder. Subsequently, the development of Hamilton’s streetscape monitoring proposal derived particular strength from claims to criminal risk as a con-

dition in need of immediate intervention by police and local government (Hamilton Police Services, 2002; see also Hier, 2004).

Second, 2002 was also the year that the federal privacy commissioner of Canada, George Radwanski, launched what would ultimately be an unsuccessful constitutional challenge against streetscape monitoring practices in the City of Kelowna, British Columbia. In the late 1990s, responding to claims about increased street crime and general social and moral disorder, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) started to monitor images from a streetscape camera in Kelowna. Given that monitoring practices were conducted by the RCMP (a federal policing agency in Canada), regulatory responsibility rested with the federal, rather than provincial, privacy commissioner.

On June 25, 2001, the information and privacy commissioner for the Province of British Columbia, David Loukidelis, filed a complaint with Radwanski's office. Loukidelis argued that the Kelowna RCMP camera contravened the federal *Privacy Act*, which applies to the RCMP. Commissioner Radwanski determined that the RCMP's monitoring practices did contravene the *Privacy Act*, yet the RCMP continued to operate the camera system anyway. Radwanski subsequently launched a challenge against the RCMP under the principles set out in Canada's constitutional bill of rights, the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The federal government motioned to dismiss the case, however, ruling that the federal privacy commissioner's jurisdiction was limited to duties specified in the *Privacy Act*. The case attracted national attention to streetscape CCTV surveillance in particular and to citizens' right to privacy more generally.

The increased number of stories we identified in 2005 reflects the impact of high-profile global and local episodes on Canadian media coverage. Two events are noteworthy. First, across all of the newspapers, coverage of the London, U.K., subway bombings in July 2005 was widespread. What was particularly important about the London bombings was that CCTV footage helped police identify the perpetrators, mapping their movements throughout London and in the areas around the transit terminals just prior to their strikes. Although the suspects were not prosecuted (all perished in the attacks), their identities were very quickly determined. This helped give proponents of increased surveillance additional ammunition for their argument that CCTV images can be used effectively to identify perpetrators of crimes after the fact and that these images, broadcast in this context, would be a useful deterrent to would-be perpetrators of similar crimes in the future.

The second key event from 2005, which occurred very late in our sampling, was the shooting of 15-year-old Toronto schoolgirl Jane Creba on Boxing Day. Creba was shopping with her mother in Toronto's downtown commercial area on the busiest shopping day of the year; she was caught in what police and media reports later described as a "gang type" exchange of gunfire. The Toronto Police Service captured images of the shooting on CCTV surveillance cameras that had been installed to monitor the Yonge-Dundas Square area during the holiday period as part of a pilot project. Although Canada's largest city did not have a permanent streetscape CCTV surveillance program at the time, public outrage concerning gang and youth violence after the Creba shooting provided a context in

which Toronto Police Services would later introduce 18-month streetscape CCTV surveillance pilot projects in several areas of the city.<sup>3</sup>

The September 2001 and London 2005 terrorist attacks, the Hamil “mugging,” and the shooting of Jane Creba were high resonant episodes that signal how people interpret “risky” spaces, places, and social encounters (Hier, 2004; Hier, Greenberg, Walby, & Lett, 2007). As Innis (2004) explains, some crime and disorder episodes are more significant to individual and collective perceptions of risk. Normative episodic transgressions that are especially visible to the public, he contends, function as “warning signals” for the contingencies of everyday life. Although the coverage generated by Commissioner Radwanski’s actions in 2002 was not based on a criminal case, it nevertheless exemplifies a signalling episode that operates in a similar manner to signal crimes; it articulated in normative terms the slippery slope that Canadians may be approaching by acquiescing to increased police presence in city life.

**Question 2: What are the locations (streetscapes, banks, hospitals, airports, retail stores, et cetera) where CCTV surveillance is discussed most frequently in the news coverage, and what might this tell us about how we think of public and private space?**

Surveillance is ubiquitous in contemporary societies (Lyon, 2002; Staples, 2000). A wide range of surveillance technologies and practices (e.g., credit cards, cell-phones, Internet service providers, CCTV cameras, university registrarial services, and personal video recorders) is used to gather and report data about individuals’ comings and goings, interests, tastes, and activities. Surveillance cameras are also a prevalent feature of the modern cityscape, located on city streets, in shopping malls, banks, parking garages, hospitals, and airports. Despite the proliferation of surveillance technologies and practices across a wide range of social spaces, however, there is little critical media or public discussion about the expansion of, and differential implications pertaining to, diverse forms of surveillance and their locations.

The absence of any meaningful public dialogue about the expansion and differential consequences of surveillance not only raises questions about “surveillance creep,” that is, the proliferation of surveillance systems in areas of everyday life not anticipated with their inception (e.g., Marx, 1988), but also about “surveillance slack”: a normative approach to surveillance, whereby the effects of information and data-gathering techniques are measured relative to their context (Marx, 2003).<sup>4</sup>

The news media’s framing of CCTV monitoring programs does not fully explain the significance of surveillance creep and surveillance slack. Proponents of CCTV consistently use a narrow set of arguments to promote monitoring systems. One of the most common arguments is that “security” or “community safety” cameras are proliferating in banks, airports, the workplace, on university campuses, in shopping malls, and in mass transit locations, so there is no reason to oppose streetscape CCTV surveillance. To oppose streetscape cameras that will only punish wrongdoers, the proponents claim, is not only foolhardy, but akin to closing the proverbial barn door after the horses have already left. A second, companion argument is that individuals “who have nothing to hide, should have nothing to fear.” This argument not only elicits a wider debate about the

meaning of personal privacy (see further discussion below), but also serves rhetorically to underscore the ubiquity claim: that since we acquiesce to increased surveillance in some areas, we should have nothing to fear about expanding this into others.

To what extent does the news coverage focus on CCTV surveillance in different social and spatial locations, and why does attention to the meaning of space matter?

As illustrated in Table 2, news coverage about CCTV surveillance in Canada encompasses a wide range of areas where members of the public circulate (e.g., city streets, transit systems, workplaces, airports, banks, hospitals, schools, parking facilities, and border crossings). Yet despite the variety of locales, the most common type of CCTV surveillance in the news coverage is public/open street

**Table 2: Locations of CCTV surveillance**

	Open Street	Public/ Airport	School	Hospital	Bank	Transit	Border	Workplace/ Business/	Parking Garage	Other	Total
	42%	0.5%	5.6%	0.6%	3%	6%	0.4%	22.5%	2%	16.8%	
<i>Winnipeg Free Press</i>	12	0	4	0	0	7	0	22	0	9	54
<i>Windsor Star</i>	39	1	4	1	0	2	0	17	2	18	84
<i>Vancouver Sun</i>	60	2	6	2	2	13	0	19	2	27	133
<i>Sudbury Star</i>	37	0	3	0	0	2	0	8	0	6	56
<i>Peterborough Examiner</i>	44	1	2	1	3	1	2	14	1	12	81
<i>London Free Press</i>	64	0	3	0	2	3	1	9	0	9	91
<i>Hamilton Spectator</i>	52	0	12	0	4	2	0	10	1	4	85
<i>Calgary Herald</i>	33	1	6	1	3	8	1	29	4	34	120
<i>Brockville Recorder Times</i>	29	0	4	0	0	2	1	7	1	5	49
<i>Montreal La Presse</i>	61	1	14	1	12	23	0	74	4	52	242
<i>Hull/Ottawa Le Droit</i>	60	1	9	2	10	10	0	55	8	21	176

surveillance in downtown areas (42%). Only the Winnipeg and Montréal papers emphasize a different space (the workplace) as the most likely location to find a video surveillance network. Indeed, workplace video surveillance accounted for 22.5% of the coverage overall. The third most commonly discussed location for a CCTV surveillance system was on public transit (e.g., trains, buses), which garnered 6% of the total coverage.<sup>5</sup> The presence of surveillance cameras in parking garages, banks, retail stores, and schools, where they are arguably most ubiquitous, attracted very little newspaper attention.

Over the past decade, public-area CCTV surveillance has come to be conceptualized through a number of proxies that centre on city streets: open street, high street, city centre, and urban video surveillance systems (e.g. Coleman, 2004, 2005; Coleman & Sim, 2000; Goold, 2004; Hier, 2004; Hier, Greenberg, Walby, & Lett, 2007; Hier, Walby, & Greenberg, 2006; Walby, 2005a, 2005b) These investigations have yielded many useful insights into the ways that CCTV surveillance is understood and applied as a crime control measure. What has been missing from the literature, however, is a more nuanced conceptualization of public areas generally and public-area streetscapes in particular.

The meanings of public and private areas are neither given nor static. Generically, unlike working environments, shopping centres, and other locations owned and/or operated by private actors, public areas are physical spaces where people are able to meet, interact, associate, organize, or be left alone to pursue their individual or collective interests in a manner that is relatively unregulated or unrestricted. Public areas are relatively unregulated or unrestricted because most Canadians expect to enter into public areas independent of excessive intrusion by the state, private interests, or other citizens, but they do not extend this expectation to unlimited freedoms to act or present themselves in any manner that they wish. In one sense, public areas are determined by the degree to which a person is able to gain access to certain spatial zones in the relative absence of interference by individuals or groups seeking to lay a proprietary claim to these public spaces, yet there remain normative conventions as to how people may interact within these spaces.

While public areas are physical places, this is not all that they are. Public areas are also symbolically meaningful democratic spaces where associational life and sociability happen. Public areas presuppose an understanding of, or imply a concomitant set of contrasting notions about, private areas. Like public areas, private areas are physical locations. Yet in contrast with public areas, which are defined by normative ideals of democratic interaction and relative openness, private areas are characterized by normative restrictions and limited access, and they are conditioned by proprietary rights and claims to ownership. Private areas are relatively regulated, in the sense that they are based on flexible standards of inclusion and exclusion. Yet, people are not entirely free to do what they wish in private areas (e.g., when development projects on private property contravene public zoning bylaws).

It is important to conceptually distinguish between public and private areas because, although notions of public and private are often understood in terms of idealized or fixed spaces of physicality, sociability, and politicization, they blur into one another and intersect in multiple, sometimes conflicting, ways. What is significant about the media reporting on streetscape CCTV surveillance in Canada is the conflation of streetscape monitoring with CCTV surveillance in other spaces. Despite the important conceptual differences between public and private space, news coverage flattens the normative dimensions of surveillance slack by failing to account for the political, cultural, social, and symbolic dimensions of public space. Put simply, there is an important normative difference in the perception of surveillance cameras on streets versus in banks or shopping

malls. The coverage not only assumes a consensus in the debate about surveillance of other locales, but also fails to account for the differential levels of access to these spaces and the differing reasons people have for entering them.

**Question 3: What are the primary thematic focuses in stories about CCTV surveillance?**

Proponents of streetscape CCTV surveillance frequently argue that surveillance cameras are effective tools for crime prevention and deterrence. There are two dimensions to this argument. First, police and other enforcement agencies, equipped with the capacity to monitor streetscapes, can anticipate and thus respond to a crime before it occurs. This argument presupposes that existing CCTV surveillance programs involve real-time monitoring and seamless communication between camera operators and police. The second argument is that

would-be criminals, once aware that their behaviours are subject to more intensified monitoring, will internalize the gaze of authorities and adopt disciplinary forms of self-surveillance and control (Foucault, 1977).

We examined the coverage to determine the dominant themes that were used to explain the *rationale* for CCTV surveillance. In particular, we examined the coverage

**Figure 3:**  
**Thematic Focus of CCTV Surveillance News**



to determine whether CCTV surveillance was discussed primarily as a tool for crime prevention and deterrence, or whether other applications (e.g., use in the detection or capture of criminals, as incriminating evidence in trials, et cetera) garnered significant attention.

Figure 3 provides an overview of the thematic structure of the coverage about CCTV surveillance across all of the sampled newspapers.<sup>6</sup> Not surprisingly, the data illustrate that the greatest emphasis in media coverage is on the use of video surveillance for crime prevention or deterrence (54%). The emphasis on prevention partially reflects the efforts of the security and crime control communities to set the definitional parameters within which surveillance is discussed and debated in the media and in other public forums. Advocates of greater surveillance, including but not restricted to police and other law enforcement agencies, often note the deterrent value of CCTV technology as a way to promote its efficacy. Although focus group research on streetscape monitoring is limited in Canada (see Lett, 2007), focus group research on CCTV in other spaces where members of the public interact confirms at least partially the success of this framing strategy. For example, research conducted by the public opinion firm EKOS Research Associates for Transport Canada in 2005 noted a “moderate to high” level of support for the placement of surveillance cameras in the transit systems of most major cities. Concerns about crime, personal safety, and, to a lesser extent, terrorism, all ranked at the top of respondents’ lists of reasons for supporting what they

perceived to be enhanced security measures. According to the EKOS report, “the perceived benefits of surveillance cameras . . . focus primarily on their potential deterrent effect on crime” (EKOS Research Associates, 2005, p. 39).<sup>7</sup>

Slightly more than one third of the total coverage (34%) referred to the ability of authorities to use video surveillance recordings to assist in the detection and capture of criminals after a crime had been committed. News stories that primarily addressed the detection and capture theme were most prominent in the later phase of the sample. This is the period following the July 2005 London subway bombings, when media reports featuring CCTV images of the purported perpetrators was ever-present. A considerably lower number of news stories explained CCTV surveillance in evidentiary terms for use in court proceedings (12%), and very few stories (4%) addressed the cultural implications of increased surveillance—for example, discussing growing usage of CCTV video monitoring as a means for alleviating public anxiety in a period of perceived increased risk.

These findings provoke other empirical questions, not the least of which is whether surveillance cameras actually reduce crime. Evidence of crime reduction is mixed, according to American and U.K. studies. Surveillance cameras have been shown to be effective in reducing property crime, especially in closed spaces (e.g., a parking garage) and often when additional lighting has been provided and clear signage has been posted. Evidence also indicates, however, that surveillance cameras do not reduce the kinds of violent crime that citizens report to be most worried about (e.g., terrorism, muggings, rapes, et cetera); importantly, as we note above, the news coverage overwhelmingly focuses on violent signal crimes as the referent for increasing CCTV surveillance in public space (see, for example, Gill & Spriggs, 2005; Waples & Gill, 2006; Welsh & Farrington, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005).

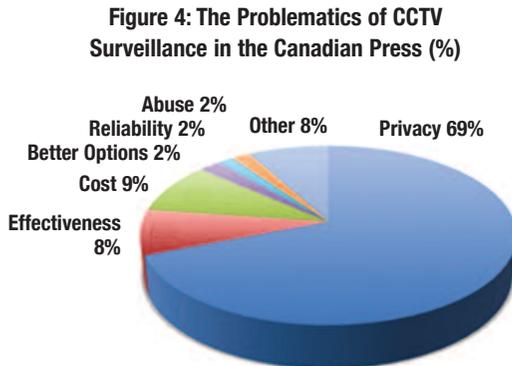
**Question 4: Do stories about CCTV surveillance (of streetscapes and other locations) explore ethical, political, or economic problems/concerns? If so, which ones, and to what extent?**

In normative terms, news media should provide enough information to citizens, independent of the influence exercised by powerful interests, to construct a nuanced and critical understanding of public events and issues. A classical definition of this approach draws upon Habermas’ theory of the public sphere, in which journalists are expected to facilitate a *culture debating* rather than a *culture consuming* public (Habermas, 1989). As centres of debate and information, the mass media (which in eighteenth-century Britain and continental Europe included newspapers, magazines, clubs, literary publications, et cetera) nurtured opposition to the traditional and hierarchical forms of authority, enabling the rule of reason to displace the rule of tradition (Habermas, 1989). Making a similar argument, Entman (2004) writes, “[I]t is not enough for media to present information in ill-digested and scattered morsels” (p. 17). Rather, he claims that citizens need and deserve to be provided with critical information or “counterframes” that enable them to understand and appreciate alternative definitions and acquire a wider and deeper understanding. With this concern in mind, we explored to what extent the media coverage provided citizens with accounts of the counterframes relating to CCTV surveillance.

Most importantly, the vast majority of news items (59%) did not explore any of the problems frequently identified with increased surveillance of citizens in public space (see Figure 4).<sup>8</sup> We cannot shed empirical insight into the actual reasons for these blind spots here, although we expect that this derives from a combination of insufficient knowledge or ambivalence on the part of journalists and ineffective efforts to communicate publicly about these issues on the part of privacy and social justice advocates.<sup>9</sup>

Within the 41% of news articles that *did* address problematic issues of increased surveillance, six themes were raised, although not all of them were always explored in great detail.<sup>10</sup> As noted in Figure 4, these themes include concerns about individual privacy rights, cost, effectiveness (in terms of the likelihood of a CCTV image rendering accurate identification), potential for abuse, reliability (in operational terms), and the rather more abstract notion that “better options” may be available.<sup>11</sup>

Among the news stories that mentioned some of the problematic aspects of CCTV video surveillance, the vast majority (69%) were concerned with the privacy implications facing individuals. This is not terribly surprising. Bennett &



Raab (2007) argue that a “privacy paradigm” has emerged in modern liberal societies that prioritize the protection of the autonomous individual from what they describe as community conscience. By a paradigm, they mean “a set of assumptions about a phenomenon or area of study

which generally go unquestioned [and which] produces an agreed understanding about the nature and scope of a particular problem” (p. 337). Bennett & Raab argue that when public policy focuses primarily on data protection and individual liberties, privacy legislation can only go so far to temper the expansion of surveillance and other systems of control. The dominance of this privacy paradigm is reflected in the media discourse about CCTV surveillance, insofar as the “problem” of increased surveillance was unquestioningly framed as a threat to personal privacy, to the exclusion of so many other possible concerns that may be of wider community interest.

The prominence of the privacy paradigm was also linked to some of the episodes we discuss above. In a 2002 lecture at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, co-sponsored by the advocacy group Electronic Frontier Canada, former federal privacy commissioner George Radwanski called video surveillance in public space “the top privacy issue” of the twenty-first century. Calling on citizens to actively resist the efforts of the state to monitor their comings and goings, he argued that “the cameras you’re contemplating here in

Hamilton . . . are the thin edge of the wedge that will irrevocably change our whole notion of our rights and freedoms” (Walters, 2002, p. A5). Some of the other problematic aspects of CCTV surveillance discussed in the coverage included references to the prohibitive costs of maintaining and upgrading the surveillance networks (9%) and to their effectiveness in actually doing what advocates claim they could do in terms of reducing crime and disorder (8%). Scholars who question the ever-presence of surveillance on the grounds of ethical dilemmas; the reproduction of racialized, sexualized, or classed identities by media coverage of CCTV images; or the wider implications of expanding surveillance for such “common values” as trust, would find the coverage insufficiently narrow and unsatisfactory.

For citizens and city officials considering CCTV surveillance, there are at least three blind spots in the news coverage worth discussing. The first pertains to what CCTV systems actually accomplish. Evidence suggests that cameras do not reduce violent crime, bar fights, muggings, or random attacks. Rather, they tend to be used to monitor panhandling, youth activities (e.g., skateboarding), vagrancy, loitering, drug dealing, and public nuisances in general (see Coleman, 2006; Norris & Armstrong, 1999). Whether citizens are living in Hamilton, Vancouver, Peterborough, Winnipeg, or Montréal, they take these social issues seriously, but these are issues that arguably require a range of different solutions—CCTV surveillance is also arguably an ineffective solution to them.

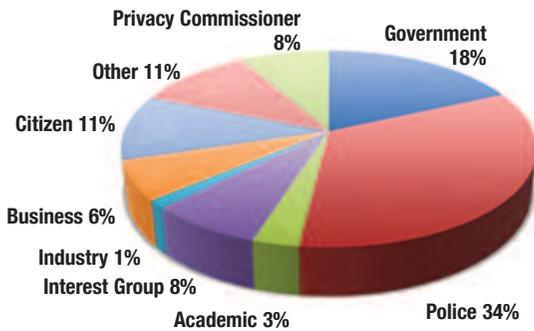
Canadians should also be aware of the potentially subversive uses of public camera systems. Some systems come with a function that will automatically block out windows in businesses and residential properties, but not all systems have this function. Studies involving CCTV monitoring in Canadian department stores suggest that marginalized groups such as Aboriginal men are more heavily watched based on race (Walby, 2005a), and anecdotal evidence from the U.K. and Canada points to a recurrent pattern of women on city streets being singled out for attention by male camera operators (Norris & Armstrong, 1999).

A third issue pertains to what streetscape CCTV systems actually entail and whether there are reasonable standards of practice that should be developed to determine their scope and shape. Streetscape CCTV surveillance systems vary considerably, despite the fact that news coverage fails to recognize these differences. In the City of London, Ontario, for example, live monitoring of 16 streetscape cameras is conducted by a separate security service that is not linked to the police services. By contrast, the 12 cameras in the City of Sudbury, Ontario, have been monitored over the years by operators ranging from welfare recipients in a provincial “work for welfare” program to law and security students and civilian volunteers. In Windsor, Ontario, the monitoring being carried out under the auspices of a pilot project was done entirely by a private company. The important point to underscore here is that citizens commonly assume that police officers or other law enforcement professionals operating under “fair” terms of use will monitor surveillance cameras and use the findings to protect them from harm. Moreover, there is little to support the belief of many individuals and groups that privacy commissioners and other relevant watchdog organizations are actively overseeing camera programs to ensure fair use.

**Question 5: In the news coverage about CCTV surveillance (of streetscapes and other locations), which sources have their interests and perspectives prioritized?**

Researchers often examine the thematic structure of news coverage to obtain insights into how successful certain sources are in driving the media, policy, and public agendas and influencing public attitudes and beliefs (e.g., Greenberg & Knight, 2004). Figure 5 and Table 6 provide empirical data that illustrate the relative prominence of different sources in terms of their media access.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 5:**  
**Source Access Patterns in News Coverage**  
**of CCTV Surveillance in Canada (%)**



Immediately apparent is the finding that police sources are by far the most prominent; police gain access in one third (34%) of the total news stories about CCTV surveillance. Indeed, with the exception of *Le Droit* (Hull/Ottawa) and *The London Free Press*, where government and/or interest group voices were more prominent, police sources were the most cited across all of the newspapers examined. The dominance of police sources in the framing of surveillance was especially evident in the Calgary, Hamilton, Sherbrooke, and Winnipeg papers, where more than 40% of the news stories privileged the police perspective. Government sources, which were typically municipal actors (e.g., city councillors) but occasionally representatives of federal political parties, were the second most prominent (18%) across all of the sampled newspapers. In the Hull and Sherbrooke papers, federal political party actors achieved upward of 40% of the total source quotations.

It is not surprising that police and government sources were the most dominant news sources in the coverage, given reporting about signal crimes and other examples of putatively criminal or deviant activity. Moreover, the majority of streetscape CCTV programs are paid for, promoted by, and administered by either police or city councils. As Knight & Curtis argue (1987), “[N]ews prioritizes the state and its agents, treating even minor state activities as inherently newsworthy [and] viewing agents of the state as reliable sources and as interesting speakers” (p. 49). Other studies have demonstrated the ability of government sources to manage the flow of news material as part of a wider strategy to boost their presence as primary definers of social and political issues (see also studies by Ericson, Baranek, & Chan, 1989; Gitlin, 1980; Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Robert, 1978). Studies of police and media interaction (Boyle, 1999; Schlesinger & Tumber, 1994; Simmons, 1999) have shown that as police activity became subject to greater levels of political oversight during the 1970s and 1980s, police

departments in Canada, the U.K., and other countries found themselves under pressure to develop “competitive strategies for media attention” (Schlesinger & Tumber, 1994, p. 13). While there have always been productive relations of mutual benefit between police and journalists, Boyle (1999) notes that a qualitative change began to occur as a result of the rising level of promotional self-awareness on the part of police, a move described by Simmons (1999) as a shift from “confrontation” to “conciliation.”

**Table 6: Source Access Patterns in News Coverage of CCTV Surveillance in Canada, by Newspaper (%)**

	<i>Government</i>	<i>Police</i>	<i>Academic</i>	<i>Interest Group</i>	<i>Industry</i>	<i>Business</i>	<i>Citizen</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Commissioner</i>	<i>Privacy</i>
<i>Brockville Recorder Times</i>	24	24	2	7	0	4	10	20	9	
<i>Calgary Herald</i>	15	44	4.5	7.5	2.7	7.5	3	5.6	10.2	
<i>Hamilton Spectator</i>	12	40	1.2	7.2	4.8	2.4	18	9.6	4.8	
<i>Hull/Ottawa Le Droit</i>	32.6	29.7	2.9	2.9	0.7	5	5.8	12	8.4	
<i>London Free Press</i>	18.3	17.6	0	23	1	0	9.8	18.3	12	
<i>Montreal La Presse</i>	23.4	25.7	5.2	7	1.8	10	9.4	12.3	5.2	
<i>Peterborough Examiner</i>	22	24	2.9	10.2	0	7	18	10	5.9	
<i>Sudbury Star</i>	8	38	6	2	0	8	16	10	12	
<i>Vancouver Sun</i>	9.3	34	1.5	7	3.8	7	15	10	12.4	
<i>Windsor Star</i>	13	39	4.8	7.1	1	4.8	11.2	7.1	12	
<i>Winnipeg Free Press</i>	9.4	47	3.8	9.7	0	7.5	9.4	9.4	3.8	
<i>Average</i>	18.25	33.67	3.1	7.55	1.31	6.4	10.8	10.69	8.22	

The source access data provide two additional interesting findings. First, given the dominance of the “privacy paradigm” in the coverage, it is surprising that the federal and provincial offices of privacy commissioners, interest groups (particularly privacy advocates), and academics did not appear as quoted sources in more than 8% (privacy commissioner and interest groups) and 3% (academics) of the news coverage, respectively. Interestingly, much of the discussion about the privacy implications of more expansive video surveillance came from the police and government sources. While this may speak to a wider communication strategy, we suggest that it also reflects the seriousness with which these actors have begun to treat issues of privacy protection—critics who accuse police sources of operating from a position driven solely by a desire for absolute and total social control should see these data as an important indication of a shift in attitude and activity.

Second, there is a surprisingly low frequency of quotations by representatives of the surveillance industry, that is, the technology companies that provide the “solutions” to the putative problems of crime and social disorder. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, there was a frenzy to introduce biometric surveillance technologies, including facial and voice recognition software to sort high-risk from low-risk persons; iris, finger, and retinal scans; and software that assesses hand geometry and vein patterns. Caught up in the intensification of media coverage of the attacks and efforts by different political actors to capitalize on rising levels of public anxiety and declining levels of trust, the primary marketing strategy of the high tech industry was to mobilize emotions such as fear and suspicion to introduce a variety of technological devices and gadgets that promised to authenticate people’s identities and to protect communities from the dangers that lurk both within and beyond borders.

Yet, when it comes to the media conversation about CCTV surveillance in Canada, the industry voice is surprisingly quiet (1%). One explanation (although we find it to be insufficient) might be that these sources lack the knowledge and practice to drive media coverage, preferring instead to communicate directly with citizens through paid advertising. A second is that journalists do not see these sources (whose primary motivation is to expand their market share) as particularly relevant to the episodes and events that typically precipitate news coverage about surveillance. The most likely explanation, however, is that these sources do not actually need media attention and may in fact benefit more by operating from behind the scenes and relying upon lobbying and other back-channel forms of communication to grow their influence than by seeking earned media attention for their products and services.

## **Conclusion**

For too long the phenomenon of surveillance has been captured by the theoreticians.

—Jackson, 2004, p. 216

Although media discourse cannot determine what people will think about social or political issues and events, it is a powerful vehicle for bringing issues to public attention, and it frequently provides clues for how they might think about these issues and events. Surveillance scholars have described the cultural field of representation from which public understandings about surveillance might derive. This has led to an impressive list of published research on the social construction of surveillance, especially in Hollywood films, reality television, and crime dramas. Although there is some published work available on constructions of surveillance in the news media, we believe this research is lacking in empirical rigour.

Moreover, there is little to no available Canadian research on how news media frame surveillance practices and technologies, despite the expansion of surveillance across Canada (Walby, 2005b). Even when considering the limited published studies that do exist, they either focus on a small number of cases (Hier, Greenberg, Walby, & Lett, 2007; Hier, Walby, & Greenberg, 2006) or offer only

descriptive information with little new empirical analysis (Deisman, et al., 2009). If news reporting on social problems and issues informs both public opinion and the decision-making of policymakers (Soroka, 2002), then the media conversation about CCTV surveillance in Canada should provide researchers, policymakers, and citizens some cause for concern.

In this article, we have provided analysis of several hundred news reports about CCTV video surveillance in Canada during the period 1999–2005. Given the important regional differences that persist in Canada, it is questionable whether a pan-Canadian media agenda exists (Soroka, 2002). Yet, although we note differences in how the sampled newspapers that were examined framed the issue of surveillance, it is not clear that these differences outweigh the similarities. Notwithstanding the situational specificity of CCTV surveillance initiatives, a number of common themes emerged across the media outlets we examined:

- Media attention to CCTV surveillance as a newsworthy subject was indexed primarily to discrete events in the local and global environments. Consequently, the coverage tended to frame surveillance in episodic terms, rather than contextually. This raises important considerations about the capacity of news audiences to understand the wider issues and implications of more intensified forms of surveillance in daily life.
- Police sources are overwhelmingly dominant when it comes to setting the news agenda. Other studies have effectively documented the sophistication of police efforts to drive public, policy, and media agendas (Boyle, 1999; Schlesinger & Tumber, 1994; Simmons, 1999), and although we have not explored the communication strategies of police sources in this paper, their presence as primary definers in the news coverage about CCTV surveillance is strongly suggestive of a concerted effort to ensure the coverage reflects police concerns about the value of CCTV surveillance as a tool for deterrence, crime prevention, and prosecution.
- Although the ability of streetscape video surveillance to prevent crime is questionable (Gill & Spriggs, 2005), news coverage about CCTV in Canada reifies the notion that the presence of video cameras on city streets, in banks, in shopping malls, or in parking lots, will somehow prevent or deter criminal behaviour.
- A discussion about the problems associated with increased video monitoring of public space is infrequently pursued, and when concerns are raised, they are almost always indexed to the paradigm of personal privacy. The infringement on personal privacy is but one of several considerations when establishing a public video monitoring program, yet news coverage of CCTV surveillance very rarely explores the financial costs, technical efficacy, and reliability of these systems, let alone the ethical implications of what more extensive surveillance might mean for our understanding of notions such as community and trust or the potential of broadcast footage of CCTV images to reproduce existing material inequalities among different categories of citizens.

- In contrast with the success of police (and to a lesser extent, government) sources in framing media coverage about CCTV surveillance, scholars, advocacy groups, and privacy experts (within and outside the state apparatus) have been far less effective in shaping the public discussion about surveillance. There is no question that with more Canadian cities beginning to explore the utility of public camera surveillance to deal with perceived problems of crime and social disorder, the discourse surrounding surveillance will need to be strengthened, and contributions from sources besides police must be incorporated into that discussion. Surveillance scholars have a potentially important role to play in this regard.

### **Limitations and directions for future study**

The data reported above provide a more comprehensive picture of the media conversation about surveillance in Canada than has been available until now. Nevertheless, limitations in our research design and methodological approach suggest some possible blind spots and thus opportunities for further study. First, in utilizing a primarily quantitative approach to analyzing the coverage, we have underexamined the complex and varied processes of meaning-construction that occur *within* media texts. Although we may be able to infer latent meanings, we do not have the empirical evidence to discuss more than the manifest content of the coverage (Deacon et al., 1999). For example, one could fruitfully pursue an analysis of how the news coverage about signal crimes and the surveillance technologies and practices presented as “solutions” often relies upon discursive cues about the threats posed to “normal” citizens by those whose racial, class, or other identities appear “dangerous.” The role of CCTV video surveillance in producing the “visual texts” that enable institutional authorities to privilege certain ways of framing social reality is important (Walby, 2009).

Second, we note in the theoretical framework above that media frames derive, in part, from the beliefs and perceptions of journalists. We can only make inferences about journalistic attitudes and understandings of surveillance on the basis of a content analysis. Such questions can and should be addressed, but they require an approach involving interviews or focus groups with journalists and other news professionals. This would be a fruitful avenue of future surveillance scholarship.

Third, we have focused on how mainstream news media cover surveillance to the exclusion of looking at alternative media such as the radical press or at emergent forms of media communication, such as blogs or social networking sites. Without discounting the rising importance of new media for how citizens and policymakers understand and deliberate over social and political issues, we maintain that mainstream news coverage provides a better picture of how policy and public opinion come to be shaped. New media (blogs and social networking sites, in particular) are becoming more prominent as sites in which surveillance takes place and where surveillance can also be problematized, so they should garner greater attention from scholars of surveillance and communication (for a good example, see Albrechtslund, 2008).

Fourth, we have focused here on the encoding of news texts, but this comes at the expense of better understanding how citizens actually negotiate and derive

meaning from the news reports they read or hear about. Pre-existing structures and mental schemas influence how individuals will process and interpret information presented to them. Past media coverage of events is an important variable, but it is not the only one. And polling data offer at best a partial impression of how a representation of the population may be feeling about an issue at a particular moment in time. We need more rigorous, ongoing, and systematic analyses of public knowledge and attitudes to increased surveillance than currently exists.

Lastly, in focusing only on news discourse for this study, we run the risk of presenting a media-centric account of how cultural meanings about surveillance are constructed. Miller (1999) reminds us that definitions of social problems appear not just in the mass media, but also in scientific journals, at academic conferences, in peer review, and in research proposals, not to mention in legal and regulatory arenas dominated by politicians and policymakers. Although we argue that the media arena is the most dominant for influencing the perceptions and actions of citizens and policymakers, as surveillance researchers interested in communication look to the future, they should be exploring the social production of knowledge about surveillance by experts in and through policy processes, and not just by the news media.

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### Notes

1. Included in the analysis are three newspapers from provinces in Western Canada (*The Vancouver Sun*, *Calgary Herald*, and *Winnipeg Free Press*), six newspapers from Ontario (*The Brockville Recorder and Times*, *The Peterborough Examiner*, *The Hamilton Spectator*, *The London Free Press*, *The Sudbury Star*, and *The Windsor Star*) and three newspapers from Québec (*Le Droit* in the Gatineau region, *La Presse* in Montréal, and *The Record* in Sherbrooke). All of the newspapers selected for the analysis were also included because they provide full-text archives for the period of our analysis (some important cities, such as Kelowna, British Columbia, were excluded because electronic archived coverage was unavailable).
2. As we work through revisions of this article, the failed Brockville project appears to be regaining some momentum; the City of Vancouver is slated to introduce thousands of video cameras across its public transit system for added security during the 2010 Winter Olympics, leaving some to speculate about a likely longer-term presence in other areas of public space; and several other Canadian cities are in the process of introducing new or pilot projects. The point to be made here is that camera projects emerge quickly—our sample of cities and newspapers reflects the situation in 2005, but at the time of publication, approximately 15 cities in Canada are discussing whether to introduce public-area video surveillance as a tool for monitoring crime and social disorder.
3. Given that Toronto's pilot public video monitoring program was launched so long after we began sampling for this study, we were unable to include a Toronto paper in our sample. This certainly did not limit the coverage of the Creba shooting, which was reported widely across all media outlets. A poll commissioned to Ipsos-Reid by National Post and Global News only days after the Creba shooting found a "majority of Canadians" willing to support more draconian security measures, including allowing police a wider berth for targeting specific ethnocultural groups to combat guns and drug-related violence and installing more surveillance cameras throughout city "hot spots," that is, areas with higher official crime rates (Cowan, 2006).

4. Marx (2003) compares older forms of traditional surveillance with newer, technologically enhanced forms of surveillance. He argues that because the newer forms of surveillance system are qualitatively different, they can only be compared on relative, rather than absolute, terms. He therefore advocates on behalf of research that addresses the normative dimensions of surveillance in specific contexts.
5. In the aftermath of the July 2005 subway bombing in Britain, an escalation of coverage on transit video surveillance occurred. Indeed, in 2006 the Government of Canada transferred several million dollars to several major Canadian cities with mass transit systems (e.g., Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary, and Vancouver) precisely to equip them with more sophisticated surveillance technologies, so that the London experience would not be felt here.
6. We present the total coverage, as there were no major discernible differences across the newspapers to warrant regional comparisons.
7. In terms of critically evaluating the methodology of the study, the timing of the EKOS research is significant. The focus groups were held in most major cities within only weeks of the U.K. subway bombings and just following the announcement by Jean Lapierre, then Liberal minister of transportation, that the federal government was looking into expanding its investment in improving the “security” of Canada’s major public transit systems. The moderator’s guide raises additional methodological questions and thus questions about a likely government policy strategy. We argue that questions pertaining to the issue of surveillance were framed in such a way as to ensure the expression of higher levels of concern than may normally have been the case. For example, the first question asks, “What kind of concerns do you have about the public transit system? Would you say you are more worried about threats like terrorism or are you more concerned about your personal safety?” (EKOS Research Associates, 2005)? The question is problematic because it assumes that people do in fact have concerns about the public transit system, and it then primes them to think about terrorism and personal safety in formulating their answers. The following were some of the follow-up questions: “Do you think that what happened in London this summer could happen in a Canadian city?” and, “How fearful were you about using public transit in your city right after the bombings?”
8. While there were no single papers that did not take up any of the problematic aspects of surveillance, those papers that did so with the greatest frequency were *The Peterborough Examiner* (70% of its total coverage), *The London Free Press* (66% of its total coverage), and *The Brockville Recorder and Times* (65% of its total coverage). Campaigns opposing public video surveillance were especially strong and organized in Peterborough and Brockville, and there were vocal opponents in London as well (see Hier, Greenberg, Walby & Lett, 2007).
9. At the time of revision of this article, the *Ottawa Citizen* (2008-2009) has published a special series about the surveillance society, featuring the work of leading surveillance researchers in Canada. To our knowledge, the source of these stories was a network of scholars based at Queen’s University that is using funding provided by the federal Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner to expand public awareness about CCTV and other forms of surveillance.
10. Articles were coded for “mentions” of problem issues. Very few stories discussed in much detail the nature of these problems, with the exception of privacy rights, which did receive a great deal of attention.
11. As with the findings reported in Figure 3, we report here the total values for each “problem category,” as there were no discernible differences across the newspapers to warrant comparisons.
12. Operationally, we coded the coverage for quotations from police sources; government (which were normally local, e.g., city councillors), academic, industry (e.g., security, technology, et cetera), and business (i.e., local retailers sources; interest groups; citizens not affiliated with any particular organization (often in the form of “street” interviews with people walking in the vicinity of surveillance cameras); and representatives of the provincial or federal offices of the privacy commissioner (usually privacy commissioners themselves).

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