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Abstract

This paper explores the representation of video surveillance by the print media in the immediate aftermath of the London Underground bombings in 2005. It presents the findings of a mixed methods analysis, drawing on content and discourse analysis to present the main themes that arise in the print media during this time. The paper shows that there is a recurrent theme of ‘them’ and ‘us’ during this time; a broader theme also found in the traditional sociological literature and other analyses of surveillance. Coverage of the use of video surveillance during this time is resoundingly positive, with only a few dissenting voices drawing out the ethical and social implications of increasing surveillance in the immediate aftermath of the bombings (both in the UK and worldwide). Finally, the paper focuses on the theme of visibility and invisibility of the bombers. The bombers are depicted as invisible, part of ‘them’ but indistinguishable from ‘us’. During the period chosen for analysis there are repeated calls for increased surveillance despite recurrent statements that however much surveillance there had been on the Underground, the bombings could not have been prevented.

Introduction

Recent years have seen an increase in developments in the area of surveillance technologies and new surveillance practices. Visual surveillance systems are becoming ever more sophisticated with biometric capabilities being built in. It is difficult to judge the number of surveillance cameras in each country worldwide due to issues of private ownership and, often, the absence of any register of publicly owned cameras. The figure of 4.2 million cameras in the UK is no more than an estimate (McCabll and Norris 2003). Surveillance camera systems in the UK are used for monitoring traffic, maintaining order in schools and watching the flow of pedestrians in transport hubs far more frequently than they are used for security or anti-terror operations. Yet these systems are often funded through anti-terror budgets, made available to anti-terror operations and gain the kind of publicity required to justify their budgets in moments of terror.

There is a growing literature focusing on CCTV in the UK. This literature focuses on issues such as CCTV and privacy (see for example, Davies 1998), the use of CCTV in public and private space (see for example, Williams and Johnstone 2000), and its effectiveness (see for example, Welsh and Farrington 2002), CCTV and social control (see for example, Bannister, Fyfe and Kearns 1998), public perceptions of and attitudes towards video surveillance systems (see for example, Gill et al. 2007), CCTV and social discrimination (see for example, Sætnan, Lomell and Wiecek 2004), police use of video surveillance technology (see for example, Goold 2004), and CCTV and power or discipline (see for example, Fyfe and Bannister 1998). This literature allows us to develop a sound understanding of the uses of CCTV in the
UK, attitudes towards it, and its potential for discrimination and control. There is currently a growing literature concerned with media representations of surveillance in general (see for example, Coleman and Sim 2000, Doyle 2003, Kammerer 2004, Albrechtslund 2008, and Finn and McCahill 2010). A number of these studies focus specifically, or lay at least some emphasis, on CCTV. Research conducted by Norris and Armstrong (1999), McCahill (2002), and McCahill and Norris (2002) analysing representations of CCTV after the Jamie Bulger case, shows that media reportage focusing on the introduction of CCTV cameras at this time was almost entirely positive; Hier and Greenberg’s 2009 paper focuses on the framing of, and representation of, CCTV by the media (but in a Canadian context). Barnard-Wills (2011) analyses UK news media discourses of surveillance in general but also mentions CCTV in relation to the London bombings. His analysis focuses on the representation of the success of video surveillance cameras in tracing the movements of the bombers, rather than an in-depth analysis of the themes that emerge in relation to CCTV in the media at this time.

This paper seeks to add to this literature using the example of the London Underground bombings in 2005. In the same way as the use of CCTV in the Jamie Bulger case ignited public support for video surveillance, I believe that the prominent use of CCTV during the investigation of the London Underground bombings has the potential to cement in the public’s mind the usefulness and effectiveness of video surveillance, despite the ineffectiveness of the systems in preventing the incidents in the first place. This issue of CCTV’s ‘success’ despite its ‘failure’ has been addressed by Norris (2012) who argues that there are three main reasons why CCTV is so widespread despite its ineffectiveness. The first he describes as a general disillusionment with traditional forms of crime control, with CCTV being used as a solution for governments to be seen to be doing something about crime: ‘the fact that suicide bombers are not deterred, and may even be spurred on, by the presence of cameras, is beside the point’ (Norris 2012: 257). Secondly, he argues that the funding of CCTV has an impact—that it becomes more widespread when governments fund systems, rather than the police (who he argues are all too well aware that CCTV is not a solution for crime). Finally, he argues that CCTV is more than simply being about the ability to prevent and detect crime: ‘It is about the power to watch, to deploy, to intervene, to identify and to regulate, often through exclusion…it concerns the reproduction of order…it serves the dominant interests…the primary target of CCTV is the young male, often from an ethnic minority’ (Norris 2012: 258).

Targeting CCTV towards particular groups or individuals in society is of specific interest to this paper. Firstly, in relation to thinking about CCTV as a divisive technology—utilised in support of ‘law abiding citizens’, and working against ‘criminals’. This idea of ‘them’ and ‘us’ is discussed by Finn and McCahill (2010) in their analysis of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ data subjects. They argue that media portrayals of surveillance ‘continue to reinforce existing social divisions by marking out clear distinctions between “us” (law abiding citizens) and “them” (“deviants” and “outgroups”)’ (2010: 2). They briefly mention the 7th July bombings and state that:

articles about the July 7th ‘bombers’ on CCTV make use of a similar strategy where a headline in The Guardian states, ‘a casual shopper in Boots—then he set off to kill: chilling new photo of bus bomber released’. Within these articles surveillance technologies act as ‘tools’ to reveal that ‘they’ are among ‘us’, that they are ‘masquerading as “us”’.

(2010: 11)

1 James Bulger—frequently referred to as ‘Jamie’ Bulger in the press, although never by his family—was abducted in a Liverpool shopping centre in 1993 by Robert Thompson and Jon Venables. His body was found two days later on a railway line in Bootle. The CCTV images of the killers leading James away were shown on the news, and print media coverage repeatedly stated that the killers had been captured on CCTV. Although CCTV did not stop the incident occurring (it aided in identification and prosecution), following this time it was extremely difficult for anyone to oppose the technology and those that did were seen as being on the side of the killers. For more on this see Davies (1996) and Norris and Armstrong (1999).
Secondly, targeting CCTV towards particular groups/individuals is of interest to this paper with regard to its potential for a synoptic effect; with the many watching the few. Mathiesen (1997) discusses the idea of the Synopticon, in a reversal of the more traditional metaphor of the Panopticon (where one observer watches the many). This idea goes back to the argument about CCTV being about ‘them’ and ‘us’; a highly divisive technology, it enforces divisions and ideas about what is ‘good’ and what is ‘bad’. Lyon (2006: 36) states that

In the case of 9/11, the TV gaze permitted the development of a context-free narrative about American victims of totally unexpected foreign violence...This narrative, once accepted, becomes the means of legitimizing other kinds of official ‘watching’ (for ‘terrorists’ in this case) of the many by the few.

I will come back to this literature later in the paper.

This paper engages with the representation of video surveillance during the immediate aftermath of the bombings (one month time period). The focus of this paper is to understand how video surveillance is portrayed in the immediate aftermath of a terrorist incident; the main themes that emerge around video surveillance at this time; and whether articles about video surveillance include any social or ethical implications during this time. This approach speaks to the wider literature surrounding CCTV; to understand how CCTV is represented to the public by the media, and whether this representation includes any of the potentially negative impacts of video surveillance (for example in relation to potential privacy infringements).

The paper first sets out some of the literature looking at representation of crime in the media. It then sets out the methodology undertaken for the purpose of analysing the newspaper articles. The rest of the paper draws on the empirical evidence to analyse the content of the newspaper articles in the context of the three main research questions posed in this paper.

**Crime, surveillance and the media**

With regard to representations of crime, Reiner (2002: 380) states that ‘crime narratives and representations are, and have always been, a prominent part of the content of all mass media’. However, he goes on to note that this depends on the definition of crime that is used, giving the example of a content analysis by Ericson et al. (1987, 1989) (Reiner 2002: 305) within which they used the definition of ‘the behaviour of a thing or person that strays from the normal...not only...criminal acts, but also...straying from organisational procedures and violations of common sense knowledge’. Under this definition, deviance becomes ‘the defining characteristic of what journalists regard as newsworthy’.

Other studies have found that violence against ‘innocent others’, especially in public places, is most likely to receive media attention (see for example, Chibnall 2003). This idea of ‘evil doers’ and the ‘innocent’ is explored by Lee in his 1984 paper, analysing the content of newspaper headlines. This idea is furthered by Neuman et al. (1992) in their analysis of key media frames, one of which they describe as ‘them’ and ‘us’. I will come back to this point later in the paper. In general, Reiner (2002) argues that the media portray the police and criminal justice in a positive light.

The idea of ‘them’ and ‘us’ can be argued to echo the idea of ‘folk devils’ devised by Cohen in his study of moral panics, in which he describes the idea of a ‘wrong-doing’, a ‘condition’, an ‘episode’, a ‘person’, or ‘group of persons’ emerging, which become(s) defined as ‘a threat to societal values or interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media’ (Cohen 1973: 9). He goes on to expand on how information is processed by the media and how this, in turn, is received by the public.
Thompson (1998: 1-2) argues that: ‘this is the age of moral panic’. He distinguishes the current situation from what he contextualises as earlier panics, which, he argues, concentrated on crime and the activities of the ‘youth’. He argues that nowadays the rapid succession in which panics occur, alongside the ‘all-pervasive quality of the panics’ means that we have entered an era that can be defined as an age of moral panic. For him a moral panic is ‘a high level of concern over the behaviour of a certain group or category of people and...an increased level of hostility toward the group or category regarded as a threat’ (Thompson 1998: 9). Under this definition, the relationship between moral panics and risk is clear; public concern over perceived risks, such as crime and terrorism, is captured and heightened by the media in relation to specific events in such a way as to develop into a general anxiety under certain conditions. However, the public does already need to be ‘receptive to discourses containing a demonizing message’ (ibid.: 29); for example, in 1993 The Economist described the publicity surrounding the murder of 2-year-old James Bulger by two 10-year-old boys as another case of ‘moral panic’. In both cases public anxiety was amplified by publicity in the press, which portrayed these events as signifying a widespread and deeper moral malaise and as signs of social disintegration (ibid.: 11).

In recent years, there has been an increase in newspaper stories centred on surveillance (Barnard-Wills 2011). Jewkes (2004: 56) argues that visual surveillance in particular provides newspapers with the visual imagery needed for ‘a good news story’. High quality pictures are seen as representing the ‘truth’ and Jewkes argues that ‘real’ footage from CCTV cameras is increasingly used in broadcasts to visually highlight the event’s immediacy and authenticity:

Many of the most shocking events that occurred in the last few years of the 20th century entered the collective consciousness with such horrifying impact precisely because news reports were accompanied by images of the victim at the time of, immediately prior to, or soon after, a serious violent incident...James Bulger being led out of a Bootle shopping centre, Jill Dando shopping in Hammersmith, and Damilola Taylor skipping down a Peckham high street, are all forcefully etched on the British psyche. Combining the mundane ordinariness of everyday life with the grim inevitability of what is about to unfold, CCTV footage—played out by the media on a seemingly endless loop appeals to the voyeuristic elements in all of us, whilst at the same time reinforcing our sense of horror, revulsion and powerlessness.

Surveillance stories, and in particular those focusing on video surveillance (with the added potential for these stories to be able to use the power of a visual element), have various forms of ‘news value’. In their seminal work on news values, Galtung and Ruge (1965) describe twelve factors that define a story as ‘newsworthy’ and have an influence on how news stories are constructed. This list comprises: frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, compositional balance, elite nations, elite people, personification, and negativity. There are also numerous other lists of news values (Ryan 1991). Schlesinger (1987) and Bell (1991) for example, add to the list of criteria with the additions of: competition, co-optation, prefabrication, predictability (Bell 1991), time constraints, and logistics (Schlesinger 1987). In 2001, Harcup and O’Neill revised Galtung and Ruge’s framework, detailing the criteria of newsworthiness as based on: power elite, celebrity, entertainment, surprise, bad news, good news, magnitude, relevance, follow-ups, and the media agenda. In relation to the London Underground bombings, stories focusing on the incident fit a number of criteria for newsworthiness; meaningfulness, consonance, negativity, bad news, relevance, and surprise.

Recently, there has been a growing interest in media representations of surveillance (Hier and Greenberg 2009: 462). These studies have included, for example, attempts to explore how people understand surveillance technologies and practices (Coleman and Sim 2000) and how the news media frame surveillance systems and practices (Wieck and Sætnan 2002; Barnard-Wills 2011). This paper will add to
the literature by analysing the main themes to emerge in stories referring to the use of CCTV during and immediately after the London Underground bombings.

**Methodology**

In an age of increasing surveillance it is important to gain an understanding of the ways in which information about surveillance technologies is presented to the public. Studying news discourse is one way of attempting to gain a deeper understanding of how video surveillance is framed. Pan and Kosicki (1993: 64) discuss the importance of news discourse, arguing its influence and direct relevance to public policy making, stating that:

> Within the realm of news discourse, causal reasoning is often present, including causal attributions of the roots of a problem, inferences about the responsibility for treatment of the problem as well as appealing to higher level principles in framing an issue and in weighing various policy options.

The media undoubtedly has some influence on the public; it is part of the process of the public formulating ideas about issues (I am not subscribing to a linear model of communication here). This is also a two-way process, with the media mirroring existing ideas from the public about certain issues. Interactions between the media and the public are complex. Gurevitch and Levy (1985: 19) describe the media as ‘a site on which various social groups, institutions and ideologies struggle over the definition and construction of social reality’. Gamson (1988) adds to this idea with his argument that news discourse feeds into the framing of public policy issues and helps to shape public debate and opinion on issues.

Frame building within the media occurs when journalists ‘select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described’ (Entman 1993: 52). Journalists do this by the ‘presence or absence of certain key words, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements’ (ibid.). Frames can therefore ‘provide context that is communicated with the text, and also can shape the way text is received’. However, this does not mean that the text is received and interpreted by the audience in a linear fashion. Neuman et al. (1992) suggest that the media have no direct effect on their audience and that the audience is capable of differing interpretations of the information presented by the media. So, frames can be seen as ‘interpretive packages’ providing meaning to an issue (Gamson and Modigliani 1989). They are a ‘central organising idea, or frame, for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue’ rather than simply providing information to passive recipients (ibid.).

Kosicki (1993) states that ‘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’. Street (2001) argues they are there to put ‘a set of ideas into circulation…the capacity to interpret those ideas is however dependent upon exposure to alternative narratives’. Furthermore, Cappella and Jamieson (1997: 47) argue that frames in the media activate ‘stocks of cultural morals and values, and create contexts’. Finally, Entman (1993) adds to this and argues that they also ‘define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements and suggest remedies’.

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2 As an example, at the recent Leveson inquiry (www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/evidence/?witness=richard-peppiatt), Richard Peppiatt, a former Daily Star journalist, describes the framing that took place at the Daily Star, stating: ‘The Daily Star is a right-wing tabloid, so they have an ideological perspective on certain issues, say immigration or national security or policing. And so whatever a story may be, you must try and adhere to that ideological perspective. Say there is a government report out giving statistics. Well, you know, any statistics which don't fit within that framework you ignore or sort of decontextualise and pick maybe the one statistic which does’.
The aim of this paper is to analyse the framing of CCTV in newspapers post- the London Underground bombings. A mixed methods approach is utilised in the form of a content analysis, coupled with a discourse analysis. The purpose of the content analysis is to draw out the main themes within which CCTV is framed during this time (using a quantitative methodology to count keywords). Following this, a qualitative discourse analysis is employed in order to analyse the framing of CCTV in these articles.

This paper uses a mixed methods approach for the purpose of ‘complementarity’; that is, to seek a ‘broader, deeper, and more comprehensive’ understanding of the representation of CCTV in the aftermath of the London Underground bombings by ‘using different methods that tap into different facets or dimensions of the same complex phenomenon’, whereby the results are used to ‘elaborate, enhance, deepen and broaden the overall interpretations and inferences from the study’ (Greene 2007: 101). I used an overall sequential explanatory approach to mixed methods research, which is ‘characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data’ (ibid.: 215).

According to Bauer and Gaskell (2000: 132), during a content analysis ‘considerable thought is given to the “kinds”, “qualities” and “distinctions” in the text before any quantification takes place. In this way, content analysis bridges statistical formalism and the qualitative analysis of the materials’. During the content analysis employed for the purpose of this paper, I drew out the major themes running through the articles in relation to video surveillance. This incorporates a qualitative element to what has been traditionally viewed as a purely quantitative method. Bauer and Gaskell disagree with the point of view that content analysis is purely quantitative and argue that ‘in the quantity/quality divide in social research, content analysis is a hybrid technique that can mediate in this unproductive dispute over virtues and methods’ (ibid.). Within both the content analysis and the discourse analysis undertaken for the purpose of this paper, judgement necessarily played a part. Neither stands as a purely objective approach. Interpretation therefore plays a part in this paper but I offer one possible way of analysing the articles and drawing out what I believe to be interesting meanings, discourses, and perspectives, surrounding the representation of video surveillance during this time.

This paper takes an inductive approach to identifying frames in news stories, which ‘refrains from analysing news stories with a priori defined news frames in mind’ (Neuman et al. 1992). The database LexisNexis was used to generate a sample of articles for analysis across all UK national newspapers between 7 July 2005 and 7 August 2005. I used the keywords ‘CCTV’ and ‘bombers’ in the first instance to form a main sample for further analysis (the term ‘bombers’ was chosen after an initial scoping search, which showed this to be the most common term to describe the four men involved in the bombings). The articles were then read in the context of a coding sheet incorporating the following keywords: safety, security, victims, evidence, heroes, evil, privacy, freedom, and terrorists. These keywords were chosen as they incorporate common terms associated with CCTV and surveillance, as well as common terms associated with those commit crimes and those members of the public affected. Following on from this quantitative aspect, I then pursued a discourse analysis to draw out the framing of CCTV in the 412 articles containing the keywords ‘CCTV’ and ‘bombers’. The relatively short time period chosen, and manageable number of articles sampled, allowed an in-depth reading of every article.

**Main research questions**

Three main research questions have been chosen for the purpose of this paper. These research questions are:

1. What are the main themes to emerge in the articles?
2. Within these main themes, what is the predominant discourse used to frame CCTV in the context of the London Underground bombings?

3. Do the articles that contain information and details about the use of video surveillance explore any ethical or social concerns, such as privacy implications?

These questions have not yet been explored in relation to the London Underground bombings. I chose to analyse the themes and discourse that arose in media articles at this time in order to add to the literature on the representation and framing of surveillance technologies. The final question was chosen in order to assess whether within this discourse and representation any ethical questions are presented (and potentially in contrast to the positive depiction of CCTV at this time). Previous research on the representation of CCTV in the media has shown that CCTV is generally presented in a positive light, with the exception of speed cameras (McCahill and Norris 2002).

**What are the main themes to emerge in the articles about CCTV and the London Underground bombings?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newsworthy themes</th>
<th>Number of articles</th>
<th>% of total number of articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evil</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorists</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innocent(s)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chart shows the results of the quantitative content analysis carried out on the 412 articles used for this study. These 412 articles were those that contained the keywords ‘bombers’ and ‘CCTV’. In relation to articles containing the keywords ‘CCTV’ and ‘bombers’, the predominant themes to emerge were: ‘terrorists’ (336 articles) (the second most utilised word to describe the bombers—after ‘bombers’); security (225 results); evidence (128 results); and victims (91 results). Following on from these main themes, there are other recurrent themes (which arise less often, however): evil (41 results); safety (32 results); and freedom (11 results). The least frequently mentioned themes are that of heroes (2 results) and ‘privacy’, which is also only mentioned twice. I discuss this in greater detail later in this paper.

**Within these main themes what is the predominant discourse used to frame CCTV in the context of the London Underground bombings?**

‘Them’ and ‘Us’
The theme of ‘them’ and ‘us’ is hugely prominent in articles. This theme incorporates the keywords of ‘terrorists’, ‘bombers’, and ‘evil’, in contrast to the keywords of ‘innocents’ and ‘victims’. The discourse that emanates from these articles is one of a divided public—those who commit the act of terror, and those that are innocent bystanders.
As mentioned previously, Finn and McCahill (2010) examined the representation of surveillance subjects by the media, arguing that these ‘reinforce existing social divisions by marking out clear distinctions between “us” (“law abiding citizens”) and “them” (“deviants” and “out-groups”). This distinction is also illustrated by Neuman et al. (1992) as the ‘conflict frame’. The conflict frame is described by Barnard-Wills (2011: 556) as being ‘common in accounts that focus upon the function of surveillance technology and practices in dealing with criminals, terrorists, or those behaving in “anti-social” ways’. This idea of ‘them’ and ‘us’ can be seen as echoing the idea of folk devils in Cohen’s 1972 study, mentioned earlier in this paper.

In the context of newspaper articles in the aftermath of the London Underground bombings there is a clear distinction between ‘them’ and ‘us’, with surveillance measures (and in particular CCTV) depicted in a positive light. The terms ‘surveillance’ and ‘CCTV’ are linked to the police and the investigation; they are used for the purpose of: ‘catching the criminals’. Barnard-Wills (2011: 556) argues that: ‘for surveillance to be positively evaluated in media discourse, it must be targeted at the appropriate subject positions’ (and that surveillance is negatively evaluated when it is mass rather than targeted surveillance). Articles analysed for the purpose of this study were overwhelmingly positive in relation to the use of CCTV for evidential purposes. This was in the context of amassing the tapes, with the media describing the CCTV footage as being a ‘vital component in tracking these bombers’ (News of the World 10 July 2005), both prior to knowing the quality of the footage and furthermore once the bombers had been identified, with articles describing the cameras as ‘the electronic guardian angels of our age’ (despite the presence of CCTV cameras not stopping the incidents from occurring) (The Guardian 18 July 2005). The term ‘evidence’ is used in relation to CCTV and the bombers in one out of three articles (33%).

Further to this idea of CCTV being positively evaluated, Barnard-Wills (2011: 556) describes ‘a distinct division [being] drawn between criminals and innocent citizens’. A large proportion of coverage in the articles analysed for this paper focused on ‘victims’ (22%), ‘innocent(s)’ (21%) and the ‘bombers’. Although the over-arching term used by the media during this time was ‘bombers’, the articles also used the term ‘terrorist(s)’ (82%), whilst conjuring images of the four bombers as ‘stroll[ing] casually to a rendezvous in Hell’ (The People 17 July 2005). Further to this theme of ‘them’ and ‘us’ found in media articles at this time, there are reports of appeals by the police for the public to be the ‘eyes and ears of the investigation’ by contributing mobile phone videos and photos, and bloggers posting personal experiences online. These public contributions are described as being ‘impactful’ and ‘important’. They are mentioned alongside CCTV footage as being ‘vital to the investigation’. The public therefore start to play a role in the investigation, on the side of the ‘innocent; and the police (and CCTV); a part of ‘us’. A number of articles also describe the bombers as ‘infantry going to war’ (Daily Mail 13 July 2005). This description is found in some of the same articles describing members of the public as ‘civilians’. Once again the division between ‘them’ and ‘us’ is apparent.

Visibility/Invisibility (or: calls for more surveillance/surveillance doesn’t stop things happening)

Alongside the depiction of the bombers as different to the majority of the public in ideological or moral terms (‘them’ and ‘us’ as outlined above), a complementary framing also exists in the media at this time, which builds upon the framing of ‘them’ and ‘us’. This framing is tied in with calls for more security on the Underground alongside articles (and sometimes within the same article) that however much security there had been the bombings weren’t preventable. The framing is one of the visibility or invisibility of the bombers.

A recurrent theme in articles at this time is the depiction of the bombers as completely ‘normal’ in terms of their behaviour. In this sense, the bombers were invisible because they were indistinguishable from other ‘normal’, ‘everyday’ people. In newspaper articles from the 13, 14, and 15 July there were repeated mentions of the bombers being ‘caught on CCTV’, arriving at King’s Cross Station on the morning of 7
July. Across the tabloid newspapers there were reports of the bombers looking like ‘a group of happy hikers’, ‘completely normal’ and ‘looking happy and carefree, as if they were going on holiday’. It was also reported that the four men were ‘chatting easily together’, ‘smiling and looking relaxed’ and ‘smiling and chatting’ at King’s Cross (with no sound from the CCTV footage, the assumption was still made that the conversation was of a casual nature) (Daily Express 15 July 2005; Daily Mirror 13 July 2005; Daily Mail 13 July 2005; Daily Express 13 July 2005; The Sun 13 July 2005). The arrival of the four men at Luton was reported as: ‘the bombers stroll into Luton’ (Mail on Sunday 16 July 2005).

There is an emphasis on the ‘ordinary’ and what is ‘normal’ or mundane:

The sense of ordinariness which the CCTV picture of Habib projects makes what he did even more horrific. For it means it is impossible to differentiate terrorists from the rest of us.

(Daily Mirror 15 July 2005)

It should be the most banal photograph in the world: four men entering a commuter railway station on a dreary Thursday morning. And yet you could stare at it for hours. Everything about it is ordinary…The picture itself gives nothing away…How often outside of our imaginations or the movies do we get to see criminals together, minutes before their crime?…So this is the rarest kind of picture…The lesson of this picture is, change your nightmares—your fears are out of date.

(The Guardian 18 July 2005)

These articles contain highly evocative language: there is panic and fear but it is not about ‘them’ and ‘us’ in terms of clear distinctions visually. Although the terrorists are represented as fundamentally other, as ‘them’, they are at the same time represented as difficult to separate out on visuals alone. The above examples provide accounts of the bombers looking like everyone else. They are different, but identifying this difference visually is difficult. The situation is constructed as scary (‘change your nightmares’), potentially disturbing, and therefore newsworthy. If it becomes difficult to distinguish ‘them’ from ‘us’ it might have been expected that an argument would surface that however many cameras there had been in the London Underground, the bombers would not have been ‘picked up’ prior to the incidents as they were indistinguishable from everyone else. However, instead of this argument, the complete opposite arises, with a number of calls for increasing the number of CCTV cameras on the London Underground: ‘The Government should immediately look into ways of toughening up security on London’s transport system…At the very least this should mean CCTV cameras on tube trains’ (The Independent 23 July 2005).

So, there is an implied failure in terms of a lack of security on the London Underground. An argument that there were not enough cameras, and that had there been, the events of the 7th July would not have happened. This linear argument that increasing levels of surveillance (in this instance, increasing the numbers of cameras) directly translates into increased security is utilised. The assumption that the public will simply accept increasing levels of surveillance (and a potential loss of privacy—although this is only implied in articles)—and not worry about any negative consequences—is also found in articles, for example: ‘After today, I expect the travelling public will be more prepared to put up with a greater level of surveillance’ (The Times 8 July 2005).

This recurring media discourse is that video surveillance technology is capable of protecting the public (as long as there is enough of it). However, it is the cameras (with footage being used for evidential purposes after the event has occurred), the police, and the media that make the bombers ‘visible’, rather than the bombers being visible to the cameras in the first place. Once they are made visible (after the event) it seems easy to argue that more cameras would have stopped the incidents occurring (the public potentially
see the bombers as always being ‘visible’, particularly in relation to phrases such as ‘caught on camera’, which imply a form of action at the time, and the repeated stills of the bombers at Luton and Kings Cross being circulated in the media at the time: ‘More than three in four say the best way to prevent further attacks on London and other cities is to increase the number of CCTV cameras’ (Mail on Sunday 10 July 2005).

Interestingly, Tony Blair is quoted in one article as saying ‘all the surveillance in the world could not have stopped the London bombings’ (The Mirror 11 July 2005). Within weeks he proposes a new set of anti-terrorism measures.

**Do the articles that contain information and details about the use of video surveillance explore any ethical or social concerns, such as privacy implications?**

Only 6 articles contained the term ‘civil liberties’ and 2 articles contained the word ‘privacy’ in connection with video surveillance and the London Underground bombings. In terms of discourse surrounding surveillance and privacy at this time, there are very few dissenting voices in terms of any negative views about potentially increasing surveillance on the London Underground. This is not unexpected. Looking back at the history of CCTV and one of the defining moments in the development and dissemination of the technology—the Jamie Bulger incident—there are certain times when the nature of the crime is so shocking or horrific that to speak up against the ‘thing’ (in these two cases: CCTV) that might stop that crime happening again is simply seen as unacceptable. To bring up the potential ethical and social consequences of increasing the number of cameras on the Underground at a time of national mourning for victims of the incident may simply be a case of being not the right/done thing. In general, articles (analysed for the purpose of this paper) weigh privacy and civil liberties against security in the manner of the traditional argument that to lose one (privacy) is to directly gain the other (security).

In one article, Charles Kennedy (Liberal Democrat) warns against ‘curbs on civil liberties’, which he describes as the ‘essence of our way of life’. In the same article it is reported that Charles Clarke (Home Secretary at the time) proposes phone and email monitoring (part of a 10-point plan for a ‘Europe-wide, high-tech response to terrorism’). Clarke is quoted as saying: ‘We have to decide whether to put civil liberties before security of the people’ (again part of the classic argument that one is directly related to the other: a loss of privacy means directly gaining security). Immediately after this quote, the article reports that: ‘police hoped that CCTV footage would show at least three people entering a station and riding a Tube carrying a holdall or rucksack, then leaving the network without a bag’ (The Mirror 11 July 2005). The article becomes predominantly about dismissing the quote from Kennedy to highlight the usefulness of CCTV (prior to it having ‘done its job’) and to give room to the argument that enhanced security comes at the price of civil liberties.

This argument of a balance between security and privacy is mentioned once again (and civil liberties dismissed) in an article focusing on mistakes made by the security services (the bombers were known to MI5 prior to the bombings) and the failure of surveillance. CCTV plays a part in the article and is mentioned as filming the bombers as they prepared to board the 7:40am train to Kings Cross, and ‘at 8:26am the train pulled into King’s Cross and the four were again caught on CCTV’. Shahid Malik (Labour MP to Dewsbury—home of one of the bombers) is quoted as saying:

> I’ve no doubt that in the short term it’s going to get somewhat uncomfortable, perhaps even painful, especially where civil liberties are concerned and especially for British Muslims. But the fact is that this short-term pain or discomfort is a price worth paying for long-term security and community harmony.  

*(The Sunday Times 17 July 2005)*
There is one article that discusses Blair’s proposed anti-terrorism measures proposing a strong argument that increased surveillance will infringe on civil liberties:

> Anyone from any position in the political spectrum who fears for the individual against the might of the state, anyone who cherishes our civil liberties, has every right to be fearful. It is in the nature of societies that, while the principles are entrenched, in practice freedoms are balanced and traded according to circumstance.

And: ‘Britain is awash with CCTV cameras…In our present, vulnerable condition, we are submitting ourselves to the state, in the vain hope of protection’ (*Independent on Sunday* 7 August 2005).

One other article mentions potential concerns about privacy in relation to increasing levels of surveillance but states that:

> There will be huge civil liberties questions [around increasing surveillance] because you will have to accept that people will see you walking round semi-naked. We can solve the modesty issue by overlaying the body with graphics except for the area which causes concern. The computer can also be set only to show those people who are carrying something suspicious.

(*The Times* 8 July 2005)

Despite its mention of possible privacy concerns, the article describes a simplistic notion of privacy; that the only concern the public may have is the potential for the body scanner to see them naked. However, bodily privacy is only one part of a definition of privacy (although a single definition of privacy does not exist—the area is complex and multi-layered) and to argue that the public is only concerned with privacy in such a simplistic fashion is something that should not be encouraged (this line of argument plays into an old fashioned argument of a public deficit of knowledge in terms of understanding technology). There are other areas for concern including: security of data storage, data sharing, training for security technology operatives, individual control over personal information and so on.

**Conclusion**

The literature on terror and the media, and surveillance technologies and the media, draws our attention to the juxtaposition of ‘them’ and ‘us’ that resides in media reports of criminal and terrorist activities. This viewpoint is found in the first section of examples from the media in this analysis; more CCTV cameras equate to enhanced security and safety. This is perhaps not an unexpected argument—funding for CCTV over the last few years has been justified on the basis of preventing crime and terror incidents (and funding for many systems comes from crime prevention and anti-terror budgets). Referring back to the literature cited earlier, focusing on CCTV as a technology that divides society into ‘them’ and ‘us’ (Neuman et al. 1992; Finn and McCahill 2010), this media analysis shows that the events of 7 July 2005 are a prime example of this type of discourse surrounding video surveillance. Adding to this literature, the media analysis presented in this paper shows that ‘the public’ are further drawn into the category of ‘us’ through requests for footage and evidence. They are further depicted as a group of law abiding citizens who will ‘put up with’ increasing levels of surveillance in order to obtain security and safety. To dissent in terms of increasing the amount of CCTV cameras would place people firmly on the side of ‘them’ (this has been shown before in terms of the Bulger case by Norris and Armstrong as mentioned earlier in this paper). This idea of ‘them’ and ‘us’ can also be linked back to the aforementioned idea of a synoptic society (Mathiesen 1997); CCTV allows ‘us’ as the law abiding citizens to watch the few who do not fit into this category, namely ‘them’, ‘criminals’, ‘terrorists’, ‘bombers’ and ‘evil-doers’.
There are, however, another set of articles in this analysis, which portray the events of 7 July 2005 as unpreventable. The bombers are represented as ‘normal’, ‘everyday’ people, who were indistinguishable from the rest of the travelling public that morning. They are fundamentally other, part of ‘them’ but it is difficult to separate them from ‘us’ based on visuals alone. CCTV in this sense then becomes an evidence gatherer; a tool for reconstructing history, and for re-telling the story of the day as events unfolded. Despite this depiction of the bombers as ‘ordinary’ there is a recurrent argument in the media at this time that more cameras would have stopped the bombings from happening—that more cameras would have somehow made the bombers visible. This adds to the argument outlined earlier from Norris (2012) that CCTV cameras have ‘succeeded’ despite their ‘failure’. The events of the 7 July 2005 echo the depictions of CCTV during other incidents, such as the Jamie Bulger case. Despite the cameras not preventing the events in the first place, there is a recurrent and continuous publishing of the stills taken from the CCTV footage of the bombers at Luton and Kings Cross, potentially cementing the usefulness and effectiveness of CCTV in relation to crime. An argument therefore develops implicitly; that more cameras will stop an incident happening again (despite the contradictory evidence that the cameras did not stop the incident happening in the first place). The discourse that arises is therefore one of effectiveness, usefulness, and that an increase in cameras directly correlates to an increase in public safety. This idea of invisibility (until the reconstruction of events after the incident has occurred) is an interesting one. It complements and builds on the theme of ‘them’ and ‘us’ found in media analyses previously (and also in this one in part). ‘They’ become part of ‘us’: indistinguishable, ordinary and invisible to surveillance cameras.

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