

# Pure flour in your bag: Governmental rationalities of camera surveillance in Sweden

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**Abstract.** Surveillance is an important governance technique of modern societies and is linked to particular governmental rationalities. This article examines the Swedish policy on camera surveillance, using the analytical framework of *governmentality*, the art of government, in advanced liberal societies as its theoretical framework. The focus is on three features that characterise current developments in the Swedish policy. These are labelled *situational prevention*, *generalisation of distrust* and *the significance of the informed citizen*. The study shows how prevention, i.e. situational prevention, was successfully introduced as a main rationale for monitoring only after the technology had been in place for some years. Monitoring as a form of general situational prevention, the congruent generalised distrust that affects the public and the Swedish requirement to inform citizens about cameras are viewed as elements of a governmental rationality based on the notion of the autonomous, free and self-responsible subject. Accordingly, the popular idea that camera surveillance is an indicator of an expanding security state must be modified.

Keywords: Sweden, camera surveillance, situational crime prevention, advanced liberalism

## 1. Introduction

How should we view the fact that modern governments are attracted to camera surveillance to such a large extent? What theoretical explanations are useful for interpreting this phenomenon? In this article I take advantage of analytical frameworks developed from the Foucauldian concept of *governmentality*, a term for the complex form of power in modern societies [8], to read the Swedish policy on camera surveillance over the last few decades. While camera surveillance is a global phenomenon and may be expected to some extent to demonstrate similar characteristics in all societies, it should be kept in mind that every national ambition in this field also has its specific rationality. Thus, the focus of this article is the specific nature of the Swedish governmental rationality of camera surveillance and its consequences for the relationship between the state and the citizens.

In studying surveillance, the Orwellian idea of an evil state spying on its citizens is readily available for the conspiratorially inclined. Certainly, the image of a *Panopticon* penitentiary originating from Jeremy Bentham in the 18th century [2,33] and reused by Michel Foucault 200 years later is a more sophisticated model on the same theme. Moreover, in the academic literature, the Panopticon has been extremely influential as a depiction of societal monitoring. Foucault's thesis of state power – or rather institutional control – as self-discipline is constructed on the assumption that certain conditions, created by the surveillance situation, make people as individuals supervise and correct themselves according to

existing norms of normality. No explicit or repressive authoritative exercise of correction is needed to generate norm-conforming behaviour [7]. Power is thus transacted more or less automatically, deprived of what is in other circumstances its relational, purposive character. As a result, individuals become their own supervisors.

The model of a perfect prison inspired the Foucauldian examination of the self-disciplinarian surveillance society [10]. It could be argued that the mechanisms of open street camera surveillance produce similar conditions. People are subjected to surveillance but ignorant as to who is supervising and in what specific situations they are being monitored [5]. Given the prospect of constantly being watched, people automatically correct their behaviour.

Many surveillance studies relate to this model by adopting, challenging or suggesting improvements to it [15,21,22,24,25,29,34,39,40]. Nonetheless, there is a growing literature that seriously questions the Panopticon as an analytical tool. One of the shortcomings concerns the postulation that surveillance always has to be hierarchically organised, i.e. a top-down activity [14]. A second issue is whether the premise of surveillance as a prison-like enclosure actually holds for modern societies [34]. Thirdly, it is appropriate to ask whether the idea of discipline itself is a concept that is more relevant for 19th century rule than it is for current social relations. In fact, Foucault in later works distanced himself from the idea of self-disciplining elements in surveillance, i.e. internalisation of control [9]; and the very notion of discipline should perhaps be replaced by something else. Yet there is still a need to describe the transformation in the relationship between the state and citizen as an exercise of governmental power. Alternative models that have been suggested to capture surveillance in modern societies, such as the *surveillant assemblage*, which “operates by abstracting human bodies from their territorial settings and separating them into a series of discrete flows” [14, p. 606], and surveillance as *synopticon*, “the many are watching the few just as much as the few are watching the many” [4, p. 301], are not particularly suited for this purpose.

According to Haggerty, surveillance can be regarded as one of the most important technologies of governance in our times [16]. Asserting this is far from saying that camera surveillance should be considered a simple, neutral government tool with a direct impact. In fact, we have to discuss the idea of government as something that is strongly related to specific social and historical conditions. The art of government in contemporary societies, or to use the terminology of Nicolas Rose and others, advanced liberal societies, differs from earlier periods in fundamental ways [1,6,30–32]. While the welfare state projects of the last century were characterised by explicit state planning and management in economic and social affairs, government in advanced liberal societies is accomplished by techniques “that create a distance between the decisions of formal political institutions and other social actors, conceive of these actors in new ways as subjects of responsibility, autonomy and choice, and seek to act upon them through shaping and utilizing their freedom” [31, pp. 53–54].

Governance at a distance informs various aspects of society that previous state organisations had more programmatic ambitions for, such as the role of expertise, enterprises, organisations and citizens [31]. Here the focus is solely on the relationship between the state and its citizens.

Government in advanced liberal societies is constructed in theory around autonomous self-responsible individuals who exercise their freedom as a freedom to choose. Citizenship is “modelled” on the image of the consumer who realises her life-projects on the market. By acting as enterprising individuals who seek self-fulfilment on a micro level, citizens also fulfil their commitments to the state [31]. Thus: “The regulation of conduct becomes a matter of each individual’s desire to govern their own conduct freely in the service of the maximization of a version of their happiness and fulfilment that they take to be their own” [31, pp. 58–59]. The very notion of individual freedom, with the responsibility

for activities undertaken this entails, is the platform for governing the citizenry but at the same time is also the “apolitical” content of policy. Advanced liberalism or neo-liberalism as governmentality, the art of government, is not a retreat from governmental intervention; rather, it is a re-inscription of governance techniques [1]. The advanced liberal government lacks an explicit program; it is based on mechanisms or social technologies of a more indirect nature. Political and economic goals are translated into choices and commitments by mechanisms of government such as networks or manners of identification [31]. However, in this article, the notion of advanced liberalism should not be construed as something that requires a complete change in the social organisation. The intention is simply to examine this governmental rationality, using the framework noted, through the example of camera surveillance in Sweden.

## 2. Prevention, distrust and the informed citizen

In this article my intention is to trace the rationality behind a governing technique, that is, the practice of camera surveillance in a specific national context. By studying legal instruments, other authoritative documents and political debates, I explore the way camera surveillance has been established as a specific means of public control. These documents incorporate a variety of arguments and narratives about technological progress, effectiveness and societal demands, which may be investigated as a rationality. But first and foremost, the rationality of camera surveillance is reflected in how the society and its constituent elements, citizens, are represented in documents and political declarations. In depictions of the social reality we find indicators of a modified account of state control, i.e. the rationality of government in an advanced liberal context. The empirical material is approached with a fairly traditional qualitative content analysis.

Three aspects of camera surveillance, *situational prevention*, *the generalisation of distrust* and *the significance of the informed citizen*, will be discussed below. These aspects can be considered logical outcomes of the invention of camera surveillance as such, but at the same time they also suggest a specific governmental rationality, or governmentality. Firstly, the idea of monitoring only makes sense within the context of preventive measures, so familiar in crime policy. But the technology as such, when deployed in public spaces, works differently from other preventive measures since the camera eye does not discriminate between people; everyone is technically scrutinised in the same way [13,23]. It paves the way for general surveillance, or rather renders impossible a directed type of surveillance, when cameras are deployed on open streets. Situational prevention [3], the term used, has gained tremendous popularity as a means to govern, replacing the once favoured policy of preventive attention to social factors associated with crime.

Clearly, monitoring may also be analysed as a practice of repressive control, one that primarily affects not people in general but particular, exposed groups [26,27,29,35]. Camera surveillance may reinforce segregation and promote discrimination by separating out the “deviant” or “not welcome” in a specific social context [21]. However, these aspects will not be addressed in this article. Still, the focus here does not conflict with the forms of social control mentioned above; different surveillance processes may exist alongside each other.

Secondly, a generalised prevention can hardly be separated from a generalisation of distrust. If a person is the focus of prevention, he/she is by definition not regarded as a reliable person. This is not to say that we are all considered suspects all of the time, but any one of us may be at least a potential wrongdoer. Distrusting people in general suggests a large repressive, moralising state but, within the frame of advanced liberal rule, the inclination is instead to consider crime an act of free choice: the

rational alternative is to abide by the law given the unpleasantness associated with being caught on camera doing something illegal. As will be apparent from this study, both the notions of general prevention and generalised suspicion are reinforced discursively in documents and political debates. Reasons are shaped by the technology while, at the same time, political rationality opts for more surveillance.

Thirdly, free choice would be irrelevant if the public were not sufficiently informed to make a choice. In other words, being informed about the presence of a camera should dissuade people from committing an illegal act. But choice here may also have another sense. In a non-authoritarian state, individuals should also have the freedom to accept or reject monitoring. Specific measures, such as warning signs, may enforce the idea that people have a choice both between being a good citizen or not and between being monitored or not. In fact, as the Swedish maxim “pure flour in your bag” illustrates, these two sets of choices tend to coincide.

It is argued here that the maxim “if you have pure flour in your bag, you have nothing to fear” (den som har rent mjöl i påsen har inget att frukta), used frequently in the Swedish context of camera surveillance, is a linguistic legitimisation that establishes the relationship between the state and the individual in a governmental rationality constructed on the basis of the notion of the autonomous individual. This maxim demonstrates the reversed burden of proof, suggesting that consent to be supervised is a morally superior behaviour. Evading monitoring indicates that someone may not be reliable or decent; indeed, they have something to hide. By approving surveillance, people choose to behave in a moral, responsible way.

### 3. The preventive turn

At present, we see a revived interest in crime prevention; both policy practitioners and academics are attracted to this idea. Internationally as well as in Sweden, prevention is promoted as an instrument to combat crime and as a security measure to protect the state security interests. But the notion today is not usually focused on prevention in general; it concerns a particular kind of arrangement. The main concern is to obstruct crime and terrorism promptly, in specific predefined situations, for example, preventing terrorism at an airport through security measures, such as security checks or biometrics, or discouraging burglary in shopping malls through camera surveillance. This situation-directed type of prevention is designed for certain sensitive contexts, not primarily for particular individuals of interest (although there are certainly other agendas). The situational measures differ considerably from the kind of crime prevention measures that involve improving social and moral conditions for people who risk falling into a life of crime or helping former convicts return to normal life in society. Situational prevention is qualitatively different to crime prevention that involves social support and providing assistance to individuals at risk. Zedner argues that the meaning of the word prevention is slowly changing from *socially-directed measures* to *situation-directed measures*. The latter has become a major component of government crime and security policies today. Concepts such as “the preventive state” illustrate this shift and state’s pre-occupation with prevention in general [41].

Situational prevention redefines the notion of a perpetrator. Social prevention focuses on specific individuals who are supposedly in the risk zone for committing crimes. The underlying assumption is that extraordinary conditions affect their chance of ending up as criminals. With situational prevention, these extraordinary conditions are no longer in question. The expectation behind situational prevention is that “Offenders are, for the most part, deemed to be normal, mundane individuals who give in to temptation as and when criminal opportunities arise. . . . ‘Opportunity makes the thief’” [11, p. 2]. Hence, situational prevention also transforms citizens into potential victims [3]. This “new” perspective

has far-reaching normative consequences and it is interesting to note that it fits in well with a general economisation of society; everything may be subject to rational cost-benefit calculations. This includes criminal temptations but it also affects the measures taken to combat crime.

The Swedish example illustrates the international trend toward situational prevention, although the change is also nation-specific. The idea of prevention has long had a strong foothold in Swedish crime policy, although the connotation of the word is different to what it was in the past. In the traditional Social Democratic policies pursued by governments from the 1950s to the 1980s, crime prevention was integrated with the idea of levelling out living conditions in society. Crime was understood to be a social imperfection that could be cured, for example, through support for dysfunctional families and investments in housing areas at risk. Individuals on the wrong track should above all be helped to improve, not punished for their wrongs; in other words, they should be rehabilitated. Crime policy was featured by social engineering and clearly associated with the welfare state model [38]. However, in the 1980s the Social Democratic Party changed its crime policy in a more repressive direction, stressing the importance of punishment and also arguing for prolonged periods of imprisonment. The preventive ambitions were downplayed. When right-wing parties eventually gained power, this trend continued in official Swedish crime policy. But the introduction of camera surveillance set the technological conditions for a new discourse on prevention, better synchronised with the new tough attitudes towards criminals.

With camera surveillance, prevention was gradually re-established in Swedish policy, but with a significantly different content. Obviously, the term prevention, as used in official Swedish documents on camera surveillance in the 1990s, meant situation-directed rather than socially directed measures. This is not to say that there were no other objectives involved. Additional, albeit secondary, arguments for extended camera surveillance were to avoid accidents and to make it easier to identify someone who was guilty of a crime and thus increase reliability in legal processes. In fact, the latter argument is a very realistic outcome of camera surveillance that decision makers have not paid much attention to. As we shall see, in official documents, direct crime prevention turned out to be considered as the big merit in technological monitoring.

#### **4. Prevention and monitoring the public in Sweden**

Certainly, the introduction of camera surveillance in Sweden is related to international trends and technological developments. Actually the treatment appeared before the disease; that is, the technology was at hand before there were any distinct ideas about how to use it. However, Sweden was early in establishing legal regulations in the field. The first law on the subject came in 1977 with the Act on TV Surveillance (*Lagen om TV övervakning 1977:20*). This act was amended in 1990 and again in 1998, resulting in the present Act on General Camera Surveillance (*Lagen om allmän kameraövervakning 1998:150*). A report initiated by the government was delivered in late 2009 suggesting revisions to the act [37], and a government bill based on this report may be expected. However, the proposals in the report primarily concern how competencies are divided among different administrative units and legal instruments, and do not alter the current regulations in any substantive way.

The present legislation specifies that camera surveillance of public spaces in Sweden is allowed under certain conditions; normally the local County Administrative Board (*Länsstyrelsen*) has to give authorisation. In banks and specific areas in stores, no permission is needed provided that specific conditions are met; it is sufficient that the board receives notification. There are also exceptions for police surveillance with specific aims, as well as for other public agencies such as the National Road

Administration. As a rule, the presence of a camera has to be announced by a warning sign, but some activities are excluded from this requirement as well. Besides giving permission, the 21 county administrations in Sweden supervise adherence to the act on camera surveillance of public spaces, or as it is expressed, “places to which the public has access”. However, the act on camera surveillance of public spaces does not cover all technical monitoring of the public. The deployment of cameras in “semi-public spaces”, such as workplaces, residential areas and schools is not regulated by this act. Instead, the Personal Data Act (Personuppgiftslagen 1998:204) applies, and the Swedish Data Inspection Board is the supervisory authority.

At the beginning, prevention was not the main object of concern in official documents on camera surveillance. The act of law in 1977 was motivated exclusively by privacy concerns. The government bill preceding the act [42] established that the purpose of the act was to address the issue of personal integrity (privacy) in camera surveillance practice. The intention was solely to establish rules against infringement of public liberties. Camera surveillance was not yet regarded as a powerful measure to combat crime. In fact, the objectives to, and the need for, monitoring by cameras were sparsely discussed. Uneasiness about the effects of camera surveillance dominated the arguments. The bill referred to a public report on personal integrity published in 1974, which determined that extensive use of such equipment, making widespread monitoring of the citizenry possible, could not be accepted from a personal integrity point of view. One of the Swedish county boards, when asked to give its opinion on the proposed act, claimed that such a process, leading to general control of citizens by monitoring, must be resisted. It is also important to note that when the first act was promulgated, the Swedish premodifier “allmän” before camera surveillance, translated here as *general* surveillance, had not yet been added. This came later with the 1998 act. In the late 1980s, surveillance of the general public still seemed unthinkable in Sweden. A total ban on camera surveillance was an option but was rejected.

Thus, the idea of how camera surveillance could be used as a measure to combat crime was rather vague in the first legislative process; instead, the focus was on its potential negative effects. This is also true of the revised act from the late 1980s. The 1989 government bill [43] was concerned with the progress of the monitoring technology and how it affected protection against infringement of privacy. However, both in this bill and the previous one, the metaphor of balance, used frequently later on, was introduced to legitimise the need to adapt protection of privacy to the different interests involved in camera surveillance use. But there was little discussion of privacy infringement as something that had to be weighed against desired outcomes of increased use of camera surveillance. This theme was only added to the agenda in any seriousness when the focus shifted to crime prevention.

With the new 1998 Act on General Camera Surveillance, monitoring changed from an extraordinary measure that lawmakers handled with a certain amount of reluctance to an ordinary measure integrated in the social control system. The number of camera surveillance systems in Sweden was to increase rapidly in the years to come. Today Sweden, like many western countries, is a society with a high level of technical monitoring [34]. However, public institutions operate only a certain number of all camera surveillance systems; a large proportion of cameras are deployed through private initiative [18]. But privately operated cameras are still part of Sweden’s public crime policy. Given the structure of different kinds of networks for monitoring and granting administrative permission, privately operated cameras are included formally as well as informally in general crime reduction ambitions. Certainly, this is an issue that, in itself, foreshadows a transformed state-citizen relationship. “The blurring of public- and private-sector surveillance neutralizes traditional safeguards against government abuse” [28, p. 4]. But it is also a significant feature of the neo-liberal government structure, based on private enterprise and functional outsourcing.

The focus of contemporary debates in Sweden is not whether a specific area ought to be subject to surveillance but rather the other way around: what areas should be exceptions to the rule, protected from cameras. The authorisation practice applied has not in any substantial way reduced the expansion of monitoring. In addition, modern cameras are also much more technically advanced than those initially deployed. Most importantly, the technical capacity to record and store material using digital technology makes camera surveillance a powerful measure of control if used in that way. It is reasonable to argue that the more cameras there are, and the more technically advanced they are, the better the preventive effects ought to be, presuming that camera surveillance has any preventive effect at all.

In the government bill of 1998 [44] that preceded the new act, prevention was introduced as the main aim of camera surveillance; the government now explicitly related surveillance to specific positive outputs. The purpose of proposing a new act, it was argued, was to regulate camera surveillance in such a way it could be used effectively to prevent crime and reduce accidents while still maintaining sufficient protection against violation of privacy. (It is worth noting that accident prevention seems to be a rather hopeless ambition in the Swedish context, where cameras are seldom manned and no one is there to alert.) Eleven years later, the purpose of the 1998 act was described, as follows, in a Social Democratic motion in Parliament. “When the present Act on General Camera Surveillance was launched the ambition was that the interest of preventing and solving crime should play a more salient role in relation to the interest of privacy than in the former act” [45, p. 2]. This reflection, long after the event, strengthens the argument that there was, in fact, a radical change in policy.

The “fact” that camera surveillance prevents crime was reiterated several times in the 1998 government bill, although with some reservations made since there was still insufficient research at that point on the effects of camera use in combating crime. Nonetheless, it was argued that the right to implement camera surveillance, preferably for preventive purposes, should be enhanced. Crime prevention and camera surveillance were also a salient theme in the general parliamentary discussion following the presentation of the government bill. The suggestion that camera surveillance prevents crime received strong support [46] although there were members who were not convinced that cameras had a deterrent effect on crime and argued that this issue needed further investigation [47].

Henceforth, a variety of instructions and reports were produced with a more or less explicit aim to promote the crime prevention argument. Despite uncertainties about preventive effects as the new act came into force, prevention was still three years later the main argument used for camera surveillance of the general public. In 2001 the Minister of Justice formed a special committee to evaluate the act. It was established already in the directive that cameras could be useful as a means of crime prevention. In addition there were other positive outputs mentioned, such as the value of material recorded for investigating crimes already committed and the reduction of accidents. The Ministry of Justice acknowledged that there was insufficient evidence demonstrating the effects of camera surveillance in preventing crime and asked for further research. Nonetheless, the committee was instructed to primarily focus on camera surveillance from a crime prevention perspective. Notwithstanding doubts about preventive effects, the Ministry of Justice maintained that there was a great deal of information indicating that camera surveillance was effective in preventing crime if used the right way. Thus, the results of the committee were, in a way, predetermined by the instructions; the committee was supposed to “consider and provide suggestions for how camera surveillance could be used effectively and strategically in crime prevention efforts” [48]. Thus, the committee could hardly dismiss camera surveillance as useless; instead, it had to find ways to make the method useful.

The Camera Surveillance Committee delivered its final report in November 2002. Once again it was established that camera surveillance, aside from preventing accidents, is primarily an instrument to

prevent crime. But, the results of the committee's own investigation were not encouraging; the committee was forced to admit that preventive results using camera surveillance were poor [36]. However, it may under certain circumstances prevent or at least contribute to a reduction of crime in society. Referring to international experience, the committee suggested that the effects are most significant if cameras are used in combination with other preventive measures. There were also some more or less concrete ideas presented in the report, on how camera surveillance might be used more appropriately for preventive purposes [36].

In Sweden, as elsewhere, growing doubts have been voiced about the material effects on crime prevention. The Swedish Crime Prevention Board (a research and development center subordinated to the Ministry of Justice), which regularly publishes reports, referred to national and international investigations, calling into question the results of camera surveillance as a preventive measure [17–20]. The general conclusion was that camera surveillance may work under very limited circumstances and in specific locations such as car parks, places with very high crime rates and on crimes such as planned burglaries. But, according to the board, camera surveillance is not a universal key to combating crime [20]. Still, in the political arena, prevention persists as a purpose of camera surveillance that is vigorously defended.

In Parliament in 2006, the Minister of Justice once again argued that camera surveillance, when used properly, may lead to productive crime prevention results [49]. Technological development, such as intelligent surveillance systems, may increase the opportunities to use cameras both in crime prevention and in investigations of crimes already committed [50]. It is clear that the Minister, as a result of reports from the Crime Prevention Board among others, chose her words with care in statements concerning the positive effects. But other speakers in the debate, also referring to technological advances, were less impressed with the research. The reports from the Crime Prevention Board was criticised as being irrelevant, in view of the fact that it had not considered that poorly functioning cameras were used in the investigations [51].

Nonetheless, prevention was the main approach when a new public evaluation of the Act on General Camera Surveillance was proposed in 2008. In the instructions to the evaluating committee, it was noted that the evaluation should primarily concern the use of cameras for preventive purposes [52]. The report, published in 2009, again confirmed the reliability of camera surveillance but with an appropriate reservation: It is claimed that it is very likely (but not certain) that camera surveillance is effective in crime prevention work. In addition, the committee apparently qualified the definition of prevention. In order to prevent crime, "it is important that the material is delivered to the police and contributes to solving crimes" [37]. So it is not simply the presence of cameras that is supposed to be preventive. The public must also be convinced that they are used effectively in the judicial process. Still, it is a matter of situational prevention.

In summation, crime prevention was actively promoted at the expense of other potential outcomes such as improved legal processes. Moreover, the ambition to prevent crime also obscured the quest for privacy protection. Despite uncertainty about effectiveness, the authoritative institutions are stubbornly sticking to camera surveillance as a situationally preventive device. Despite the gloomy results from camera surveillance presented in national and international reports [19], in 2009 Social Democratic Parliament Deputies still argued in a motion on camera surveillance that "the risk of being detected is the most effective measure of crime policy" [53, p. 1]. The conclusion has to be that the idea of prevention was promoted despite limited proved effectiveness because the idea was attractive as such. It fitted into a new order of society as well as a new attitude toward citizens; in effect, a new governmental rationality was about to emerge.



## 5. Generalising distrust

With the 1998 act, the Act on General Camera Surveillance, a new terminology for monitoring the public was added to the legal vocabulary. In the preparatory works preceding Parliament's decision on the new act, camera surveillance was mentioned for the first time as an issue that concerned the public. It was no longer camera surveillance as a new, unspecified technology that was on the agenda for revised legislation; it was the monitoring of a specific, albeit all-inclusive, group of people, the general public, that necessitated legal regulations. The addition of "allmän" (general) indicated that the objective of surveillance was now fixed and while "general" seems to include everyone, the term was, in fact, also a demarcation. The target group was not specified as potentially criminal or as marginalised elements of the social space; it was the general public. In contrast, groups and individuals, defined in advance as being of particular interest for state security reasons and serious crime investigations, may under certain circumstances be secretly monitored by the police and security service. Such monitoring was, and still is, regulated in the Act on Secret Camera Surveillance (*Lagen om hemlig kameraövervakning 1995:1506*) and the Act on Measures to Prohibit Certain Serious Crimes (*Lag om åtgärder för att förhindra särskilt allvarliga brott 2007:979*).

Actually, "the public" was introduced in the legal context of camera surveillance at the same time crime prevention emerged as an appealing aim. With the target group specified, prevention also inevitably took on the specific character of a situation-directed measure. Certainly, general camera surveillance can hardly be promoted as socially directed prevention because, if it was, it would encourage looking on monitors for people who look like they might commit a crime at some time. That is, filming would be guided by preconceived notions of what a future criminal looks like. Camera surveillance of the public has to be neutral with respect to the appearance of particular individuals and their potential deeds. It targets situations involving criminal acts, at least rhetorically it must be this way, in a democratic state governed by law.

It is not possible to know whether camera surveillance is here to stay, as a legal instrument, but it certainly embodies a new kind of direction in crime policy. Monitoring is a situation-directed instrument for combating crime but when used en masse it also represents, somewhat paradoxically, a shift from an incident-based policy to a systematically oriented one. This governing technique is used not just on occasions that call for specific attention; it is there as a structure of control. That is, when cameras are installed as a regularly deployed device, social control becomes something different from what it used to be. Public authorities and private enterprises using cameras have to consider each and every person that passes the camera as an object to be monitored; the average citizen as well as the dedicated law-breaker has to consider that they may be under surveillance.

This situational, but systematised, control affects the notion of the potential offender as well as the distinction between the general public and the offender. The potential offender no longer is a marginalised man governed by social misfortune and destitution. He or she is someone who takes a risk in a specific situation by chance made available to him or her; it could be anybody seeking to take advantage of a situation. The 2002 camera surveillance report articulated the essence of this rationale: "The basic platform of situational crime prevention is that crime is a rational behaviour that is preceded by a decision to commit, or not commit a crime in a specific situation" [36, p. 98].

The focus is on the temptation produced by a specific situation. Therefore, the situation has to be rearranged in order to make it less tempting; that is, crime has to be made an irrational rather than a rational activity. This is where camera surveillance enters the context, revising the calculation of the risk of being detected. The following quote from a Social Democratic Deputy in the parliamentary

debate in 2006 illustrates how calculations of risks have been integrated discursively in the arguments on surveillance: “People refrain from snatching a handbag if they know that there are cameras” [54, p. 7].

The prospect of being caught on camera increases the risk of being captured and discourages the thefts of handbags. It is also clear from the quote that the potential bag snatcher or pickpocket represents a general category of “people”, so more or less everybody is an object of prevention and thus also as an object of general distrust.

It is easy to find examples of similar generalisations constructed discursively in Swedish political debate; this is not an issue that separates the parties. According to the Minister of Justice in the parliamentary debate in 2008, one of the main questions to consider in the context of camera surveillance is: where, by whom and for what purpose do *people* want to be looked at [55]. Thus, the Minister presupposes that everybody is, in principle, content with being monitored; the extent of surveillance as such is not up for discussion. Another short quote from the debate illustrates this way of generalising even more clearly. In a motion proposed by a Christian Democrat member of Parliament, a revision of the camera surveillance act was supported by the argument that it would mean more rights “for us who are monitored” [56].

In the last assertion, prevention is not just generalised; it is also internalised into a general “we the objects of monitoring”. In a corresponding manner, a speaker from the Centre Party argued that “you should not have any blind faith that state control of us citizens . . . would actually make us so much safer” [57]. We are all included as the object of control, or protection, which consequently means that none of us is completely reliable. If we happened to be in a situation where there was no control, then we could give in to the temptation to break the rules. This generalised “we” is often changed to the, in Swedish, equally generalising, equally internalising “you”. For example, the sophisticated technology is mentioned as a problem, stemming from the difficulties of recognising when “you are monitored” [58].

Indeed, the idea of general camera surveillance feeds a generalisation of distrust. Without having any opinion as to whether this is based on any sensible assumptions about human nature, it has to be concluded that the generalisation of distrust does not fit well with the notion of general social trust often presented as a model of the good society. Camera surveillance promotes a morally unattractive position of distrust. However, in fact, neo-liberal rule is indifferent to the idea of social trust. But there is also the other side of the coin here, making general distrust into a morally advisable position, which fits well with a new governmental rationality. The rationale is the same as for security checks at airports, for instance. Everyone must be checked on equal terms because suspecting one person more than any other conflicts with our moral opinions about human equality and the right to equal treatment. Autonomous individuals demand equal recognition, in other words, not being treated worse than others.

## 6. The significance of the informed citizen

One aspect of camera surveillance as a means of crime prevention is crucial, namely public awareness of cameras. Cameras cannot prevent crime if nobody is aware of their existence. Cameras that potential offenders do not know about are of no use in deterring crime; in other words, ignorance about the existence of cameras means that they cannot be relevant for the choice to be a law-abiding citizen. Therefore, since cameras are not always easy to detect, warning signs have a specific purport in camera surveillance as crime prevention. By law, in Sweden camera surveillance has to be indicated by signs or in an otherwise distinct way. This requirement to provide information has been included in laws ever since the 1977 Act on TV Surveillance. In a motion put forward by the Liberal Party in 1997, the reason for the requirement to provide information was formulated clearly: “In our opinion, general

camera surveillance is acceptable if it prevents crimes and accidents. By definition, camera surveillance is, generally, crime-preventive only if it is done openly” [59].

Surveillance is not effective as prevention if it is done covertly. But this is not the only reasoning for the warning signs; they also have other advantages. Obviously, information has a very specific function in establishing the “friendly” image of surveillance as well as demonstrating a specific image of the institutions carrying out the monitoring. That is, it is not a question of a capricious, evil state that installs cameras in order to spy on its citizens; it is a state that is eager to maintain order in society in the interest of one and all. Camera surveillance is the measure of a society governed by laws in the name of order and justice. Distrust may affect the supervising state, and warning signs may work as a mitigating measure that counters such reactions. In 2007, the Minister of Justice argued in Parliament in favour of the importance of warning signs as a means to enhance people’s security [60]. Obviously, she was speaking about securing citizens from inappropriate intrusion by the state. At the same time it seems to rule out the possibility that the state could have a hidden agenda.

Thus, warning signs are instruments for ensuring preventive effects and a means to legitimise camera surveillance, to reassure that the controlling institutions behave according to the rules in a democratic state. But there is also a third aspect, which concerns personal integrity or privacy. It is a fundamental principle of legislation in the field that monitoring should not be allowed unless people know about it [43] because that would conflict with the claim to privacy. Freedom of choice is in this context a precondition for privacy and the possibility to make a choice requires information. Signs make people aware of the alternatives available: walk within the range of a camera or choose not to. The logic is that if one feels that filming violates one’s privacy, there is an opportunity to go elsewhere; we may choose more privacy if we want. In other words, warning signs make the supervised individual an explicit approver because being the object of surveillance is optional if there are alternatives presented. Obviously, this rationale fails if, for example, there is no or limited public transport to the place a person intends to visit that is free from technical surveillance. But for the basic reasoning, this makes no difference.

The implied argument reads: By passing a camera for which there are warning signs in place, people consent to being monitored. But what if someone decides to not pass the camera? Is he trying to avoid being in the field of vision? Is it a means of defending his privacy? While his intention may be to protect his privacy, the problem is that avoiding cameras, because of the assumption of explicit consent, also becomes an indication that he may have something to hide. That is, he is not willing to prove that his hands are clean. The harder someone tries to avoid, in case of for example, lack few camera free zones, the more suspicious this person will become. To quote an old Swedish maxim, “as long as you have pure flour in your bag” there is no reason to fear anything simply because you are being monitored. By consenting to being in the field of vision, people prove that they do not have any obscure intentions. They are someone who should be trusted.

The maxim of “pure flour in your bag” is frequently used in the Swedish public debate on the surveillance society. The idea is that, if the flour that someone offers is pure (white and innocent) he/she has nothing to fear from whatever measures the authorities implement to keep order in society. There is a strong normative position assigned to this metaphor, still, as previously mentioned, it is a powerful argument among average Swedes for not being that bothered about electronic surveillance.

There is moral potential in the logic that “giving consent to being monitored” becomes synonymous with “being innocent”. This does not concern so much the prospect that people may be more adaptable or law-abiding because they are being monitored. Rather it is about a strong incentive to prove one’s innocence by exposing oneself to the gaze of the camera eye. It is normal and decent to be monitored, and suspicions are raised if someone objects or tries to avoid it. Clearly, proving one’s innocence by

consenting to surveillance also turns the evidence around. Giving consent proves that the person is not guilty, not the contrary; his or her potential guilt has to be established. The legal requirement for warning signs is a necessary condition to produce this social rationality.

Originally, “having pure flour in your bag” was a linguistic convention which assumed that some people conform to this requirement and some do not. It illustrated the old, established social distinction between “us” and “them”; the trustworthy and the not so trustworthy. Camera surveillance addresses another process of constructing social identity, the process of constructing “the distrusted public”. But distrust is not an end in itself. In the Swedish context of surveillance, it is more a product of a governmental rationality based on the idea of an autonomous individual constantly involved in the act of choosing.

## 7. Concluding remarks

Taken together, the three aspects of Swedish camera surveillance discussed above, situational prevention, generalisation of distrust and the significance of the informed citizen, suggest a fairly comprehensive change in policy. In fact, the introduction of camera surveillance as surveillance of the general public indicates that the relationship between the Swedish state and its citizens is undergoing change. In a way, the shift goes beyond the expanded violation of privacy that is often claimed to be the main issue of concern by voices critical of extensive surveillance [12]. The governmental rationality is strongly intertwined with the invention of the surveillance technique in that government, on one hand, is conditioned by the ability to monitor and, on the other hand, politics constructs the logical argument in which camera surveillance appears to be a reasonable feature of modern society.

Swedish camera surveillance viewed as government of advanced liberalism suggests that it is not a question of the state expanding its means of social control, approaching a “totalitarian” security state. Monitoring the public represents a new kind of governmentality based on the neo-liberal individuation of the citizen. It is a governance technique that fits well with the notion of the autonomous individual who exercises her freedom, also in moral decisions, as a freedom to choose. Yet, camera surveillance the Swedish way seems to be an appropriate means for conducting the conduct of individuals so that citizens will embrace both the rational superiority of abiding by the law and being visible. There is a strong public incentive to appear before the camera eye and readily approve of being monitored. Popular images support this kind of norm conformity.

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