

# CCTV in Spain: An empirical account of the deployment of video-surveillance in a Southern-European country

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**Abstract.** Over the last two decades the use of video surveillance has grown in scope and numbers. However, research on the national contexts that have driven such developments tends to concentrate on Northern and Western Europe. This article explores the situation of CCTV in Spain, its legal framework, perceived shortcomings, public perceptions and specificity – such as a pre-9/11 concern for terrorism but its minimal impact on the justification for CCTV, a rights-based and *a priori* control of video surveillance devices and a deployment pattern that differs from those identified in the literature on CCTV at the European and global level. In providing an account on how Spain has joined the ‘surveillance society’, it exposes a picture of unevenness, legal loopholes and resistance, and provides a unique overview of CCTV deployment in a Southern-European, post-authoritarian country.

Keywords: CCTV, Spain, video surveillance, terrorism, resistance

## 1. Introduction

Over the last two decades the use of video surveillance, typically justified by security concerns, has grown in both scope and number. Research on the main drivers of implementing public surveillance remains scarce, and whilst national contextual information on non-Western countries is beginning to emerge [15,21,22,24], most case studies are still concentrated on Northern and Western Europe [12–14, 26] and North America [23,25]. The lack of a significant body of research exploring other national contexts has arguably weakened the analysis on the deployment of CCTV beyond particular national contexts and has led to assumptions about the use and usefulness of these systems. Consequently, the deployment patterns identified have become a one-size-fits all prescription, demonstrating a lack of more diverse accounts, and downplaying the significance of different national settings and institutional contexts.

Little is known about CCTV in Spain or other Southern-European, post-authoritarian countries, although there are exceptions to this general rule [22]. This can be attributed to a multiplicity of reasons

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including linguistic, cultural, political and academic which are beyond the scope of this research. However, a glimpse of Spain's recent history provides a picture that is significantly different from that of the countries most represented in surveillance studies. This includes; a dictatorship during which the day-to-day surveillance of people's political activity and affiliation continued until 1975 [4], a consequent generalized concern over the excesses of State intervention in private and political activities in the years after the dictator's death, and the continued activities over the last 50 years of several armed terrorist movements (ETA being the most well-known). In addition, a greater use of public space, typical of Southern-European societies, and a legal recognition of the right to 'intimacy' in public space only add to the list of noteworthy specificities with a potential impact on the deployment and public perception of surveillance mechanisms in public space. These characteristics contribute not only to explain national departures from mainstream international discourses on CCTV, including the role of terrorism in the deployment of CCTV before and after 9/11, but also the similarities with some neighboring countries, such as the strong influence of the French legal system on the regulation of CCTV in Spain, and the potential similarities with other post-authoritarian societies.

The purpose of this article is to contribute a general empirical account of the Spanish context to the literature regarding the increase of video surveillance at a time when the boom in research on surveillance [20] coincides with the exponential growth<sup>1</sup> of CCTV in Spain. The article describes the historical determining factors linked to the use of CCTV and the debates around its regulation and current legal framework. The article presents public perceptions and the difficulties of providing a comprehensive map of CCTV in Spain. We conclude by highlighting where the Spanish case supports or contradicts some of the dominant assumptions in the core literature, and makes the case for increased attention to shifting attitudes towards surveillance and the role of those who actively oppose the 'surveillance society'.

## 2. Methodology

In order to present a first appraisal of the deployment of CCTV in Spain the authors have utilized a range of research methods with the aim of systematizing the available information and providing an account that is both comprehensive and detailed. The methods used include; a review of the relevant academic literature (existing case studies on CCTV deployment at the national level elsewhere), a review of the legal framework at the national and regional level, semi-structured interviews with actors involved in CCTV deployment at the regional level, a review of the archives of one of the regional bodies responsible for authorizing CCTV,<sup>2</sup> and media analysis through online search engines and newspaper libraries in order to follow the cues obtained during the interviews and the review of the archives. Several obstacles have had to be overcome in this process. The absence of earlier studies on the subject meant a dearth of published material being available. Also, the decentralized nature of the administrative and judicial state apparatus in Spain, with 17 autonomous regions having different degrees of autonomy and levels of regulation for video surveillance, meant the task of interviewing the actors involved in CCTV deployment was more difficult than initially expected. In a number of instances our requests for an interview were not successful and on a few occasions when interviews with those directly involved in the approval of

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<sup>1</sup>In 2009 the number of CCTV footage files notified to the Spanish Data Protection Agency increased by 60% [2].

<sup>2</sup>A detailed analysis of this data can be found in the article 'Local Surveillance in a Global World: Zooming in on the Proliferation of CCTV in Catalonia' in this special edition.

requests to install CCTV were possible, we found that the interviewees could not provide us with a broad overview of the situation in their respective areas. Consequently, these interviews, which were initially intended to form the basis of our study, became supporting material, and legal texts at national and regional level, local ordinances and legal texts at the local level, and media coverage of CCTV between 1990 and 2010 took central stage. In order to develop a general picture, 17 analytical reports on the deployment of CCTV, one for each autonomous region, were constructed. They concentrated on the uptake of CCTV in key cities (capitals of province) with an aim to draw conclusions on the process in every region and to allow comparisons to be made. A review of the international literature on the deployment of CCTV was conducted and compared to the Spanish case in order to go beyond the basic description of video surveillance in Spain and to provide more depth – both on the challenges of presenting a map of CCTV in Spain and the possibility of contributing to the comparative aspect of surveillance studies – with the purpose of building a greater understanding of the increase in CCTV outside Western and Northern Europe.

### 3. Surveillance and terrorism before 9/11

The term ‘video surveillance’ (videovigilancia) rarely appeared in the Spanish media before the mid-90s, even though there had been earlier attempts by local councils to set up CCTV systems, for example in Madrid in the late 80s. Video surveillance became a public debate in Spain when the Ministry of the Interior and the Basque Government presented a plan to implement CCTV surveillance in the Basque country to ‘prevent street violence’, and in particular, ‘*kale borroka*’, the street fighting linked to youth organizations of the Basque Liberation Movement. The plan required the development of a legal framework so that the images captured could be used in a court of law, and so a few months after the initial draft was presented, the proposal became the Organic Law 4/1997 – in the Spanish legal framework constitutional matters relating to fundamental rights and freedoms are regulated by Organic Laws, which require a parliamentary debate and an absolute majority to be approved.

The public debate generated was, in retrospect, surprisingly cautious and rights-based due to the press and other actors highlighting how CCTV had an impact on fundamental rights. Initially all parties in the political spectrum, as well as significant sections of the Judiciary, openly expressed their concerns, with the exception of the Conservatives, the *Partido Popular* (PP), and the Basque Conservative Nationalists, the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV) who were leading the proposal. The rights-based discourse at the time managed to introduce significant changes to the initial proposal, including; the creation of regional Commissions of Guarantees that would review each application to install CCTV monitored by a police force and ensure the fulfillment of the legal requirements established in the Organic Law, the protection of the rights to access and to cancel personal data, and the obligation to destroy footage after 30 days. When the media unearthed the previously unaddressed extralegal CCTV surveillance in a handful of Catalan seaside towns, public opposition to CCTV grew. Interestingly, this diffusion pattern is similar to that identified by Hempel and Töpfer [14], who note that the same trend occurred with the first schemes installed in the UK, Germany and France, where CCTV did not originate in crime-ridden cities or terrorist hang-outs, but in affluent, middle-sized beachside towns.

After the Al-Qaeda train bombings in Madrid on 11 March 2004, which killed nearly 200 people, neither public discourse nor media coverage stressed the link between CCTV and terrorism, and there is no evidence of an immediate increase in surveillance in the country capital following the attacks. This contradicts established thinking which suggests that when a terrorist threat is covered by the media, it is often used to reinforce the argument in favor of CCTV [18]. According to the documents reviewed and

Table 1  
Legal Regulation of CCTV in Spain

Regulation	Purpose/title	Scope
LO 4/1997	To regulate the use of video cameras in public spaces by the Spanish Police Forces	Public
RD 596/1999	To give effect to the regulations of the Organic Law	Public
LO 15/1999	For the protection of personal data	Public and private
I 1/2006 (DPA)	Concerns the treatment of personal data linked to surveillance through cameras or video surveillance	Private

the views gathered through interviews, the case for surveillance in Spain is overwhelmingly built upon the need to prevent acts of ‘incivility’ and petty crime. The one notable exception is La Alhambra, in Granada, which suffered a terrorist attack in 1996 used it to justify the installation of 50 CCTV cameras in 2008. In all other instances, terrorism is hardly ever present as the justification for video surveillance. This sets Spain apart from other countries where national security concerns have gained ground after 9/11, and are key factors influencing underlying discussions about the public perception of surveillance and in the justification for CCTV [14,27].

The Spanish case, thus, adds complexity to the relaxing of the ‘limitations on previously stricter laws’ which Lyon [18] attributes to the consequences of 9/11. While legal constraints on CCTV use are also becoming less strict in Spain, 9/11 and terrorism are not part of the public debate nor the political justification for CCTV at the local level. This suggests that the proliferation of CCTV might be a case of policy transfer or convergence, whereby governments may adopt similar policies based on anxieties about security, even if the detail of the narratives used to justify them is substantially different.

#### 4. The Legal regulation of CCTV in Spain

##### 4.1. Public CCTV

As mentioned above, in 1997 the Spanish Parliament passed legislation (LO 4/1997) to regulate the use of video cameras in public spaces by the Spanish police forces. This was completed two years later with a Royal Decree (RD 596/1999) which developed the principles and contents of the new law (see Table 1), drawing strongly from the French *Loi Pasqua*.<sup>3</sup> More specifically, the law regulates video cameras and any sound-recording device, fixed or mobile, operated by a member of a police force and used in a public space (open or closed). Other devices do not fall under this law nor require *a priori* authorization, including; instruments operated by private security, traffic cameras, cameras protecting police buildings, the surveillance of sports events, and cameras used by the police following instructions from a judge. Therefore, only cameras monitored by the police can monitor public space and are considered ‘public’ in Spain.

The law states that ‘increasingly sophisticated technical means’ improve the levels of protection of goods and freedoms of the people, but sees the need to regulate the use of such devices, *already being used* by the police, in order to guarantee that the defence of public security is in compliance with constitutional rights and freedoms. Therefore, it establishes a system of *a priori* authorization ‘inspired by the principle of proportionality, in its double meaning of appropriateness (*idoneidad* in Spanish) and minimum intervention’. The appropriateness is defined as ‘the camera will only be used when deemed

<sup>3</sup>For further information about French law relating to CCTV see the article ‘Video Surveillance and Security Policy in France: From Regulation to Widespread Acceptance’ in this special edition.

Table 2  
Legal regulation of CCTV in the autonomous regions

Regulation	Purpose/title	Scope
D 134/1999	To regulate video surveillance by the Autonomous and Local Police Forces	Catalonia
D 168/1998	To regulate the authorisation and use of surveillance cameras by the Basque Police in public areas	Basque Country

necessary, in a specific situation, in order to maintain community safety'. Minimum intervention 'demands that, in each case, the relation between the stated goal and the possible effects by the use of the video camera on the right to one's honour, image and intimacy is to be assessed'. Moreover, the law states there must be a 'reasonable risk' for public safety in the case of fixed cameras, and a 'specific danger' in the case of mobile ones (LO 4/1997).

Before 1997, CCTV cameras were only controlled *a posteriori* by the Judiciary in order to determine whether a particular system was detrimental to individual rights. However, since 1997, and according to the law, the process of *a priori* authorization is to be overseen by regional Commissions of Guarantees presided by the President of the High Court of Justice of each autonomous region. The legal framework also establishes; that all images and sound recordings will have to be deleted within 30 days, the right of the public to be informed of the existence of fixed cameras, and the right to access and to dispose of personal footage. The Commissions of Guarantees are the bodies responsible for the interpretation and implementation of the regulation. They are advisory entities independent of the competent administrative authority in charge of issuing the authorizations, and have among their main functions the drawing up of *a priori* 'favorable' or 'unfavorable' reports within one month of each petition to install cameras in public areas. In the case of mobile cameras, the report is *a posteriori* and often only consists of a written acknowledgment of their use. In spite of the 'advisory' status of the Commissions, when the report issued is 'unfavorable' or includes limitations to the CCTV systems proposed, it is binding.

Overall, the Spanish legal framework for 'public' CCTV is based on the assumption that CCTV can hinder the public's right to privacy, intimacy and one's image, thus establishing rules to enforce an obligation to justify any attempt to limit such rights on the basis of the need to prevent crime. In Spain, 'public' CCTV is always locally funded and operated by police forces, and in line with other European countries, with the exception of the UK, Spanish law recognizes the right to 'intimacy' in public areas, and some cameras have not been approved by some Commissions due to their perceived impact on this right to one's intimacy [3].

The establishment of a strict authorization system based on the Commissions of Guarantees, whose members always come from the Judiciary and different levels of public administration, ensures that private parties or anyone who could have a vested interest in the subject have no access to the process. Further, the obligation to destroy the images within 30 days, with very few exceptions, as well as the provisions to inform the public of the existence of surveillance cameras through visible signs and the obligation to renew and justify all existing schemes each year indicates a clear attempt by legislators to halt or impede the generalization of the use of electronic surveillance for crime prevention. Such 'good intentions' could be tainted by contradictions found in the development of the articles of the regulations and some vague formulations which could potentially lead to abuse [8]. The weakest link in the Spanish system, however, is found at the regional and local level, as only two Autonomous Regions, Catalonia and the Basque Country, have developed specific legislation for their Commissions, through a Decree creating and stating the legal regulations of a Commission to Control Video-surveillance Devices in Catalonia (D 134/1999) and a Decree to create and regulate a Commission of Video Surveillance and Freedoms of the Basque Autonomous region (D 168/1998) (see Table 2). In the rest of the country, the

Table 3  
CCTV files (not cameras) registered with AEPD until 31/05/10

Year of registration	Private CCTV	Public CCTV	CCTV total
1994	8	2	10
1995	4	0	4
1996	1	0	1
1997	0	0	0
1998	0	0	0
1999	3	0	3
2000	13	0	13
2001	17	0	17
2002	32	0	32
2003	90	0	90
2004	118	3	121
2005	250	0	250
2006	433	14	447
2007	4,776	89	4,865
2008	9,212	184	9,396
2009	21,973	285	22,258
2010	13,818	403	14,221

provisions established by the Organic Law and the Royal Decree apply, and the Commissions do not have specific regulations nor rules of accountability.

For a system that depends so heavily on the Commissions of Guarantees for its implementation, this regulatory void in most of Spain, together with the loose definition of the functions of the Commissions, the lack of specific personnel and means to implement their control functions, their limited scope of action, and the general lack of awareness of their existence and role – cast doubts on the real effectiveness of the legal framework. Our research highlighted this point, as when trying to contact members of the regional Commissions to arrange interviews, we found that in most cases even the personnel at the High Courts of Justice were unaware that such bodies existed.

#### 4.2. Private CCTV

In Spain, any surveillance camera not monitored by a member of the police force is considered private, and thus not subject to the tighter, *a priori* obligations of the specific LO 4/1999. This creates a broad scope for grey areas, with CCTV in public transport, in public buildings with private security providers, in the workplace and in commercial, semi-public areas not subject to a review by the Commission and not controlled beyond the need to register the existence of any file with CCTV footage with the Data Protection Agency (Agencia Española de Protección de Datos, AEPD). Consequently, the good regulation of public CCTV, notwithstanding the limitations mentioned above, stand in stark contrast to the very weak regulation of private CCTV, governed just by an Instruction (1/2006) of the AEPD that draws from the Law of Personal Data Protection (LO 15/1999), the Law 23/1992 on Private Security, and the Law 1/1982 on the Civil Protection of the Right to Honor, Intimacy and One's Image, but lacks their status and enforcing authority. The Instruction stresses the need to take into account matters of appropriateness, necessity and proportionality in the installation and operation of private CCTV and to 'avoid ubiquitous surveillance'. More specifically, it states the obligation to notify the public in the form of placards of their access and cancellation rights, as well as the need to communicate to the AEPD the existence of any file with CCTV footage, thereby excluding CCTV systems with no storage capacity. The AEPD states clearly that the instruction does not allow private parties to install CCTV systems in

public spaces. However, the AEPD's role is limited to interventions *a posteriori* and after a complaint has been filed, and even if the rapid increase in the number of files registered does show a capacity to influence developments, the Agency only manages to capture a small fraction of the reality of CCTV in Spain. Table 3 captures the number of CCTV (files) registered with the AEPD.

Current developments in the legal framework of private CCTV, stemming from the adaptation of national law to European Directives, might further hinder the possibilities to control or monitor the growth of private CCTV. Specifically, the Services Directive 2006/123/CE liberalizes the activities linked to the installation of security systems, and the law regulating the transposition of this particular piece of EU legislation into the Spanish context (25/2009) specifically excludes companies that sell, install or maintain security equipment from the scope of the Private Security Law, thus effectively making it possible for private parties to install CCTV systems without a clear legal framework or need to inform any relevant authority.

#### 4.3. *CCTV in public transport*

CCTV in public transport represents a good example of the growing 'grey areas' existing in the field of video surveillance in Spain, due to the legal gap that exists between the regulation of public and private CCTV, and the limitations made possible by a narrow definition of 'public' video surveillance. While in London CCTV was first installed as early as the mid-1970s' and justified as a crime-fighting tool [21], in Spain the earliest schemes, such as Madrid's Metro in the late 80s, were installed as a way to provide a sense of security after the downsizing of one third of those employed to work in underground ticket offices. Those first CCTV systems did not record images and were meant to monitor the now-deserted station halls. Recording functions only began to be installed in the late 90s, when CCTV in public transport started to proliferate, following the example of Italy. Today, cameras in train and metro stations are a generalized and systematic policy (see Fig. 1) and they fall under the regulation established by the AEPD Instruction from 2006, with no control provided by the Commissions of Guarantees. Cameras in moving vehicles, such as taxis and buses, made possible by the technological advances of the last few years, are also a very recent but rapidly increasing trend. Moreover, and contrary to what happens elsewhere, CCTV images emerging from the public transport arena are regularly broadcast on Spanish television. Typically, they are of low-level misdemeanors and violence and not the footage of serious crime and terrorist acts sometimes broadcast in other counties [14,27]. This might explain why support for CCTV in public transport is more common than in the workplace, leisure areas, bars and restaurants, residential buildings and streets [16].

#### 4.4. *CCTV to monitor traffic*

With the exception of Catalonia, where cameras to monitor traffic must go through the Commission of Guarantees, in the rest of Spain it is the Traffic Authority (Dirección General de Tráfico, DGT) that approves CCTV installation. There is no evidence of rejected applications, which may suggest that the DGT is less careful in reviewing the applications than the Commissions. This has increased the perception among local authorities that traffic cameras are easier to install, thus making it more difficult to map the proliferation of CCTV in Spain. It is not easy to make a distinction between those cameras that monitor traffic for road safety purposes and those that are intended to surveil large public areas or control vehicles entering or leaving specific locations. The Catalan Commission of Guarantees, however, does try to find out the real purpose of the petitioner, and usually limits the camera scope and zoom when justified as road traffic cameras. In some cases the DGT has received applications after they have been

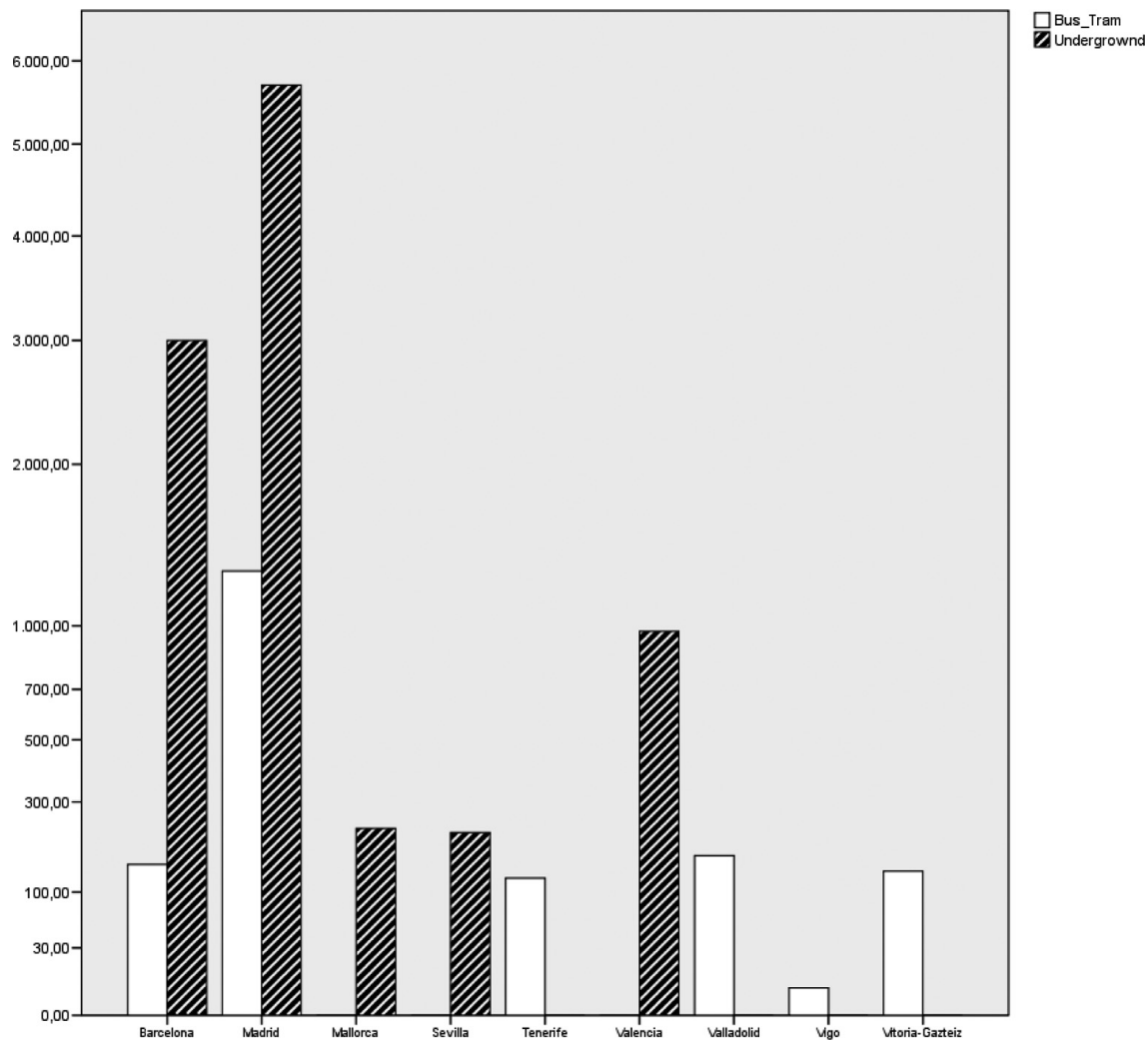


Fig. 1. CCTV and public transport in Spanish cities: Numbers of cameras in premises and vehicles.

rejected by a regional Commission of Guarantees, and there is a growing tendency to mix road safety and crime in the justification for CCTV, especially in affluent, gated neighborhoods where there is a stronger demand for control of vehicles entering and exiting premises.

## 5. Public perception of CCTV

Recent opinion polls conducted by the Public Opinion Research Center (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, CIS) [5,6] show strong support for the use of CCTV, with figures in tune with international results [16]. Of the 68.7% of the Spanish population that supported video surveillance, 66.4% reported that it made them feel safer, 18.0% that it allowed for the identification of offenders and 15.2% believed it prevented crime. 10.0% of the Spanish population are against CCTV altogether, mainly (79.4%) due to their perceived loss of privacy. As for the location of CCTV, support is stronger for surveillance cameras



Table 4  
Attitudes towards the location CCTV in Spain (Results for Europe in brackets)

	Very good or good	Neutral	Bad or very bad	Other
Banks	95.5 (91.9)	1.9 (3.8)	1.2 (4.3)	1.3
Shops	88.3 (82.9)	5.9 (10.2)	3.7 (6.8)	2.0
Residential	51.1 (36.1)	14.9 (27.1)	28.7 (36.8)	5.3
Workplace	44.7 (n.a.)	13.6 (n.a.)	36.7 (n.a.)	5.0
Nurseries/Schools	77.2 (n.a.)	8.2 (n.a.)	11.2 (n.a.)	3.3
Public Transport	74.5 (86.7)	8.8 (9.3)	13.3 (4.0)	3.3
Streets	60.6 (56.1)	12.5 (21.5)	23.5 (22.3)	3.4
Hospitals	75.1 (42.7)	8.5 (28.6)	13.2 (28.6)	3.3
Bars & Restaurants	46.2 (n.a.)	13.3 (n.a.)	36.0 (n.a.)	4.5
Leisure Areas	50.0 (n.a.)	12.9 (n.a.)	31.7 (n.a.)	5.3

Source: adapted from [4,11].

in banks, shops, nurseries, schools and hospitals, and weaker for workplaces, bars and restaurants, leisure areas and residential buildings. This data is set out in Table 5. Interestingly, public support for video surveillance declined by almost five points between February 2008 (73.2%) and September 2009 (68.7%). Those who link CCTV to increased security, protection and less fear have also declined (71.1% to 66.4%), whilst those who link it to its deterrence capabilities has increased (11.6% to 15.2%).

Other relevant data compiled by the two CIS surveys include; the level of awareness of the need to ask for an authorization to set up CCTV systems, which is 53.1%, and awareness of the need to install signposts indicating that there are cameras in operation, which stands at 62.2%. Finally, on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being minimum surveillance in public places and 10 being maximum surveillance, survey respondents on average position themselves at 6.67. It is worth noting, however, that complaints over CCTV have gone from 382 in 2008 to 768 in 2009, which leads the AEPD to conclude in their Annual Report that ‘the positive perception of video surveillance goes hand in hand with a demand for guarantees in relation to privacy’ [2].

## 6. Towards a map of CCTV in Spain

The existence of surveillance cameras in public and semi-public spaces has not been a public issue in Spain. For instance, whereas Bournemouth in the UK, Hyères in France and Sherbrooke in Quebec have been mentioned in academic literature [14,25] as early examples of the use of CCTV to combat crime, we have not found any reference to Lleida, the Catalan town which in 1991 installed dozens of cameras in its main commercial street under pressure from shop owners and an ‘overwhelmed’ police,<sup>4</sup> or the seaside towns that were found to have systems installed prior to the approval of the legal framework in 1997. The lack of academic and public attention to this subject is worsened by the complexity of the Spanish administrative and legal framework, with 17 Autonomous Regions and 50 Provinces with varying degrees of regulation and autonomy. This, together with the absence of aggregated data, even at the regional level, makes it really difficult not only for researchers to come up with a thorough map of CCTV, but also for policy-makers and members of the Commissions of Guarantees to work towards some kind of convergence in terms of procedures, principles and methodologies. Nonetheless, there have been attempts to overcome these difficulties, and the recent interest in the subject [2,8] has facilitated progress.

<sup>4</sup>Interview with local Head of Community Safety (June 2010).

Table 5  
 Characteristics of CCTV in Spain based on categories mentioned in existing research

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Uneven development linked to decentralization
Expansionary logic and exponential growth in all areas, especially public transport
Specific, rights-based regulation and <i>a priori</i> authorization of public CCTV
Weaker regulation of private, non-police monitored CCTV, but still requiring registration
Right to 'intimacy' recognized in public space
No public debate or extensive media coverage
Privacy and liberty as main arguments against the expansion of CCTV
Signage as only means of notification
Local initiative with no central support
No Public-Private Partnerships or private funding for schemes
No evaluation of impact

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In view of the field work conducted for this article, several aspects are worth highlighting. The varying character and practices of the Commissions in different places has led to different outcomes, for instance, as some Commissions only started to meet regularly a few years ago, whilst others validate all requests they receive, and a few, notably Andalucia, Catalonia and Extremadura, are systematically applying the law in a restrictive sense. There is generalized confusion around the potential benefits of CCTV and where it is most effective – although public transport, municipal buildings, youth facilities, historical centers and commercial areas are the spaces most surveilled, it is unclear why this is so, with only one system being independently evaluated [8]. Also, on occasion a council will announce its intention to install CCTV, but the application is never processed, which seems to confirm the symbolic aspect of CCTV policy stressed by some authors [10]. As for the size of public CCTV networks in open areas, they rarely exceed a few dozen cameras in most cities.

It is also evident that the proliferation of CCTV in Spain has not been without its problems. As well as the many accounts of vandalized cameras – Barcelona's second camera was damaged in 2001 and not repaired until 2006 – there have been demonstrations and organized acts of sabotage, for example in Madrid, Santiago de Compostela and Bilbao. The biggest challenge to CCTV, however, has come from the Galicia and Madrid regions. These have been led by the Movement for the Defence of Civil Rights (Movimiento Polos Dereitos Civís, MpDC) which has systematically reported all illegal cameras in Galicia, and the activist-artistic Madrid-based 'A Happy Neighborhood' initiative (Un Barrio Feliz) which has done the same in Madrid. Since the announcement of a plan to install 48 CCTV cameras in Lavapiés, a stigmatized neighborhood with high levels of migrant population, Un Barrio Feliz has been implicating CCTV as part of a plan to turn the city into a 'shop window, to over regulate public space and to turn consumption and control through fear into the guiding limits of our existence'.<sup>5</sup>

Whilst it is not possible to go into detailed descriptions of CCTV in all regions of Spain here, Table 5 highlights some of the pertinent characteristics relevant to the Spanish case, taking into account some of the categories of analysis identified in the existing research on CCTV. This presents a snapshot of key trends surrounding Spanish CCTV and a possible systematization for comparative research [9,12–14,20, 21,23].

## 7. Conclusion

While there are common trends to the proliferation of CCTV across the globe, local contingencies, institutional settings, legal contexts and political arrangements are shaping the actual progression of

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<sup>5</sup>See: <http://unbarriofeliz.wordpress.com/about/>. Accessed on 26 July 2011.

CCTV as a security policy alternative. In Spain, the role of these factors at the local level has been exacerbated by the lack of a national CCTV strategy, which heightens the unevenness in the diffusion of video surveillance, even though the legal context is the same for all regions. This indicates that while legal constraints can slow down the process by which CCTV becomes a generalized policy, as some authors have suggested, this should be seen in light of other institutional arrangements and political processes, such as the actual effectiveness of the legal framework, the relationship between different levels of public administration, historical factors that might impact on the public debate and the elements that shape the vernacular built around CCTV deployment. Moreover, when there are major differences in the way public and private CCTV is regulated, as is the case in Spain, the grey areas that emerge can end up rendering useless the initial deterrent effect of regulation. The data on Spain presented in this article also suggests that whilst the proliferation and awareness of CCTV are on the rise, this awareness is breeding resistance in the form of privacy complaints, demonstrations and sabotage of CCTV surveillance devices. Opinion polls also show a slight shift in the perception of the usefulness of CCTV, which can be understood as a process of ‘adjustment’ of previous or unrealistic expectations [14].

Changing attitudes towards surveillance cameras should also be taken into account. Justification for CCTV in Spain has gone from terrorism, to efficiency, to disorder, to incivility, to crime, and from crime prevention and deterrence to crime solving and police efficiency – and back. Assumptions about CCTV are reproduced with little reflection on their actual impact, cost-efficiency and negative externalities. Norris et al. [21] suggest a four-stage diffusion trend in the worldwide growth of CCTV, where ‘private diffusion’, ‘institutional diffusion in the public realm’ and ‘limited diffusion in public space’ are the prelude to ‘ubiquity’. From the evidence considered here it is apparent that Spain has recently reached ‘stage three’. However, CCTV continues to provoke reluctance and suspicion in significant parts of the population. The empirical research discussed here thus suggests that any educated guess on the future of ‘surveillance societies’ should not underestimate the potential impact of increased awareness and the incipient public debate, together with a more realistic approach to CCTV by those who have experienced its gaze for several years.

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