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## Exploring the effects of CCTV upon fear of crime: A multi-level approach in Seoul

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## ABSTRACT

We examined the effects of CCTV upon fear of crime through a multi-level analysis, using the Seoul Survey. We examined factors such as the number of CCTV cameras, crime rates, and disorder according to community and resident demographics. The results showed that the number of CCTV cameras was negatively associated with the fear of crime, but no significant effect was observed on the perceived risk of crime. In addition, the effects of CCTV differed by gender. The number of CCTV cameras was found to affect men's fear of crime but not women's fear of crime. Crime rates and disorder as regional-level factors were found to increase both fear of crime and the perceived risk of crime. The current findings emphasize the importance of scientific and systematic installation of CCTV cameras, active responses from police and related organizations to reduce crime and disorder, and the establishment of additional security measures for females.

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## 1. Introduction

After the recent murder of a woman in the Gangnam subway station in the Seoul metropolitan area, the safety of citizens has become a top priority of South Korea's capital city. Because safety is one of the most basic human desires, residents are demanding that the country and local governments draft policies designed to ensure the safety of community residents. According to a survey of South Korean citizens, the most-preferred measure for crime prevention in communities was the installation of CCTV cameras (Kang et al., 2009).

However, the results of empirical studies of CCTV are not consistent, and its crime prevention efficacy is unclear to date. For example, although some studies have concluded that CCTV is effective for crime prevention (Gill and Spriggs, 2005; Short and Ditton, 1995; Skinns, 1998; Squires, 1998; Tilley, 1993), other studies have argued the crime rate was reduced more in the control area than in the test area in which CCTV was installed (Sarno, 1995; Farrington et al., 2002). Studies concluded that, depending upon the installation area, CCTV did not reduce crime in residential areas but was effective for crime prevention in parking lots and other relatively closed-in areas (Welsh and Farrington, 2002). In addition, depending upon the type of crime, some studies showed that CCTV was effective for the prevention of property crime such as larceny and robbery (Squires, 1998; Gill and Spriggs, 2005).

Regardless of the empirical results, the number of CCTV installations aimed at crime prevention has thus far been increasing in quantitative terms. Since 2002, when five CCTV cameras were initially introduced in the Gangnam district in the

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Seoul metropolitan area, we have observed a record-breaking surge in CCTV, with 141,687 cameras installed across the country as of September 2015. In the case of Seoul, the number of CCTV has increased from 14,531 in 2012 to 27,694 in 2015, a nearly two-fold surge over three years according to the Seoul metropolitan government. In addition, the cameras are monitored by staff at the CCTV integrated control centre. Despite this increase, installation locations and number of installed CCTVs were often determined by the distribution or intensity of the residents' complaints without scientific analysis until recently. However, some boroughs are currently trying to conduct scientific analysis and mid-term planning of CCTV installation. For example, only cameras are installed in many cases, but in areas of high crime or fear of crime, CCTVs are installed along with situational crime prevention measures based on CPTED, such as streetlights.

Local governments are moving forward with the installation of CCTV, even in financially unstable areas. Thus, it is time to reconsider and reassess whether these efforts really serve the intended purpose. To this end, this study seeks to explore the relationship between CCTV and fear of crime by a multi-level approach. The exponential surge in CCTV over the last 15 years was largely sparked by the demands of residents that their fear of crime be addressed and reduced. In a Korean study related to this issue, it was found that the more people feared for their families concerning crime, the more they wanted CCTV cameras (Park, 2014). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate whether CCTV actually reduces fear of crime, namely, whether a reverse causal effect is valid. Concerning this issue, Wilson and Sutton (2003) recommended, "The two aspects of crime control and the reduction in fear of crime should be seriously considered when installing CCTV (Wilson and Sutton, 2003)." Currently, several studies are available that verify the relationship between CCTV and the fear of crime; however, very few studies involve a multi-level analysis of the effects of CCTV upon fear of crime, using the number of CCTV cameras as a regional-level variable.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Fear of crime

Fear of crime is defined as a psychological and emotional reaction such as anxiety or worry concerning the possibility of harm resulting from crime (Ferraro, 1995; Garofalo, 1981; Maxfield, 1984). Considering this conceptual definition, fear of crime is measured using two different categories: fear of crime and perceived risk of crime (LaGrange and Ferraro, 1987; Hale, 1996). First, fear of crime is a type of fear concerning the possibility of crime victimization regardless of the specificity of the crime, and it is measured by the emotional fear of certain situations such as "walking alone at night" (Taylor and Hale, 1986). This concept of fear of crime is used broadly. On this issue, the point has been made that when measuring fear of crime, it is necessary to offer a range of specific types of crime. Fear of crime measured in this manner is referred to as perceived risk of crime (Rountree, 1998). The perceived risk of crime involves a list of various crimes such as murder, robbery, larceny, and sexual violence and measures the fear caused by each particular crime (Franklin et al., 2008; Salmi et al., 2004). Although fear of crime as measured through these two different approaches will vary at times, they remain mutually complementary (Hale, 1996).

Concerning the fear of crime, the OECD surveys its member countries and publishes results in the Better Life Index (BLI),<sup>1</sup> which assesses the quality of life in member countries based on 11 different factors. The index includes safety, which is measured by murder rates and fear of crime. According to the results in 2016, 68% of respondents said they felt safe when walking alone on the streets at night, and South Korea was ranked 22nd in this category, indicating that more people than expected feared crime. The same result is demonstrated in the results of a survey on feelings of safety conducted by the Korean national police agency (KNPA). In a survey from the latter half of 2015, the national average score for safety was 68.6 out of 100. Certain empirical studies conclude that quality of life deteriorates along with a rising fear of crime (Hale, 1996; Hansmaier, 2013). Nonetheless, fear of crime among Korean citizens is quite high. Consequently, women are less willing to go out at night, and there has been a flood of interest in self-defence products. Considering these circumstances, it is necessary to investigate factors that can reduce the fear of crime.

### 2.2. CCTV and fear of crime

In addition to its purpose of preventing crime, CCTV has been proposed and installed to reduce the fear of crime in communities (Phillips, 1999). Several studies have been conducted to verify the effectiveness of CCTV on fear of crime. Research has shown that over 70% of residents indicated a reduction in their fear of crime after the installation of CCTV (Bennett and Gelsthorpe, 1996; Chatterton and Frenz, 1994). Other studies have confirmed that CCTV was not effective for crime prevention but was effective at reducing the fear of crime (Musheno et al., 1978) and increasing feelings of safety (Bennett and Gelsthorpe, 1996; Ditton, 2000; Reid and Andresen, 2012; Sarno et al., 1999; Yavuz and Welch, 2010). In contrast, other research has reported that CCTV was not effective at reducing the fear of crime (Honest and Charman, 1992) or increasing feelings of safety (Zurawski, 2010). In relation to fear of terrorism, the effectiveness of CCTV for reassuring the public in the UK rail network was evaluated as lower than that of police presence and activity such as stop and search, indicating the effect of CCTV is limited (Power et al., 2016). Aside from these exceptions, many studies have reported the

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org>.

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