



"I Know Where You Live!" – Aspects of Watching, Surveillance and Social Control in a Conflict Zone (Northern Ireland)

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Abstract

This article examines the special role of non-technological, everyday surveillance in Northern Ireland, and its meaning for life in the conflict laden province. It looks at the dimensions of people watching other people and how it is that the culture of conflict, which undoubtedly still exists in Northern Ireland, also produces a culture of surveillance. This culture then affects the way in which other forms of surveillance are viewed: with the introduction of CCTV into Northern Ireland, it becomes clear that many issues connected to this technology differ in comparison to other locations and cultural contexts, particularly with regard to issues of trust.

Introduction

'I know where you live!' Five words that exemplify the special role of non-technological surveillance in Northern Ireland. Although these words may be used in a sinister and threatening way everywhere, they have some special repercussions in Northern Ireland, containing an immediate threat to life and safety of whoever is addressed. The remark shall be used to examine the role of everyday surveillance in the Northern Irish context and its meaning for life in the conflict laden province. Basically this article wants to explore the dimensions of people watching other people and how it is that the culture of conflict – undoubtedly existing in Northern Ireland – also produces a culture of surveillance. With the introduction of CCTV into Northern Ireland however it becomes clear that many issues connected to this technology differ in comparison to other locations and cultural contexts, e.g.: Great Britain or Germany.

A little story from Northern Ireland may underline the first statement and highlight its role in the social texture in the province.

While living in Derry/Londonderry during 2000/2001 I more or less regularly used the bus to go to Belfast for an interview, some research or for personal reasons. I then took the bus in the

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morning and bought a paper at the newsstand, which was run by an older woman that was familiar to me. What I had not imagined was that it was the other way round, too. When one day I bought a newspaper in the afternoon while waiting for a friend to visit, she said to me: "Don't you normally come here in the morning?" So although I was not a daily customer and never did more than buying a paper, she not only recognised me, but also knew when I would normally have been there. I found this a little bit frightening to be honest. However this might just be a coincidence and something that could have happened in other places as well - but given the social texture of divided communities, where it can be of vital importance to know who somebody is and what side he or she may possibly belong to, it also shed light on the culture of surveillance and watching that is part of life in Northern Ireland.²

In this paper I will explore two aspects of non-technological surveillance, which are dependent on each other and form the 'culture of watching'. It will become clear why it was necessary to establish a system of internal vigilance and social control: in order to successfully 'watch the enemy'. The central argument here is that the inter community conflict in Northern Ireland, fostered external surveillance of the 'Others' community and in turn necessitated and facilitated the internal surveillance of ones own community. The consequences of these human based surveillance systems impacted deeply on Northern Irish society and its effects can still be felt today, e.g.: in discussion surrounding the introduction and use of CCTV in the province.

I will argue that the practice of external surveillance was closely connected to acts of violence and deeply embedded in the way the conflict was carried out, while internal surveillance was about control, policing and discipline. All this upheld a system of communal deterrence that to this day structures many aspects of life and political discourse in Northern Ireland. By concluding with a discussion of the arguments around the introduction of CCTV, I want to highlight the impacts of this system and the long-lasting effects of human surveillance and suspicion.

Aspects of Watching

The roots for what I want to call a 'culture of watching' lie in the conflict of the past thirty years. And while surveillance always has a social impact on societies and social life it is equally shaped by existing social relations and cultural practices (cf.: McCahill, 2002: xii). This is why exploring aspects of surveillance – especially non-technological forms of surveillance – seeing, visibility and presence in Northern Ireland, supports any research into the consequences of new systems of surveillance such as CCTV (civic not military ones, I will come back to this later), which were introduced into Northern Ireland two or three years ago.

Neighbourhood vigilance and mutual surveillance of the other side have served two purposes: For one it was important for the communities' security, in that it served as a warning system against sectarian and security force attacks against them - watching the other. For another it has been used to keep an eye on the people in the neighbourhood, a form of social control that often

² The term "I know where you live" indeed surfaced a number of times in the interviews recorded during my field research in Northern Ireland.

took on forms of policing, in the absence of what the communities perceived as a proper and acceptable regular police force - watching your own. The two aspects reflect the two faces of surveillance that Lyon (2001) has identified: care and control. Only here a clear attribution as to where care ends and control begins, becomes fuzzy and is in many cases highly ambivalent.

In those neighbourhoods, where the regular police force was denied both entry and acknowledgement, alternative forms of justice and policing were established. Crime, antisocial behaviour and other misdemeanours could thus be dealt with from within the community itself. Watching, intelligence and surveillance were paramount for these systems, which as shown served as social control and an instrument of power as well as a life insurance for the people in these neighbourhoods.

The consequence of the first statement is that people not only knew where you lived, or who you were, but also that they would have kept an eye on you. So under the circumstances of the conflict and its often violent dynamics 'I know where you live!' lead to 'we will be watching you!' So it was not only about the knowledge of where you lived, but also about the control of what you did and where. Social control through human surveillance could have clearly regulated what your life within a given community would have been like.

Watching the Other

Surveillance in Northern Ireland, especially in the time of the 'Troubles' – as the time between 1968 and 1994 is referred to – and still to this day had many forms, technological and non-technological. David Lyon stressed the point that an analysis of surveillance is grounded on the fact that it is embodied persons watching over others, but that the new quality of surveillance lies in the fact that its embodiment lessens and is transferred to computers and other technological means (2001: 2ff; 2002:1). While the dynamics of technological surveillance is indeed far greater than that of people watching people in its consequences regarding control, political participation or democracy, aspects of non-technological surveillance can highlight particular social structures on which basis modern surveillance technologies can be introduced. On a very basic level it is the ordering of society that is made the focus of attention. In the case of Northern Ireland it provides the chance to explore the relation of power, violence and identity through aspects of surveillance.

Thus, the focus here will be on aspects of non-technological surveillance and its relation to structures of power, social control and identity within the context of the conflict in the province. As mentioned above, two main directions of surveillance have been identified: external and internal surveillance of people. Both were connected to each other, but initially served different purposes and thus can well be analysed separately.

External surveillance is closely connected to fear and anxiety on the one hand and the ability to defend, to fight and react in the context of conflict – this holds true for the paramilitaries as well as for police and military. Allen Feldman notes that in Northern Ireland photography had a dangerous avocation (the situation has softened in the past few years). Being seen and being

killed, seeing and killing were entangled and interchangeable in the ecology of fear and anxiety. Visual appropriation became a metonym for dominance over others (1997:29).

'Seeing is killing'

Accounts by Eamon Collins, a former IRA member turned outcast and book author described vividly the mechanisms of surveillance, watching and intelligence gathering as part of the, what he called, IRA killing machine (*Killing Rage*, 1997). For his 'testimony' he was killed in 1999 by his ex-comrades. One of his descriptions focused on the killing of a UDR man.³ In the chapter Collins basically recounts the information hunt on the man and within highlights aspects of exactly the fear and anxiety Feldman is talking about. Having managed to work closely to the UDR man for a short time, he happened to be alone with him in the offices where they both worked as excise officers:

One night Toombs made a surprise visit to my area when I was working late and alone. He had expected to find another of my colleagues there with me, a young Scotsman, but I had sent him home early, offering to cover for him. [.....] To me it seemed that Toombs had been disappointed at missing this young man's company for a few hours - a Scot, a Protestant, someone to talk to without fear of bringing a bullet in the back - rather than me, a Catholic, a nationalist, an unknown quantity. (21)

This example highlights Feldman's analysis of violence and vision, in which he sees social space, body, and ethnicity fusing in a visual diagnostic for homicide. Contact avoidance symbolises the very infrastructure of sectarian violence and as he says, can be measured by ways in which visual distancing organised victims and aggressors into stylised postures and poses (1997: 35). The nexus of ethnicity, space and body is essential for the situation of mutual deterrence and surveillance in Northern Ireland. Spatial claims and perceptions are of vital importance for the formation and maintenance of the ethno-religious-political identities in the province. The exclusiveness of the identity discourses are the origin and the motor of deterrence and mutual fear among the different groups. The body is the place where these fears are projected onto. Violence is directed against individuals (external and internally) and their bodies. Surveillance of bodies representing a different ethnic identity in confined spaces represents one of the bases for the system of communal deterrence.

Surveillance or vigilance, as many practices of suspicion are referred to, thus becomes the

³ Some of the acronyms used in this text are explained here:

UDR = *Ulster Defence Regiment*, part of the British Army, a part-time regiment, mostly protestant, has become the *Royal Irish Regiment (RIR)* today.

UVF = *Ulster Volunteer Force*, Loyalist paramilitary group.

UDA = *Ulster Defence Association*, largest Loyalist vigilance group, also responsible for terrorists acts, then using the name *Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF)*.

PSNI = *Police Service of Northern Ireland*, was the *Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC)* until November 2001.

IRA = *Irish Republican Army*, largest Republican paramilitary group, also known as the "Provos" as it is in fact the "Provisional IRA" and has been active and known under this acronym since the late 1960s. The *Official IRA* declared a ceasefire in 1972 and since has not played an important role in Northern Ireland.

important feature of the system of communal deterrence, with which Frank Wright (1987) explained the strategies of threat, violence and antagonism among Northern Irish communities, i.e. Catholics and Protestants.

Pete Shirlow from the University of Ulster at Coleraine has shown how the system of communal deterrence and contact avoidance can be observed in political geography and communal landscapes of Northern Ireland. He describes how, what he named 'spaces of fear' were evolving and how they impact on the everyday life and mobility of people living in many (mostly) working class residential areas (Shirlow, 2000; 2001). They, for instance, limited the knowledge of areas outside their own and restricted their mobility by their own choice. In the context of conflict and violence, this seems to be fuelling even more suspicion and antagonism, hatred and eventually violence.

Visible displays and murals, which can be found all over Northern Ireland, are also an important part of the political geography. And, they contribute to the system of communal deterrence as they are marking areas of identity and spaces of belonging. In this these displays and murals also are constructing spaces of fear or safety, depending on the content of the pictures. In its visibility they generate an internal meaning of identity and an external warning to let outsiders know, whose territory one is in. They produce the mappings and topology of political space and areas of surveillance. Many of them indeed display violence or the threat of violence, which makes them a visible part of deterrence strategies (cf.: Jarman, 1997; Zurawski, 2004)

Hence, violence is - not only, but - also dependent on perceptions, on 'mappings' of us and them and therefore is about social control. The 'spaces of fear' therefore generate also spaces of violence, as counter-reactions. 'Spaces of fear' are often perceived as spaces that hold a threat to life, or are simply unsafe to go to. Thus violence becomes an integral - even if only perceived - part of this space. But not only has the space itself had a connotation of violence, but also all things coming from these spaces or areas. Fear erects mental and physical boundaries between the spaces and its inhabiting people. Violence is anticipated in these areas and acted against persons from there, in the form of defence because of fear. Violence appears to be the flip side of fear, especially in a highly segregated society such as Northern Ireland with no chance of a sensible way of communication between its respective members. Feldman notes that the 'ghettoization' of urban space in Northern Ireland were also "implementing imperial and colonial agendas by using geographical control to constrain and rationalise social and therefore bodily and perceptual contact between sundered populations" (Feldman, 1997:34).

Communal deterrence - communal surveillance

By introducing the concept of communal deterrence it becomes clear that surveillance in the social structure and practices of Northern Irish society can be seen as a vital part in building and maintaining collective structures. References to the community or a collective entity can be found in many narratives of violence in Northern Ireland. Some statements collected during field research carried out in the province in 2000/2001, shows this and also supports Collins' account highlighting the relation of surveillance and violence and Wright's concept of a system of

communal deterrence⁴.

It has to be noted that the interviews carried out, were my no means focussing on aspects of surveillance, but on violence and its legitimisation. It is interesting however to see how aspects of surveillance, suspicion and control surface time and time again in these stories.

The structures of communal deterrence, and with it forms of political dichotomy, lead to a heightened suspicion of all things alien, especially and foremost if it was catholic or protestant. Feeling under threat stands out as one narrative that is recounted time again. A protestant community worker from the Fountain estate in Derry/Londonderry states that people feel vulnerable being under constant attacks (referring to the parades season) and sense very clear the 'us-them' structure that lies beneath:

..... they would attack you and there is a sense of bigotry and hatred that even people from other areas, if you identified as being of the other sort you would get a kicking.

Youth from the same estate support this in their stories dealing with recognition, security and violence:

Me and him were walking past and we were walking past the cinema and then these couple of fellas outside the cinema were with their girlfriends and said "that's Jaffa B over there from the Fountain" and I don't know how he noticed me and then they chased us the whole way round, around the back of the Quayside and the whole way back up.

Another boy also expressed his fears of being identified when going to certain nightclubs. The reasons for identifying are in fact mundane, as he recounts - he went on a school trip with them, played football against them, or was seen walking towards the Fountain, a protestant enclave in a mainly catholic environment on the Westside of the City of Derry.

Being recognised, identified as not belonging to a neighbourhood seems to constitute a major element in the practices of watching and suspicion. A community worker states that even today (in 2001 when the interview was held) he would not be able to walk through the Bogside (a strong and traditional catholic neighbourhood in Derry), because "*there would still be people in the Bogside who would have liked to dispatch me somewhere else*" - he indeed added that he would have liked some of them to be dispatched elsewhere, because of what *they* have done to *his* community.

⁴ Between August 2000 and July 2001 I was on fieldwork in Northern Ireland, during which I collected interviews from over 55 people. These are the basis for the analysis made herein. The research was funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) (cf.: Zurawski 2001). I have been back in the province regularly since 2001. Other sources are accordingly marked. The last section of the paper is based on talks with community workers, civil rights organisations, business initiatives and police officers in Belfast and Derry in June 2004.

Tunnel Vision

Watching the other implies the element of suspicion and fear for one's own security. Given the tight knit structures of Northern Irish neighbourhoods, there was and still is a strong sense of belonging to a community, which supported the mechanisms of watching, surveillance and reaction to potential threats by others. References to a threat were almost always made towards a collective other. 'They' wanted to destroy my community, or it was 'them' to watch out for. Antagonism was exclusively collective and led to what one protestant ex-prisoner and former UVF paramilitary described as a tunnel vision. A tunnel vision towards the other, which had to be kept at distance or being destroyed in anticipation of further threats to the integrity and security of one's community. This tunnel vision very much coincides with Feldman's remark that 'seeing is killing', as he also refers to the telescopic sight and the attached weapon as a field of vision, threatening the other (1997:37).

Two statements by two former paramilitaries meeting in Berlin on an event organised by a German peace initiative in 2003 might exemplify this tunnel vision and the merciless antagonism between the groups and their views.

Joe, a former IRA volunteer puts it quite frankly when he says that

10 years ago it would not have been possible to sit in one room with this person here: Peter. I would have killed this person and it would have been a legitimate right of mine to kill this person, but I do not wish to do it today because of the disposition we have in our country. Because of the ongoing dialogue we have, because we want to achieve the same things.

In return Peter an ex-prisoner and former combatant for the UVF comes to similar conclusions when reflecting on the situation in the past:

10, 5 years ago it would have been impossible to sit in the same room with Joe. Not that I wouldn't have wanted to have sat, the situation in Northern Ireland would have... you have to take measured risks. I have nothing personally against anybody - 15 years ago I would have sat with Gerry Adams. But in the situation where you had people been killed daily, people been killed, people been intimidated, people bombed, people been injured, people been threatened, on both sides on a daily occurrence, your community would have looked upon it as you being a traitor, betraying them.

Both statements point to the fact that while watching the other was important and for some people involved a necessity, it also meant that at the same time they were being watched by themselves - not only by the perceived enemy, but also by their own communities. Being a traitor or an informer to the police was among the biggest fears for many and among the most important reasons for suspicion of the police and thus for establishing 'alternative' systems of justice and policing within the community to 'watch your own'.

The fact of being seen, being watched and thus being made a potential target of violent action is deeply inserted in the lives of people and materialised in their bodies (Feldman, 1997: 47). Testimonies by police officers highlight the fear of being watched and hence attacked, being made a bodily target of violence. These circumstances regulated many of their daily activities and, being forced onto them as part of their existence, they had no choice of opting out.

A police officer from Derry reflects on issues of security and visibility now and in the past. His statement stands for many others made by security forces personnel:

Well obviously there are certain measures I am taking around my home, security measures. When you get up the first thing you do is check your car in the morning and all the rest of family have to check their cars. Travelling to work, to work it's not so bad. Coming back, leaving the police station here is really the big risk at that time, so it was. At the minute there is a certain degree of a threat from a distance. But not so much as it was then. To leave the police station after work was the big problem then because they could just tail you and take you whenever they wanted.

The police man talks about fear and issues of (in)security, about being tailed and being taken (killed) as being part of everyday life and part of the job. He constitutes a potential victim in his eyes - but on the other hand it was also part of his job to gather information on paramilitaries, to watch certain neighbourhoods and to act against individuals branded as 'terrorists' through intelligence and surveillance. What becomes obvious here is the system of mutual surveillance that does not only function as a deterrent but also as activity to go against potential enemies pre-emptively. The structures of the conflict - whose impact can still be felt today, though with different dynamics and less deadly consequences - made everybody a potential target and a threat to others at the same time. The result was highly segregated communities that served to minimize the threat and insecurity, which in turn only fuelled the system of mutual surveillance and suspicion. And: it coerced the communities to comply and obey and not only watch the others, but also to make sure no threat is not coming from within. The necessary consequence of which was to watch your own, too.

Watching your Own

Always in fear of the other side inflicting pain and death to one's community, people kept to themselves, on an interpersonal level as well as geographically. Spatial formations and perceptions reflect these structures to this day (cf.: Shirlow, 2000; Kuusisto; 2001). To maintain these structures, which seemed to be important to maintain security and defend an identity, it was necessary to keep an eye on all members of your community. To watch your own was part of the strategy for social order within the community. Any activities that might have threatened its integrity had to be controlled and eventually sanctioned.

Taking control

Internal surveillance can thus be seen as the flip side and inevitable consequence of the system of mutual surveillance and deterrence. The saying 'I know where you live!' becomes almost obsolete in this regard, as this is the prerequisite of living in a community (neighbourhood) in the first place. The two faces of surveillance - care and control - constitute a highly ambivalent concept in this context. It is the community that provides its members with security through its system of communal surveillance - care; and at the same time its members have to comply with the fact that it is the same community that controls and punishes any kind of deviation that might pose a threat to this security. But who actually takes control, who punishes who watches?

As the police was part of the system of communal deterrence as one of its poles in the conflict, they were not able to act as a neutral force and ensure the safety of neither protestant nor catholic communities. The police was simply not accepted in dealing with 'internal' threats. The refusal to accept their competence, it were the paramilitaries that filled the vacuum and acted as police in this regard. It was therefore them who benefited from this vigilance and mutual surveillance the most. They sought and gained control over the communities during the conflict. Very often violence and deterrence through punishment beatings, knee-cappings, shootings or exiling people as the practical procedures past and present (cf.: Knox and Monaghan, 2000) in conjunction with tight and coercive surveillance practices have been the means to achieve this control.

But it would be to short-sighted to simply assume that it was the paramilitary establishing a kind of alternative regime on their own. They would not have been able to do so without the compliance of the people and the social textures and systems of social control, communal deterrence, mutual surveillance and suspicion. Accounts and stories from Northern Ireland will show how much these structures are part of the social relations and a cultural practice as response to the conflict.

Neighbourhood watch

Justifications of why paramilitaries were taking over policing roles are closely related to the external threat, the fact of being seen, being watched by others and thus made a potential target. A former UDA man (protestant) explains the initial role of the organisation in the early 1970s, as being a group that just looked after their own areas,

to make sure nothing happened. You knew strangers coming into the area, you kept an eye on people's cars, people's houses. You class them as vigilantes if you want, but they were set up at the start just to protect their own areas and that was the height of it.

Two members of the protestant UVF stress the point that the paramilitaries were in fact not establishing a regime distant from the community, but much more were an integral part of it:

The other thing too is, when the trouble went, we wouldn't consider ourselves terrorists. When people use the word terrorist, or using it in that context, it's not, the community doesn't see the likes of the UVF as people

wearing black uniforms and masks. It is not. It's not, it's Mrs. Jones's young fellow, the next neighbour, the man that cleans the streets, the man that runs the community centre, that's who they see is the UVF. So it's no problem to call one.

The second interview partner added that it was:

if you like, a sort of neighbourhood watch, just on a grander scale. They want to see the community develop, become better, they don't want to see their areas run down, therefore, whereas police men live in private housing estate, miles away, never have any bother themselves, so therefore there is no impetus again to go and solve the problem, whereas the paramilitaries they live in the area they don't want bother in their area, so therefore they go and solve the problem out.

Narratives that are highlighting the importance of the community and the internal control executed by paramilitaries can be found on both sides of Northern Irish society. . A former IRA combatant points to the fact that it was the communities that were asking the paramilitaries for their help with problems of antisocial behaviour, minor crimes and other – “*it was definitely a reaction from the local communities*” – arguments broad forward by others as well. He goes on to justify actions taken by the paramilitaries against individuals in that “*if he was handed over to the people who he inflicted what he did on, I mean, the punishment would be far worse*”. Many paramilitaries from both sides were arguing against the allegations that they were in fact policing the community and rather wanted themselves to be seen as ‘helping’ the community coming to terms “*with the fact that they are being tortured from within*” (for issues of punishment beatings, see: Knox and Monaghan, 2000; Feldman, 1997; 1998).

Watching the members of one’s own community served to coerce them to their rules, making sure that they do not pose an extra risk to security, which the system of communal surveillance and deterrence against the perceived enemy was trying to keep at bay. The consequences of this internal system of tight social control were built on the absence of a reliable police force and the refusal to give any credit to the police. More, the fear of coming into contact with the police and being made a suspected informer spying on the community, helped to maintain the established power structures through social control and conformity.

The consequences of this were that the tunnel vision that was steering the communal antagonism between Protestants and Catholics was turned inside and extended towards one’s own community, one’s neighbours, introducing suspicion, fear and the need to watch. The power of care and control was transferred to the paramilitaries, who were eager to take it on and execute if they deemed necessary. And while the tunnel vision is extended from the enemy towards your own community, a general culture of surveillance seems to have been established, which blurs the boundaries between care and control and constructs an absolute and exclusive system of deterrence - internally and externally. While the paramilitaries are the ones that care and defend, they are also the ones that control, define in/exclusion and punish (destroy), which equips them with enormous power. Care for them also meant control and if needed punishment, destruction

and violence towards community members. They held and still hold the power of definition and through it the means and legitimisation to enforce these definitions. The power over definitions gave them the powers to violent action ('Aktionsmacht') as Heinrich Popitz has pointed out in his analysis of the 'phenomena of power' (Popitz, 1992).

Issues of identity, which lie at the heart of the conflict, are therefore put into the hands of the paramilitaries, as they have the power to maintain and defend the contested discourses. Surveillance, practices of watching and coercion were (and are) an essential cultural practice for survival and control in Northern Ireland, helping to maintain structures of power that are centred essentially around issues of identity and its defence (cf.: Zurawski, 2002; 2002a). But identity in Northern Ireland is never only an issue of cultural values and practices on their own, but always an issue of boundaries and classification - and fear of communal disintegration. Although peace has come to the province now, the long nurtured antagonism of both groups is still in place, along with the 'culture of watching' and issues of security and suspicion. Surveillance practices are therefore still in place and can be counted as a cultural feature. The process of transition is shifting many of the established structures, with them the position of the paramilitaries regarding their role as community defenders. This is a situation that might generate further problems within Northern Ireland in the future.

From neighbourhood watch to CCTV

Northern Ireland is at the beginning to develop many institutions of a civil society. At the moment, many of these exist alongside some of the informal ones that were established throughout the conflict, e.g. alternative justice systems, which were very much relying on human surveillance and mechanisms of social control. Conflict related crime and violence has vanished to a great extent, but new forms are on the rise, such as drug crime, smuggling, counterfeit and others. Also, police and communities have to deal with new forms of antisocial behaviour, which is no longer sorted out by the paramilitaries alone, also because many of their actions are not as well respected as they were before. Among the means to tackle some of these issues, such as street crime, drinking and alcohol related vandalism, especially on weekends, councils, police and other state and communal agencies have decided to install CCTV, a technology which so far was only implemented by the military.

Technological surveillance was (and to a minor extent still is) also a means for the state to control the 'terrorists', to police the conflict and to fight the war against the *Irish Republican Army*. It has to be noted that the cameras and microphones throughout the province that were mounted before 1998, were foremost put up to control and observe the catholic population. The installations on top of Divis flats for instance were pointing towards the catholic heartland of the Falls Road in Belfast, as is still the army tower in Derry that has a dozen cameras pointed at the likewise catholic Bogside in the town. Throughout Northern Ireland this was a general military practice of dealing with the conflict or the prevention and control of violence and conflict. Living under surveillance and being controlled by cameras in their movements and everyday lives was a fact for some people in Northern Ireland, which many of the republican (catholic) politicians and activists felt was an abnormal situation. Ironically its is now the Unionist (protestant) politicians,

as Henry McDonald notes in the Guardian (2004), that would like to keep this abnormality alive, as they oppose the reduction of any security measure, such as the watchtowers and military video surveillance. Previously it was they, "who drew comfort from Margaret Thatcher's tenuous assertion that Northern Ireland was as British as Finchley. Now it is the unionists who appear to want 'war-zone Northern Ireland' to be maintained".

In a shift of priorities and as part of the peace process, the civic surveillance of public places is now expanding in Northern Ireland, while the rest of the United Kingdom is already well equipped with cameras (cf.: Norris and Armstrong, 1999; Gill, 2003) In Northern Ireland it is part of a wider 'Community Safety' concept strengthening local government. This concept can be seen as an ideological construction around which much of the CCTV projects are being conceptualized. As a strategy to gain some form of community safety, it strongly advocates the use of CCTV for the prevention of crime and antisocial behaviour (cf.: Feenan, 2000). 'Community Safety' is part of the Criminal Justice proposals, which is a department connected to the *Northern Ireland Office* (NIO) and thus a government initiative.

Installing and advocating the use of CCTV can be seen as a strategy of the state to regain power and to generate safety for all citizens as part of new approach to police and govern Northern Ireland. By introducing public CCTV state agencies at the time wanted to establish their neutrality, which had not been granted by the former military surveillance practices. These new measures however must be seen in the light of the 'culture of watching' and former practices of surveillance. Suspicion against CCTV is fed by the same fears against surveillance and visibility before the introduction of CCTV that were discussed above and were being watched had the connotation of being in danger, being made a target of violent action by others.

The strategies and schemes behind the installation of public CCTV differ across Northern Ireland. There does not seem to be a coherent way in which CCTV systems are implemented locally. Local authorities are using different approaches to cover a range of problems. While in Belfast public CCTV is mainly run by the police to monitor so called interfaces between catholic and protestant neighbourhoods to minimize riots and violence, the city council in the City of Derry runs its own initiative, consisting of local government, the police and local business people to control the main shopping and nightlife areas. Both are met with scepticism from various sides of the communities. Most prominent among them is the criticism of catholic communities, who are suspicious against new control measurements by the state under the disguise of community safety arguments.

Conclusion

The criticism by parts of the catholic community on issues surrounding the CCTV introduction in Northern Ireland must be understood in terms of experiences with past surveillance practices. For many of them surveillance still poses a threat and can only be understood in relation to the *tunnel vision* of the conflict and issues of communal deterrence as well as a general scepticism against the state. New CCTV initiatives are seen as a reminder of the old military surveillance structures against the catholic community. As shown, this was perceived as a threat to the

community at large and the individual in particular. And in the light of the culture of suspicion, fear and communal surveillance, the new cameras would then signify the same threat or are seen as a means of control – less as an instrument of a normalised society dealing with issues such as crime or vandalism. Hence, the arguments and debates around the installation of CCTV systems have a different focus compared to other parts of the UK or even Europe.

The surveillance structures which evolved in the conflict are still a felt and vivid reality in Northern Ireland. The need to watch the 'other' has not gone away. With still approximately 90% of the population living in segregated areas, the need to rely on 'your own' seems still very much intact. The mechanisms of internal surveillance and social control have very much the same reasons. Both mechanisms of surveillance have been structuring Northern Irish society for the past 30 years. The peace process has brought about new insecurities and the loss of used practices and 'securities'. To maintain the known practices and attitudes seems to be one answer to cope with the new situation of social transformation.

Changes or the introduction of new structures, esp. when they are related to issues of surveillance can thus only be dealt with under the "old paradigm" of surveillance as a threat, as being seen as a target or as a means of internal control. This however does not foster a general understanding of the intentions of the new measurements, which are aimed at more general crime issues and are set up as non-sectarian civic schemes. Or do reduce sectarian aggravation at interface areas in an impartial manner.

Still, for many people the new CCTV systems do not establish trust, but recall the feeling of surveillance, suspicion and deterrence. Discussions around CCTV are very much fuelled by arguments that are originating in discourses where visibility meant a threat to life and the security and integrity of one community. The division of the society and the felt need to communal surveillance are – although living in a period of peace – still a lived reality. The role of the state never was neutral and is not perceived as such by parts of society today. Therefore, new measurements of surveillance that indeed follow different political aims, such as crime control and public safety, are mainly seen as new ways to maintain old structures of 'hostile observation'.

Issues of privacy, data protection and the threat of total surveillance are therefore less prominent than in an English context or indeed elsewhere. Thus, the introduction of public CCTV systems is often accompanied by community audits, trying to hear and involve all sides of the surveillance measurements before installation. If these procedures will lessen the scepticism against them is still open to debate. The success of these systems, e.g. as policing instruments at interfaces, cannot be finally evaluated yet - although first results of a small survey made by the police and other stationary agencies in Belfast (PSNI 2004), showed a reduction of riots and inter-communal violence in these spaces. But truly lasting effects and successes are also dependent on the politics of public surveillance and the possible shift in attitudes towards any system of control, as they are always situated in contested political and cultural spaces, with a complex history of watching, visibility, control and fear. In the ideas of a community safety programme, CCTV's role is to lessen communal tension by way of a neutral approach to problems of crime and other that affect all communities likewise. Seen in the light of past and current cultural practices, fears and attitudes towards surveillance and visibility, it could also be the source of

new antagonism and insecurities.

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