Crime Control or Crime Culture TV?

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Nic Groombridge
Senior Lecturer, Media Arts and Sociology, St. Mary's University College, London

Abstract

In criminological and in popular or media discourse CCTV is seen to be ‘working’. Sometimes concern is raised about the civil liberties issues raised by such surveillance - for instance, in its extension from shopping malls to police cells. This paper reviews the criminological contributions to the debate but goes on to cross the borders of criminology into media and cultural studies by examining popular cultural texts which focus on or incorporate CCTV and surveillance as themes. Examples include: Big Brother, The Simpsons, J.G. Ballard's Super Cannes and Ben Elton's Dead Famous. That is, whether CCTV works or not, it has become part of the cultural repertoire. Some thoughts are offered on the efficacy / ‘ethicacy’ of CCTV but more on the intertwined nature of crime and media and the recognition that CCTV is a medium which has become part of our culture.
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