

Brianna MacMahon
PSC 768: Law, Courts, and Human Rights
Final Paper
4 May 2020

Police Surveillance Technology:
A Comparative Analysis of the United States and Britain

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a sharp increase in studies on the police, including, but not limited to: the use of force in policing, urban versus rural policing, and racial minorities and the police. Undeniably, it is of critical normative and empirical importance that we understand (i) why some communities report lower levels of trust in the police than others and (ii) how we can repair this broken trust. Time and again, scholars have suggested that technology—such as closed-circuit television (CCTV) and body-worn cameras (BWCs)—may be able to provide this much-needed transparency and accountability by documenting the scene in as unbiased a manner as possible. If, for instance, there is video evidence for how an encounter with a police officer transpired, then both parties are less likely to resort to force, as they know that the BWC is actively recording the scene. Similarly, if a potential criminal is aware that CCTV is located in front of a store, he is less likely to go through with his plan of robbing said store, as he knows that he will be captured on camera.

In this paper, I conduct a comparative analysis of police surveillance technology in the United States and Britain. First, I review the relevant literature on police-civilian relations, dividing it into three broad sections: (i) the use of force in policing, (ii) early experiences with the police, and (iii) racial minorities and the police. While this review is by no means exhaustive of all the literature on police-civilian relations, it adequately lays the groundwork for why there has been a push in recent years for more technology to improve police-civilian relations. Second, I

delve into the literature on two specific and prevalent types of surveillance technology: (i) CCTV and (ii) BWCs. Both technologies are different in terms of how they operate—CCTV, for instance, is positioned throughout a community, while BWCs are implanted upon a police officer’s vest. Yet, they serve related purposes: to deter crime (for CCTV) and to deter use of force (for BWCs). Moreover, CCTV and BWCs are also both intended to make civilians feel safer and to assist the police in their investigations. Notably, CCTV has been in existence for far longer than BWCs; thus, the literature on CCTV is slightly more solidified. Still, it makes sense to compare and contrast the two technologies against each other, as they both raise questions of privacy, transparency, and accountability. Finally, I conclude by summarizing the findings of how CCTV and BWCs could improve police-civilian relations, suggesting further avenues for research.

Police-Civilian Relations

a. The Use of Force in Policing

The traditional political science literature on law enforcement posited that force is a fundamental aspect of policing in the contemporary world (Bittner 1970). Yet, law enforcement agencies—particularly those in the United States—have been criticized for their over-use of—and, quite frankly, reliance on—force to achieve their ends (Nelson 2001). This undue application of force has dire consequences, devastating police-community relations and fostering a severe sense of mutual distrust (Littlejohn et al. 1984; Braga et al. 2014). Instead of seeking to remedy this divide through policies that would encourage community policing and thus foment greater trust between officers and civilians, however, law enforcement agencies instead adopted controversial policing tactics, such as the New York Police Department’s (NYPD) now defunct Stop-and-Frisk—a policy that unduly targeted non-white civilians (Tyler and Fagan 2012). Expectedly, such law enforcement measures have merely exacerbated the tension between police officers and their

communities, the ultimate consequence being civilians' diminished trust in the police as neutral arbiters of justice. Truly, in recent years, the question of how police officers should be "policed" has become more prevalent in the literature (Fridell 2016; Lim 2017). Goldsmith (2010) argued that police misconduct has always been an issue of accountability; the advents in technology have merely awarded the people more power in holding police officers accountable. To Chan (1999), police accountability can be construed in two ways: the control of the police, or officers' ability to explain their actions in the field.

Indeed, police need to be able to explain why and when they resort to aggressive policing tactics. Aggressive policing tactics can range from unduly detaining a certain class of citizens (eg. racially discriminatory policing policies, such as the aforementioned NYPD's Stop-and-Frisk) to officers' use of excessive force in police-civilian encounters, the latter of which results in severe injury—or even death—of the civilian. Other instances of aggressive policing tactics include, but are not limited to (i) the restriction of minorities' mobility (Bass 2001a), (ii) increased levels of detainment and community surveillance (see Fagan and Davies 2000; Hurst et al. 2000; Weitzer 1999), (iii) the rise in police officers' use of undue force (Weitzer 1999), (iv) increased instances of police misconduct (Kane 2002), and (v) decreased response times to crises and fewer police services (Klinger 1997). Soss and Weaver (2017, 571), for their part, deem the current rise in aggressive policing tactics a "pivot toward violations of order." In several respects, the contemporary literature on policing has been dominated by discussions of (i) how police officers are socialized (Cohen 2017; Soss and Weaver 2017), (ii) whether the chain of hierarchy actually encourages officers on the beat to resort to aggression with suspect civilians (Cohen 2017), and (iii) if technological advancements (such as body-worn cameras) can properly address these concerns by providing more transparency and accountability (Lum et al. 2019).

Until fairly recently, political science, as a field, had failed to consider policing to be a political matter. Lerman and Weaver (2014) altered this by framing aggressive policing tactics in a decidedly political light. They argued that the policing literature has already hinted at the political ramifications of aggressive policing tactics; for instance, prior studies had suggested that citizens learn about the intricacies of government operations through their personal interactions with local agencies, such as the police (Forman 2004; Soss 2005). As such, negative interactions with the police are more likely to have a chilling effect on citizens' broader perceptions of the state. In extreme cases, such alienated citizens may become less likely to reach out to their local government, instead choosing "politics of invisibility" (Cohen 2010, 195). Yet, high levels of interactions with the police need not result in decreased faith in the state. Echoing the conclusions of Griffiths and Winfree (1982) and Leiber, Nalla, and Farnworth (1998), who had argued that communities that experience high amounts of police-civilian contact are not necessarily adversely impacted by these interactions, Lerman and Weaver (2014, 217) found that "the prevalence of police activity may be associated with higher levels of local engagement." In these instances, citizens may feel more closely connected to the police force and trust officers to protect their communities. A high visibility of police officers, therefore, may actually encourage citizens to feel safer and more politically active in their communities.

However, officers' *overuse* of force has a chilling effect on community members' sense of political efficacy, thus decreasing the likelihood of the community members reaching out to their local government when they are in need of assistance. Hence, aggressive policing tactics directly impact citizens' engagement with not only the police, but their local government (Lerman and Weaver 2014). The consequences of aggressive policing tactics could, on a large scale, be democratically catastrophic, with lower voter turnout from affected communities, higher rates of

political alienation, and decreased levels of trust in government. Due to the racially motivated nature of aggressive policing tactics, an alarmingly large number of civilians—whom Lerman and Weaver deem “custodial citizens”—are now questioning whether they are, in fact, full-fledged citizens. This “diminished belief in [the] equality of citizenship,” for its part, translates into decreased levels of political trust, efficacy, and participation (Lerman and Weaver 2014, 16-17). Disillusionment with the system, then, translates into outright apathy, with citizens actively and consciously opting out of all sorts of civic activities, from participation in social groups to voting. Hence, aggressive policing tactics can also demobilize and, in the most extreme cases, disenfranchise citizens.

b. Early Experiences with the Police

Indeed, early experiences with the police can negatively impact youths’ attitudes toward the police. Hurst and Frank (2000) contend that researchers have dedicated minimal attention to youths’ attitudes toward the police. They point to a handful of studies from the mid- to late-twentieth century (see Griffiths and Winfree 1982; Rusinko, Johnson, and Hornung 1978; Winfree and Griffiths 1977) that focused upon youths’ attitudes toward the police (and, in some of the studies, other criminal justice agencies). The results of these studies were, at best, inconclusive; while Winfree and Griffiths (1977) found that race’s effect on youths’ attitudes toward the police was negligible, Rusinko, Johnson, and Hornung (1978) concluded that black youths were significantly more critical of the police than their white counterparts. Across several studies, sex was not found to have a significant effect on one’s attitudes toward the police. The studies have varied in size, with some focusing upon one city (Sullivan et al. 1987) while others aggregated youths’ attitudes across several cities (Taylor et al. 2001).

An interesting finding supported across the studies, however, is that the more contact

youths have with the police, the more negative their attitudes toward the police are (see Rusinko, Johnson, and Hornung 1978; Winfree and Griffiths 1977). Crucially, Griffiths and Winfree (1982, 138) offered a vital caveat, noting that “[t]hose juveniles who reported negative contacts with the police were negative in their views of law enforcement, while the converse was true for youths with positive experiences with the police.” Leiber, Nalla, and Farnworth (1998) supported Griffith’s and Winfree’s conclusion, reporting that the nature of youths’ interactions with the police is more important than the quantity of said interactions. Notably, black youths reported lower levels of respect for the police when their interactions with officers involved being questioned at the station. Overall, a well-established verdict in the literature is that young people possess more critical attitudes toward the police than older people (see Boggs and Galliher 1975; Scaglione and Condon 1980) because young people are significantly more likely to experience hostile interactions with police officers (see Erez 1984; Scaglione and Condon 1980).

Through their study, Hurst and Frank aimed to build upon this relatively scant and understudied literature, more thoroughly examining youths’ attitudes toward the police. In line with the aforementioned works, they found that young people are significantly less favorable of the police than their adult counterparts. Indeed, as opposed to adult respondents, the youths whom Hurst and Frank surveyed reported low levels of trust and satisfaction in the police. What might explain youths’ unfavorable opinions of the police? Generally, young people are more familiar with the police than other criminal justice officials, as police are present in every community. Consequently, youths’ interactions with police can influence the former’s views on the criminal justice system. Thus, these early encounters are crucial for young people’s political socialization. Previous studies had found that positive relationships between the police and their community members increased the community members’ willingness to help the police in their investigations

(see Goldstein 1987; Stipak 1979). Based on these consistent and well-supported findings, Hurst and Frank contended that it only makes sense to apply the same logic to youths' relationships with the police. Accordingly, they claim that young people's early experiences with the police should be monumental in forming their views on the criminal justice system.

Of course, there are several reasons why this reality should concern us. If police are disproportionately targeting certain groups of citizens based on ascriptive characteristics such as race or sex, then a true schism emerges in society wherein those whose experiences with the police are primarily positive report higher levels of trust in government than those whose experiences with the police are primarily negative. Through their aggressive policing tactics, then, police are, in essence, disenfranchising—or, at the very least, demobilizing—a significant portion of the citizenry. Police are meant to serve as protectors of their communities. Yet, if youths' interactions with police officers are of such a hostile nature that the former develop a lack of trust in not just the police, but government, in general, this can harm the legitimacy of our democracy. Truly, the literature needs to analyze more closely the political ramifications of such negative interactions with the police. If an entire generation can become so deeply disaffected with the criminal justice system through their interactions with the police alone, then we must understand how to reverse such alienation.

c. Racial Minorities and the Police

For decades, scholars have studied how experiences with the police affect not only citizens' views of the police as an institution, but the state, in general. Feagin (1991, 115) theorized that, in part, the “cumulative impact of racial discrimination” explains blacks' unfavorable perceptions of the police. In Feagin's estimation, these negative, accumulated interactions with the police become a part of the collective experiences of all blacks. Indeed, it is not only blacks' personal experiences

with the police that influence them; oftentimes, by looking around their communities and witnessing the sheer prevalence of racial discrimination in policing, blacks internalize their community members' struggles as their own (Weitzer 2002). In a later work, Feagin and Sikes (1994, 16) expanded upon this idea of collective experiences, finding that "experiences with serious discrimination are stored not only in individual memories but also in family stories and group recollections." Through the power of group recollections and collective experiences, individual experiences are thus translated into community ones.

Expectedly, one of the most empirically supported findings is that blacks report far higher levels of distrust toward the police than their white counterparts (see Barlow and Barlow 2002; Weitzer 1999, 2000, and 2002; Weitzer and Tuch 2002). In tandem with this conclusion, many studies have found that prevalent, negative police encounters lead people to view officers less favorably than those who do not experience such adverse interactions (see Decker 1981; Huebner et al. 2004). Weitzer and Tuch (2002) argued that race, coupled with negative experiences with the police, are two of the greatest indicators of one's attitudes toward the police. As Hurst et al. (2000) found, young, urban black men are the demographic most frequently detained by the police. Unsurprisingly, these excessive stops—which are, in large part, due to the racially discriminatory nature of policing—decrease young black men's confidence in the police. Expanding upon this framework of blacks' disillusionment with the police, Rosenbaum et al. (2005) found that the effects of vicarious experiences on community members' views of the police are more prevalent in black communities, as blacks are particularly inclined to share their negative police experiences with their friends and families. These stories, in turn, have a direct impact on blacks' perceptions of the police, resulting in higher levels of distrust.

With these studies in mind, Brunson (2007) sought to examine how accumulated

experiences influence young, urban black men's perceptions of the police. Two-thirds of the young men he surveyed claimed that the police are difficult to talk to, half reported that the police were impolite, and slightly less than half revealed that police officers frequently "harass and mistreat people in the neighborhood" (Brunson 2007, 81). Moreover, the young men sharply criticized the police for what they perceived to be ineffective crime prevention and response. Such unfavorable attitudes toward the police translate into outright disaffection, as these young men grow to accept that the police do not care about the security of their community members (Brunson 2007, 83). In extreme instances, negative experiences with the police—whether those experiences assume the form of unwarranted stops or overuse of force—do not just affect black citizens' attitudes toward the police. Instead, these experiences carry ramifications for how blacks view the entire criminal justice system. Blacks who perceive the criminal justice system as unresponsive to their needs are less likely "to testify as witnesses in criminal proceedings and/or when serving as jurors," or convict a black defendant (Brunson 2007, 93). Furthermore, blacks who become disenchanted with the criminal justice system are more likely to try to solve disputes on their own, as they no longer trust the police to provide protection. Negative experiences with the police can thus make blacks feel like lesser citizens, and they do not feel as civically or politically efficacious as their white counterparts.

Brunson's study goes a long way toward explaining the various ways in which negative, accumulated experiences with the police can impact young black men's perceptions of the police. Brunson bolstered his argument through the use of in-depth, detailed interviews, painting a deeply distressing picture of young, urban black men's troubled relationship with the police. A limit of Brunson's study, of course, is that he focused upon a small group of young black men in St. Louis, Missouri. Despite the limited scope of his inquiries, his results are comparable with those

conducted in other urban areas and contribute to the ever-growing field on how accumulated experiences with the police influence blacks' perceptions of them. Toward the end, Brunson offered some policy recommendations, reiterating his belief that the police need to work consciously to rebuild trust in these communities, but he does not here fully expand upon the consequences of urban blacks' decreased levels of political efficacy.

Recently, Braga, Brunson, and Drakulich (2019) conducted a survey of the current state of the field regarding the effects of accumulated experiences on urban communities' attitudes toward the police. Interestingly, while black communities have the aforementioned tradition of sharing their experiences with the police with their families and friends, this same phenomenon does not exist in white communities (Brunson and Weitzer 2011). In essence, whites do not feel as compelled as blacks to warn younger generations about the dangers of walking the street late at night, acting "suspiciously," or talking back to a police officer. Clearly, a disconnect exists between the police and non-white communities: a disconnect that detrimentally impacts the citizens of these communities and results in diminished trust and confidence in the police. Braga, Brunson, and Drakulich (2019, 541) note that "most individuals, regardless of race and socioeconomic status, are not antipolice." Therefore, it is not intrinsic that blacks should distrust the police more than whites. Instead, blacks' disproportionately negative experiences with the police must be able to explain this stunning—and disturbing—disparity in citizens' perceptions of the police. Braga, Brunson, and Drakulich concluded by offering a cautiously optimistic view of the future of policing, suggesting that an emphasis on community policing may go a long way toward rebuilding the lost trust between black urban communities and the police. Furthermore, they foresee the full implementation of body-worn cameras increasing the police's transparency, which, theoretically, could result in increased trust in the police. These fractured relationships

cannot, and will not, be healed overnight, but the police must actively choose to pursue more community-based policing in order to start the process of resurrecting their communities' confidence in them as providers of security.

Tragically, a paradox exists, where “impoverished communities of color feel simultaneously over- and underpoliced” (Braga, Brunson, and Drakulich 2019, 549). While community-based policing and technological advancements such as body-worn cameras can, potentially, increase urban (predominantly non-white) communities' trust in the police, I argue that the problem is more systemic. Nationally, we need to re-examine how we train our police officers. It is not enough to install body-worn cameras on every officer's vest, or cameras upon every police car's dashboard. We need to change the way police officers are told to behave in the field. Incidents of police brutality and racial profiling are not relegated to one region of the country, or one city, demonstrating just how pervasive the problems are. More incentive must be placed upon police forces to investigate how officers are trained. Police officers are trained to respond to perceived suspect aggression with aggression, but instead, they should be instructed in de-escalation tactics. Then, and only then, will community members feel safer in their interactions with police officers.

As aforementioned, non-white communities are more likely to be the target of aggressive policing tactics than predominantly white ones (see Fagan and Davies 2000; Leitzel 2001; Tyler and Waslack 2004; Weitzer 2000; Weitzer and Tuch 1999). Previous studies had demonstrated that the demographic group most affected by aggressive policing tactics is young, urban black men (see Brunson and Miller 2006a, 2006b; Hurst et al. 2000). Expectedly, aggressive policing tactics impact community-police relations, with civilians who view officers as aggressors expressing greater doubt in the police's regard for their rights and overall safety (Carr, Napolitano, and

Keating 2007). Officers' overuse of force can, and does, dramatically decrease a community's perception of the police's legitimacy (Braga et al. 2014; Brunson and Miller 2006a, 2006b). These diminished perceptions of police legitimacy, in turn, decrease officers' effectiveness in the field (Tyler 2004), and the productivity of police-community relations is essentially non-existent. In the most extreme cases, if citizens perceive the police as a democratically unfair and unjust institution that is indifferent to their needs, these citizens may engage in acts of civil disobedience, ranging from small-scale riots to outright domestic terrorism (Krueger and Malechkova 2003).

Troublingly, those who experience direct interactions with the carceral state differ greatly from those who do not on a wide array of positions, from social issues such as same-sex marriage and church attendance to more substantive issues such as their economic well-being and the role of government in providing equal opportunities for all. Custodial citizens, for their part, express higher levels of anxiety over their economic futures and job prospects than the rest of the polity (Lerman and Weaver 2014, 233). These stark disparities illustrate that custodial citizens do not view the state in the same way as the broader populace—and, more alarmingly, that they do not perceive themselves as being equipped to improve their current condition as lesser citizens. Aggressive policing tactics feed into this sense of abject hopelessness, convincing custodial citizens that they are unequal members of society who are undeserving of the same rights and privileges that other civilians enjoy.

Police Surveillance Technology

a. CCTV

i. Britain

In Britain, police use of CCTV to solve cases is no longer questioned by the greater public. CCTV has been on the rise in Britain since the 1990's, and thus, its normalization into British

society has no doubt contributed to its high levels of support among the public. Indeed, the majority of the public now supports police use of CCTV, with very few reporting that CCTV infringes upon their privacy (Ditton 2000). Most civilians claim that the presence of CCTV on street corners makes them feel safer; moreover, they contend that the police are more effective at their job when they are able to utilize CCTV footage (Ditton 2000). Such statements demonstrate that the British public is not opposed to technology that potentially invades their privacy. Truly, when such technology leads to safer communities and more effective police forces, the benefits—in the eyes of the mass public—clearly outweigh the cons.

CCTV is such a solidified part of life in Britain that researchers have taken to calling it a “banal good” that is infrequently criticized by the media or public (Goold, Loader, and Thumala 2013). One of CCTV’s primary purposes is to deter crime by increasing the level of surveillance of a particular area (Cornish and Clarke 2003). Because the presence of CCTV is oftentimes overtly obvious (i.e. there are signs indicating that CCTV is operating in the vicinity), it is intended to dissuade potential criminals from breaking the law (Clarke 1995). Inarguably, the threat of being seen—and, even more resolutely, caught on camera—is hypothesized to lower crime rates, as it can be widely assumed that most criminals do not wish to be arrested.

Several studies have been conducted in Britain testing whether CCTV is actually efficient at reducing crime. Some of the benefits of CCTV are obvious, but must be iterated. For example, CCTV has the innate ability to assist police officers, improving their response time and allowing them to more accurately depict the scene of the crime (Ratcliffe 2006). Criminals, for their part, are more likely to confess to their crimes when they are captured by CCTV footage, as the evidence against them is far stronger than it would be without CCTV footage (Owen, Keats, and Gill 2006). Another benefit of CCTV is that it leads to an increase in crimes being reported that may have

otherwise been ignored (Winge and Knutsson 2003). Yet, a possible downside of CCTV is that civilians take their presence for granted and are not as vigilant in public spaces as they used to be. In the worst-case scenario, CCTV can lure civilians into a false sense of security (Armitage, Smyth, and Pease 1999), thus making civilians less reliable witnesses.

Despite this drawback, CCTV remains a vital part of the surveillance technology in Britain. As CCTV has been ingrained within British society for the past couple of decades, its effects are more easily parsed than those of BWCs, for instance. In several settings, including car parks and residential areas, CCTV has been shown to be a significant factor in the reduction of crime (Piza, Welsh, Farrington, and Thomas 2019). Furthermore, CCTV is not more effective at capturing one type of crime over another; CCTV has equally captured drug crime, property crime, and vehicle crime, with lower levels of effectiveness at capturing violent crime (Piza et al. 2019). This seems to suggest that more violent criminals have taken into account the position of CCTV and commit their crimes elsewhere. Thus, CCTV does not prevent crime altogether; its presence merely seems to influence the types of crime that occur in more public spaces. Regardless, the scholarship on the use of CCTV in Britain illustrates that CCTV is effective at deterring crime, and the public does not consider the cameras to be an infringement upon their privacy.

i. United States

For the United States, the widespread adoption of CCTV was slower to take hold. Concerns over privacy and overall effectiveness hindered the implementation of CCTV. A police inspector in San Francisco, for example, purported that CCTV was ineffectual because there was “no immediate consequence to the behavior” (King et al. 2008, 87). While the British have mostly praised CCTV, dubbing it “the crime prevention initiative of the century” (Norris and Armstrong 1999a), Americans have approached CCTV more skeptically. A common theme across various

studies conducted in the United States is that CCTV is not effective on its own; rather, it must be coupled with other advantages, such as good lighting, security guards, and decent security measures (Welsh and Farrington 2002). Thus, CCTV is only as useful as its environment, and it cannot single-handedly deter crime or assist police officers with their investigations. Truly, as La Vigne et al. (2011) argue, to be as effective as possible, CCTV must be integrated with other measures and not be treated as a standalone security device.

Additionally, CCTV does not equally deter all criminals. To be most operative, the potential criminals must be aware that they are being watched (Farrington et al. 2007). Sometimes, CCTV is conspicuously positioned, and potential criminals may not always be cognizant of the fact that they are being surveilled. Yet, even more interestingly, some criminals weigh the benefits and costs of committing a crime under the purview of CCTV, and they still decide to commit said crime (Butler 1994). When asked why they committed the crime despite knowing that CCTV was in the area, many criminals have reported that they did not perceive CCTV to be a serious or credible threat (Gill and Loveday 2003). There may be assumptions that CCTV was not properly installed, or that police forces will not be able to determine, without a shadow of a doubt, the identity of the perpetrator. Or, contrariwise, perhaps some perpetrators simply do not believe that CCTV is actually operational. In true Foucauldian fashion, the mere threat of being surveilled may be enough to deter crime, but not everyone is similarly responsive to such threats.

Despite these concerns, studies have shown that, when coupled with proactive police activity, CCTV can significantly deter violent crime and improve social order (Piza, Caplan, Kennedy, and Gilchrist 2015). Crucially, however, CCTV “does not function within a vacuum” and must be integrated with other police measures to be as efficient as possible (Piza, Caplan, and Kennedy 2016, 262). The utility of CCTV may be dampened by slow process rates, as police

officers do not arrive on the scene as quickly as necessary (Piza, Caplan, and Kennedy 2016). Hence, it seems that the literature on CCTV in the United States focuses more upon the bureaucracy of CCTV, expressing less optimism about the ability of CCTV to effectively curb crime and improve police response times. Nonetheless, the potential benefits of CCTV—such as civilians’ increased perception of their safety—may be able to improve police-civilian relations, as the mere presence of CCTV suggests that the police care enough about a particular area to keep it under surveillance.

b. Body-Worn Cameras (BWCs)

i. United States

Certainly, because of the political ramifications of aggressive policing tactics in the United States, some scholars have suggested that safeguards should be implemented to increase police officers’ transparency in the field (Morton 2018). BWCs, for their part, are intended to provide this transparency—and, relatedly, to make the police more accountable to the people whom they serve. While BWCs boast several purposes, arguably, the most crucial is “[improving] behavior of both police officers and citizens during their encounter” (Gramaglia and Phillips 2018, 314). BWCs capture the scene in as unbiased and neutral a way as possible, allowing police officers’ and citizens’ stories about what transpired to either be corroborated or disproven. By no means, however, are BWCs a perfect technology; despite their novelty, many issues have already arisen regarding their utility. Though BWCs do, theoretically, present the scene in an impartial manner, “technology is often filtered through—and shaped by—human factors” (Lum et al. 2019, 95). Indeed, agencies have much discretion on whether to release videos to the public, and if they do, there is always the worry that the clip has been edited in such a way that it is no longer an accurate representation of what truly transpired (Lum et al. 2019). And, even though BWCs have the

potential to protect both civilians and officers in the field, many police officers have expressed their aversion to BWCs, contending, for instance, that BWCs would inhibit their ability to work effectively and infringe upon their overall security in the field (Gramaglia and Phillips 2018).

Undoubtedly, police culture in the United States plays a role in why some officers are more resistant to technological advances such as BWCs. Some studies have suggested that officers' overuse of force may in fact be due to officers' deep, unwavering commitment to the "institutional or organizational culture" surrounding their societal role as unmatched wielders of power in their communities (Ariel, Farrar, and Sutherland 2014, 513). Officers who see themselves, first and foremost, as holders of power are more likely to express aversion to any changes that threaten to reduce their authority (Lester 1996; Terrill et al. 2003). More explicitly, police cultural norms, such as the code of silence, may decrease officers' willingness to embrace BWCs, as they perceive this encroaching technology as a way of diminishing the police's institutional legitimacy (Skolnick 2008). Police hold a unique role in society, as they have been "granted the legitimate use of coercion" against civilians (Paoline 2003, 201). Truly, the job of a police officer is one rife with risks and dangers. To protect themselves and their communities, police officers must ensure that their authority is not compromised in the field. This well-intentioned action has the adverse potential, though, to result in officers resorting to coercive tactics that are not particularly warranted for the given situation (Skolnick 1994).

More specifically, police subculture—that is, the environment and policies of individual agencies—also plays a role in officers' perceptions of their societal role and how they should interact with civilians. Officers who exhibit high levels of loyalty to their agency further exacerbate the aforementioned code of silence, rendering it more difficult to investigate possible instances of officers' excessive use of force in the field (Skolnick 2008). Increasingly, there have been

questions as to whether the chain of hierarchy in police actually encourages police officers to resort to aggression with suspect civilians (Cohen 2017). We would expect these sorts of agencies—agencies that encourage officer coercion—to express higher levels of resistance to BWCs, as BWCs would inhibit officers’ ability to act in such aggressive manners.

Findings on police officers’ perceptions of BWCs have been mixed, and predominantly relegated to urban communities. Police officers in Phoenix, AZ, for example, were skeptical of BWCs, with only one-third of those surveyed reporting that BWCs would be easy to implement (Katz et al. 2014). Police officers in Los Angeles, CA were equally reticent, with one-third of the officers surveyed claiming that BWCs would make them feel safer on patrol (Uchida et al. 2016). In Phoenix, AZ, Spokane, WA, and Tempe, AZ, over half of the police officers surveyed reported that BWCs would both increase their professionalism and affect whether they would resort to force (Gaub et al. 2016). Similarly, police officers in Orlando, FL expressed rather high levels of support for BWC implementation, claiming that BWCs could serve to improve both civilians’ and officers’ behaviors in the field (Jennings et al. 2014). While most of the studies on police officers’ perceptions of BWCs have been conducted in the “sun belt” regions of the West and South, recently, more findings have emerged about “rust belt” agencies in the Midwest and Northeast (Gramaglia and Phillips 2018). Looking at a small number of agencies in the Midwest and South, Kyle and White (2016) found that police officers’ attitudes about the utility of BWCs were related to their sense of fairness in both decision processes and outcomes. Police officers in Buffalo, NY and Rochester, NY, for their part, claimed that while they believed BWCs would influence their decision to use force, they were less optimistic that BWCs would improve civilians’ behavior in the field (Gramaglia and Phillips 2018).

Concerning civilians’ perceptions of BWCs, the evidence has been mildly more concrete.

Fewer studies have been conducted gauging civilians' perceptions of BWCs, but the results, nonetheless, are intriguing. By and large, civilians report positive views of BWCs (White, Todak, and Gaub 2017). Most civilians agree that BWCs will improve the transparency and accountability of the police, improving the behavior of officers in the field (Lum et al. 2019). This seems to suggest that, while police officers have mixed views on BWCs, the public does not. However, studies have found that not all demographic groups view BWCs in the same way. Most notably, non-white civilians are less likely to perceive BWCs in a positive light than their white counterparts, as those “who already think the police are not doing their job well when dealing with crime may think that adding BWCs will not help improve police performance” (Crow, Snyder, Crichlow, and Smykla 2017, 604). Troublingly, then, it does not appear as though BWCs will meaningfully improve police-civilian relations in predominantly black communities, which are simultaneously the communities that report the lowest levels of trust in the police. Truly, a recent study found that civilians do not seem to think that BWCs have the ability to improve police-civilian relations (Sousa, Miethe, and Sakiyama 2017). If the communities most adversely affected by the police are also the ones less likely to perceive any benefit in BWCs, then how can BWCs help repair the trust between the police and their communities? Perhaps, similarly to CCTV, BWCs will only be effective when coupled with other measures, such as community-oriented policing (COP) strategies (Rukus, Warner, and Zhang 2018).

ii. Britain

In Britain, the discussion of BWCs has been more limited than in the United States. Essentially, the literature has seemed to regard BWCs as an add-on to CCTV. While past studies have focused upon CCTV and its potential to deter crime, BWCs are perceived as being a supplement: a way to more meaningfully alter behavior in the field (Cubitt et al. 2016). And,

dissimilarly to CCTV, BWCs have the potential to alter the behavior of both potential perpetrators *and* police officers. Thus, it can be argued that both CCTV and BWCs, in various ways, are preventive measures that could allegedly change the landscape of contemporary policing. Despite the relative novelty of BWCs—especially when compared to CCTV, which has been in operation for much longer—there have been a significant number of studies reporting that BWCs will increase police accountability (Cubbit et al. 2016). As opposed to CCTV, BWCs have the advantage of improving line of sight and presenting a clearer image of the scene (Cubitt et al. 2016). Most notably, it has been found that BWCs decrease civilian complaints against the police (Adams et al. 1999) and increase civilian perceptions of police accountability (Katz, Choate, Ready, and Nuno 2014). These two benefits are crucial for a meaningful improvement in police-civilian relations. Truly, the literature on BWCs in Britain suggests that civilians are optimistic about their potential and, similarly to how they feel about CCTV, are not perturbed by the possible privacy infringements of BWCs. And, given how BWCs are currently more salient in the public's mind than CCTV, these benefits are expected to be all the more powerful.

Yet, similarly to police officers in the United States, police officers in Britain have expressed their concerns over BWCs. Officers have reported discomfort with BWCs and a lack of desire to incorporate them into their daily routine (Drover and Ariel 2015). While the police culture of Britain is certainly different from that of the United States, in part due to the lower levels of violent crime in Britain, it is nevertheless interesting that police officers in both regions report comparable levels of skepticism toward the implementation of BWCs. Indeed, police officers in Britain report lower levels of confidence in BWCs than the public (Ellis et al. 2015). Thus, police officers and the public differ widely on how they perceive BWCs. The public, for the most part, purports that BWCs will protect them from overly aggressive police officers, while police officers

seem to only express optimism that BWCs will reduce complaints against them. This disparity suggests that BWCs have a dual purpose; they protect civilians against the police while also simultaneously protecting the police against civilians. British police officers, then, do not meaningfully differ from their American counterparts, and they express skepticism about the widespread implementation of BWCs. Yet, notably, these findings are inconclusive, as BWC studies are not as pronounced in Britain as they have been in the United States. We await further experiments on British police officers' perceptions of BWCs.

Conclusion

In sum, this review of the literature on policing in Britain and the United States offers tentative support for the widespread adoption of technological advancements such as CCTV and BWCs. CCTV is a more solidified technology, and thus, its benefits do not appear to be as up for debate as those of BWCs. Whether BWCs can live up to their idealized potential and improve police-civilian relations has yet to be fully seen. However, this review offers an optimistic view of the ability of these technologies, coupled with more community-oriented policing strategies, to increase civilians' trust in the police. Indeed, nothing exists in a vacuum, and we cannot expect CCTV and BWCs, on their own, to "fix" policing. More systemic change must simultaneously be instigated. Particularly in the United States, where police brutality has become such a tragically regular occurrence, investigations into the socialization of police officers must be conducted. Only then can we understand what the problem is and how to remedy it.

People need not live in perpetual fear of the police. Rather, in a better world, civilians and police officers would work more closely together to deter and apprehend criminals. A shift toward more community-oriented policing strategies—as opposed to aggressive policing tactics that disproportionately target marginalized groups—will go a long way toward repairing the broken

trust between the two parties. Police-civilian relations will not dramatically improve overnight, or even, sadly, within the next few years. However, the adoption of technologies such as CCTV and BWCs may help improve office transparency and accountability, which will, in turn, buoy civilians' trust in law enforcement.

As BWCs become more commonplace, further studies should continue parsing their effects. It is crucial to consistently monitor the fluctuating levels of support or opposition among the public and police officers regarding BWCs. In five years, will both civilians and police officers express high levels of support for BWCs, or will police officers continue to be less optimistic about the potential of BWCs than civilians? We are not yet equipped to answer these questions, but as we gather more data about the utility of BWCs in the field, we will be better able to understand their true effects—and whether they can, in practice, improve police-civilian relations.

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