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New study – continued strong support among the Swedish public to the use of surveillance cameras in public spaces

During the first week of April, 1,000 Swedes were asked via telephone about their opinions on the use of surveillance cameras in public spaces. Ninety percent (90%) of the public were positive when asked the question “What do you think about surveillance cameras in public spaces?” – 49% stating that they are “very positive” and 41% “quite positive”. Furthermore, 72% of the respondents stated that there should be more surveillance cameras installed, compared to the number currently in use; while 3% stated a desire to decrease the number of surveillance cameras currently in use.

As a follow-up study to the opinion poll made in August, 2017, another opinion poll was conducted on the Swedish public’s attitudes on the use of surveillance cameras in public spaces. Just as in the previous study, this study also addressed the relationship between privacy and surveillance cameras. When asked the question “The presence of surveillance cameras in public spaces (public squares and streets) invades my privacy.”, 75% state that that the presence of surveillance cameras in public spaces does not invade their need for privacy (45% stating that it fits “very poorly/not at all” with their opinion, and 30% stating that it fits “quite poorly” with their opinion). Another question was added to this opinion poll, asking the Swedish public about their attitude to the presence of surveillance cameras in residential areas, 66% state that that the presence of surveillance cameras in public spaces does **not** invade their need for privacy (38% stating that it fits “very poorly/not at all” with their opinion, and 28% stating that it fits “quite poorly” with their opinion)

Previous research efforts on surveillance cameras often only focus on **the crime preventive effect** of surveillance cameras in public spaces. In addition to the crime preventive effect of cameras, two additional camera benefits were included in this study. The benefit of **detecting crime**, and the benefit of using camera-generated material to **investigate crime**.

- 82% of the public believe that the presence of surveillance cameras prevents potential perpetrators from committing crimes (35% agree “very well”, while 47% agree “quite well”)
- 87% of the public consider surveillance cameras to be a useful tool for detecting crimes-in-progress (47% agree “very well” and 40% agree “quite well”)
- 82% of the public perceive that the material generated from surveillance cameras can be used to investigate and solve crimes (35% agree “very well” and 47% agree “quite well”)

The trust in the Swedish Police’s ability to appropriately assess their own need to use surveillance cameras in public spaces was also included in the study. Answering the statement: “My privacy is breached if the police are allowed to use surveillance cameras at their own discretion, for example in streets and public squares.”, 37% stated that their privacy is “not breached at all”, 23% stated that it fit “quite poorly” with their opinion while 36% believed it fit “quite well” or “very well” with their opinion. **In summary, 60% reject the statement that their right to privacy is breached if the police are allowed to use surveillance cameras at their own discretion.**



Security Informatics

The general public in Sweden can typically be described as being very positive to the use of surveillance cameras in public spaces, as well as seeing a need for a higher number of surveillance cameras than is currently in use. Regarding the effects (benefits) of surveillance cameras, the public believe surveillance cameras have the greatest benefit in detecting crime-in-progress. **Furthermore, the participants in the study reject the statement that surveillance cameras in public spaces infringe on their privacy.** The typical participant also rejects the statement of misuse of surveillance cameras if the police is allowed to decide on the use of surveillance cameras in public spaces at their own discretion.

For more information, please contact:

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About the study

Since 2017, Securitas is a partner company to the School of Economics and Management, Lund University. Securitas asked the LUSAX research group at the School of Economics and Management, Lund University to coordinate and assure the quality of a study concerning the use of surveillance cameras in public spaces among the general public in Sweden. The study was executed by opinion poll institute KANTAR SIFO, between 5-11 April, 2018 and included 1,000 phone interviews. KANTAR SIFO guarantees the representativeness of the sample.

About LUSAX

LUSAX is a multidisciplinary research project focusing on the transformation of the global security industry, with an emphasis on the shift from analog to digital technology platforms, and its consequences for corporate strategy, global demand and supply, market expansion, and organizational management. LUSAX is driven by the idea that relevant and useful research is created in close cooperation with businesses, policy makers, society and citizens. LUSAX is a non-profit research group at the School of Economics and Management, Lund University, Sweden.

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