

Should Cameras Be Allowed in the Courtroom?

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### Should Cameras Be Allowed in the Courtroom?

The question regarding the use of cameras in courtrooms has long been heavily debated, especially considering its rationality from the perspective of public coverage. While some argue that the use of cameras in courtrooms is an absolute must to ensure the validity of juridical procedures, opponents believe that the use of cameras in courtrooms has adverse implications on participants' behavior. With regards to debates concerning the use of cameras, it should be noted that the current jurisdiction of the US disables the use of cameras, whereas the Supreme Court allows oral tapes only to be recorded. One of the most noticeable remarks concerning the discussed question is the uncertainty among judges and jurors, which are unevenly divided in their support concerning the use of cameras in courtrooms. Some jurors and judges are even unsure whether the use of cameras regularly would have any useful implications for the trial process as a whole. Judging from the unveiled above notions, it becomes noticeable that the use of cameras in courtrooms is a controversial and multifaceted subject. Even though the opponents of using cameras in courtrooms argue that they would indisputably disturb jurors and all engaged participants, the evidence-based utilization of cameras in courtrooms represented no negative implications on the proceedings, which means that both sides of the debate are worthy of review.

#### **Against Cameras**

First and foremost, while considering the matter of opponents of camera usage during proceedings, the option of distraction is frequently voiced as the most viable cause of advocating against the installation of cameras. The core of the argument is that cameras are believed to change the behavioral patterns of all participants, ranging from witnesses to jurors (Wheeling, 2017). With regards to the matter of distraction, installed cameras may potentially impact the

proceedings, yet the absence of evidence-based cases makes this argument rather uncertain. However, not only is distraction voiced by the opponents of utilizing the cameras in courtrooms. Lawyers are also believed to be heavily impacted by the presence of cameras in courtrooms. The presence of recording tools during hearings may involve a considerable extent of oral argument, which would not have happened without the live streaming of the hearings (Wheeling, 2017). In some sense, debates between lawyers and jurors may result in sound-bites rather than rational arguments, which eventually leads to the deterioration of the legal system's sustainability.

Moreover, the overall attention to the live courtroom proceedings may jeopardize the fairness of the courts as a whole. In particular, one may highlight the case of Travis Vader, which took place in Alberta, Canada. The crucial point was that the news cameras were allowed to broadcast the decision, yet the aftermath of the broadcast was met with mixed reactions. It would be reasonable to perceive the trial's primary focus as seeking justice and fairness—not another source of entertainment (Spratt, 2016). Hence, the mere presence of cameras during hearings and trials may transform into a new source of performance, which may have adverse implications for the stability of the criminal justice system as a whole. What is more, the opponents of cameras in courtrooms emphasize the significance of written reports, which are commonly published after trials. If one has an in-depth interest in getting acquainted with the trial process, records may be easily accessed without any barriers. Having reviewed the views of opponents of installing cameras in courtrooms, one may simultaneously emphasize the importance of examining the thoughts of proponents.

### **For Cameras**

Secondly, the vast majority of views concerning the urgent need for using cameras in courtrooms are based on the fact that the evidence-based cases of broadcasting facilities have not resulted in negative consequences for the trial process as a whole. In particular, the proponents of utilizing broadcasting facilities in courtrooms frequently discuss the pilot broadcasting program in Indiana, which found out that broadcasting did not negatively impact the proceedings (Wheeling, 2017). Judging from the provided piece of evidence, the advocates of employing cameras during trials also highlight the educational usefulness of broadcasting. According to their point of view, the public becomes more aware of the legal system as a whole, eventually becoming more integrated with legal procedures and regulations. By providing a better sense of the legal process and subsequent elements of the court system, the public is most likely to respect jurors, judges, and their decisions to a greater extent in comparison with the absence of broadcasting. With regard to the obvious benefits in the form of status and education, one may also underline the element of transparency. Even though written reports are available in the aftermath of hearings, the possibility of tracking the specifications of trials or proceedings may be of good use for those who want to examine trials more closely.

### **Supreme Court**

Other than that, one may point out that cameras in courtrooms and even the Supreme Court should be mandatory because of the absence of contained risks. Since most jurors and judges have concerns about risks which are related to their well-being, data regarding their personalities are still available on the web. Considering the impact on witnesses and lawyers, broadcasting had never presented the case where cameras interrupted a trial or had obvious negative implications. The existing blackout in the Supreme Court specifically results in the

inability of the interested American public to observe government officials perform essential duties, which may be accessed only by a few individuals (Segall, 2017). Subsequently, the presence of robust public demand for accessible broadcasting is an aspect that should not be neglected nor ignored by the system of criminal justice. The compliance with what is requested by the public is among the crucial reasons why broadcasting facilities should be expanded all across the criminal justice system. In a similar analytical manner, the proponents of cameras in courtrooms also point out that the public coverage of the most controversial and historical trial debates is crucial for public discussion and education of future jurors and judges (Segall, 2017). Subsequently, the mentioned arguments should be utilized as the points to change the existing regulation of cameras with their potential use in courtrooms.

### **Final Remarks**

Having scrutinized the arguments of both for and against the use of cameras in courtrooms, one may point out that it would be dubious to voice a final decisive thought. On the one hand, jurors, judges, and lawyers assume that the presence of online broadcasting facilities may disturb the validity of a trial. More precisely, they argue that cameras may change the behavioral patterns of all participating individuals, eventually transforming legal argumentation into an oral debate. On the other hand, the opposite attitude towards the use of cameras in courtrooms and its role in ensuring the transparency and openness of the legal system should not be neglected. The educational capabilities for law students may become the crucial power for enabling broadcasting facilities in courtrooms in the short-term perspective. Having analyzed both points of view, one may also demonstrate the division in opinions among jurors and judges

themselves. While some argue for the maintenance of the status quo in relation to cameras, others assume that it would not be a big deal for court proceedings.

To conclude, the mere existence of such a division is troublesome regarding the immediate introduction of broadcasting facilities all across the US and in the Supreme Court. The potential for this introduction is considerable, yet more attention should be dedicated to the public demand for such an innovation. If the broader extent of public opinion is in favor of the introduction of cameras in courtrooms, then broadcasting tools should be introduced. Since the existing debates result in the absence of implications and an evidence-based continuation of the debate, the current state of affairs seems to have little implications for the changes in the existing status quo. Lastly, the faster broadcasting facilities appear, the more educated a broader public would become in relation to the legal system.

## References

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