

# Do artificial surveillance cues increase generosity? Two meta-analyses

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## Introduction

When people know they are being watched, they are more generous (Kurzban, 2001).

Several papers seemingly show that even *artificial cues of being watched* impact behavior (e.g., Haley & Fessler, 2005).

However, some studies have failed to replicate this surveillance cue effect (e.g., Matsugasaki, Tsukamoto, & Ohtsubo, 2015).

In light of these mixed results, we conducted two meta-analyses investigating the effect of artificial surveillance cues on generosity.



Images of eyes, such as this one (Pedersen, 2016), have been used as surveillance cues by several studies.

## Method

Meta-analysis procedures outlined by Lipsey and Wilson (2001)

Effect size calculated for each experiment  
- generosity for the surveillance cue condition compared to the control condition

Effect sizes weighted using random effects model

Calculated overall effect size, SE, and 95% CI

### Proportion who gave meta-analysis

- Measure: proportion of participants who gave something rather than nothing
- 19,512 participants
- 27 experiments

### Amount given meta-analysis

- Measure: mean amount of resources (usually money) given by participants to others
- 2,732 participants
- 26 experiments

## Results:

### Proportion who gave

Logged odds-ratio: 0.16 (SE = 0.10)

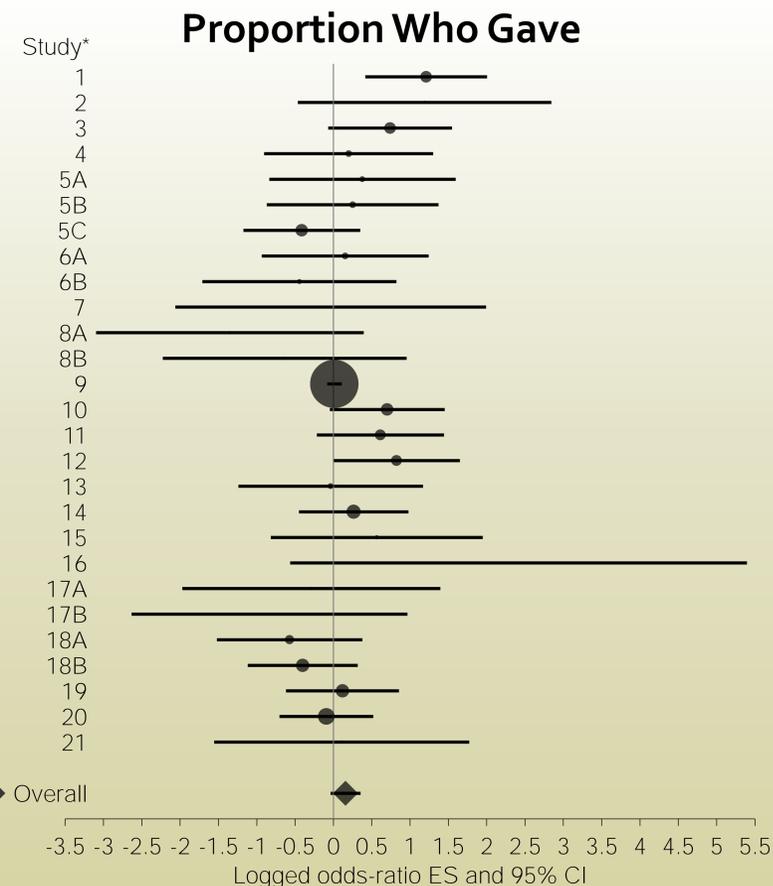
Participants in the surveillance cue conditions were 1.17 times more likely to give than participants in the control conditions.

95% CI: -0.04 to 0.35

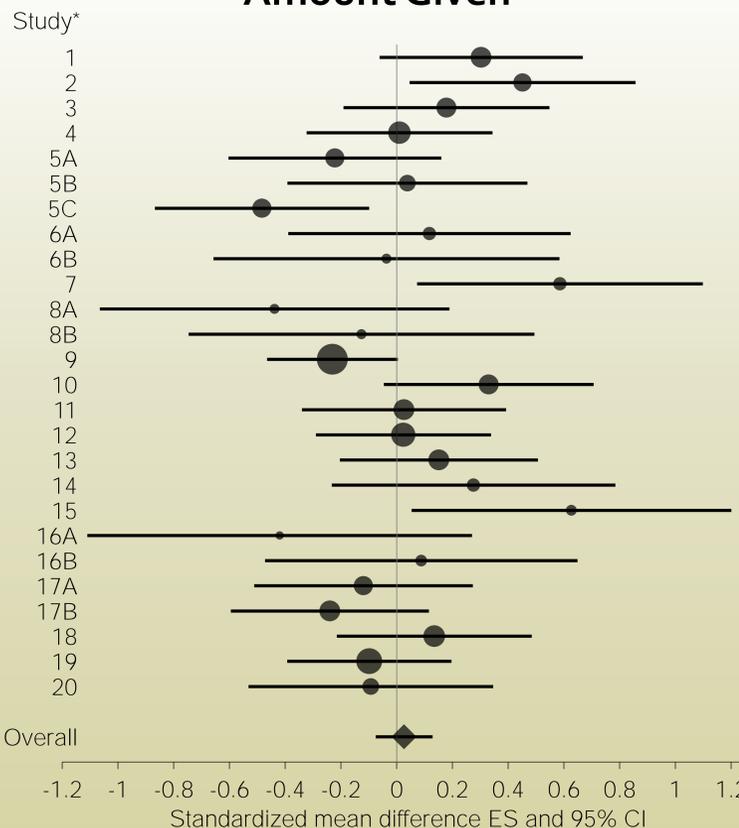
The effect size is not significantly different from zero.

No effect

When effect sizes were positive, proportion of Ss who gave was greater in the surveillance cue condition.



### Amount Given



## Results:

### Amount given

Mean difference: 0.03 (SE = 0.05)

Participants in the surveillance cue conditions were slightly more generous than participants in the control conditions.

95% CI: -0.08 to 0.13

The effect size is not significantly different from zero.

No effect

When effect sizes were positive, amount given by Ss was greater in the surveillance cue condition.

## Conclusion

No evidence that artificial cues of being watched increase generosity

Two meta-analyses found no evidence that artificial surveillance cues increase generosity, either by increasing how generous individuals are or by increasing the probability that individuals will show any generosity at all.

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## Further information

Northover, S. B., Pedersen, W. C., Cohen, A. B., & Andrews, P. W. (2016). Artificial surveillance cues do not increase generosity: Two meta-analyses. *Evolution and Human Behavior*. doi:10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2016.07.001

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\*Studies cited in manuscript

