

# Policing the City in the Digital Age multidisciplinary workshop

6-8 March 2024

The Center for Advanced Internet Studies (CAIS)

Konrad-Zuse-Straße 2a, Bochum, Germany

## Booklet

Day 1 (March 6 <sup>th</sup> )		
<b>Part 1:</b>	<b>Setting the Agenda: Policing, Cities and Digitalization</b>	
14:00-15:00	<b>Jan Üblacker</b> Housing and Neighborhood Development, University of Applied Science for Housing and Real Estate, Germany <b>Tim Lukas</b> Institute for Public Safety and Emergency Management, University of Wuppertal, Germany <b>Hadas Zur</b> Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, USA	<b>Welcome and introduction</b>
15:00-15:45	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Potentials, Risks and Limits of Police Authorities in Times of Crisis</b>
15:45-16:30	<b>Hadas Zur</b> Harvard University, USA	<b>Policing cities in the digital age: A new research agenda</b>
16:30-16:45	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
16:45-17:30	<b>Simon Egbert</b> Department of Sociology, Bielefeld University, Germany	<b>The different faces of digitalized police work: Empirical findings on predictive policing in Germany</b>
17:30-18:00	<b>Closing discussion</b>	
18:00- 20:00	<i>Dinner</i>	

Day 2 (March 7 <sup>th</sup> )		
<b>Part 2:</b>	<b>Police-Community Relations in The New Visibility Era</b>	
9:00-9:15	<i>Arrival and Coffee</i>	
9:15-10:00	<p><b>Jacques de Maillard</b> Political Science, University of Versailles-Saint-Quentin and the Sociological Research Centre on Law and Criminal Institutions (Cesdip), France</p> <p><b>Félicien Faury</b> Cesdip, University of Versailles-Saint-Quentin, France</p>	<b>Policing’s new visibility in French cities. How visual technologies transform police oversight in France</b>
10:00-10:45	<p><b>Michael Leo Owens</b> Department of Political Science, Emory University, USA</p>	<b>Digitalizing and diffusing moments of urban police violence</b>
10:45-11:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
11:00-11:45	<p><b>Naomi Levenkron</b> School of Multidisciplinary Studies, Kinneret college and the Faculty of Law, Hebrew University, Israel</p> <p><b>Yael Litmanovitz</b> Israel Democracy Institute and The Centre for Criminology, Hebrew University, Israel</p>	<b>What is the role of the police in addressing “fake news”? Setting a research agenda</b>
11:45-12:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
<b>Part 3:</b>	<b>Future Technologies in Policing Cities</b>	
12:30-13:00	<i>Heading to Duisburg</i>	
14:00-16:00	<b>Guided tour in the Innovation Lab of the Police North Rhine-Westphalia</b>	
16:00- 16:45	<p>Walk &amp; Talk along the harbor <b>Tim Lukas and Jan Üblacker</b></p>	<b>The urban history of the industrial cities in the Ruhr area</b>
16:45-19:00	<i>Dinner at the harbor</i>	
19:00	<i>Heading back to Bochum</i>	

Day 3 (March 8 <sup>th</sup> )		
<b>Part 4:</b>	<b>New Actors, New Spheres: Monitoring and Policing Spaces and Communities in the Digitalized City</b>	
9:00-9:15	<i>Arrival and Coffee</i>	
9:15-10:00	<p><b>Jan Üblacker</b> University of Applied Science for Housing and Real Estate, Germany</p> <p><b>Kira N. Freier</b> University of Applied Science for Housing and Real Estate, Germany</p>	<b>From streets to screens: assessing online neighborhood groups' role in informal social control in two German cities</b>
10:00-10:45	<p><b>Justine Humphry</b> (Zoom) Discipline of Media and Communications, University of Sydney, Australia</p>	<b>Digital policing of homelessness: datafication, prediction and biometric control</b>
10:45-11:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
11:00-11:45	<p><b>Shivangi Narayan</b> AGOPOL Project: 2021-2024 (funded by Oslo Metropolitan University and the Norwegian Research Council), India</p>	<b>Mygate: convenience for residents or pervasive surveillance for data creation? A study of society management app in India</b>
12:00-13:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
13:00-14:30	<b>Final discussion</b>	
15:00	<i>Farewell</i>	

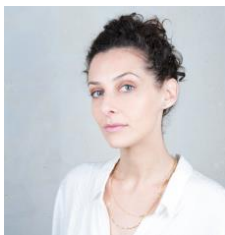
## Part 1:

# Setting the Agenda: Policing, Cities and Digitalization

### **Policing the city in the digital age: a new research agenda**

Hadas Zur, Jan Üblacker and Tim Lukas

The digitalization of our social and material life is transforming urban society, governance and control. New technologies (i.e., sensors, social media, apps, algorithms) create a complex web of policing in our cities and neighborhoods. The use of digital tools reshapes police practices in the urban arena and reconfigures the interface between physical and digital spaces in police work. In addition, digitalization facilitates and decentralizes law enforcement actions. Finally, digitalization promotes novel modes of representation, communication and interaction that challenge police, and introduces new spaces for negotiation that transform police-community relations. Therefore, policing cities in the digital age produces a multitude of transformations and raises new research questions that require further study. This paper describes the need to develop a new research agenda for understanding the interrelationships between urban policing and digitalization. It brings together three bodies of literature, those concerning policing cities, the digitalization of urban life and governance, and the digitalization of policing. It identifies research gaps and presents five core shifts in the interrelationships between cities, policing, and digitalization; 1. Diversification of actors, 2. Changes in police-community relations, 3. Accountability in the new visibility era 4. New digital-spatial configurations of policing and 5. Methodological shift in police work and in police research. These themes can serve as a foundation for valuable research, both empirical and theoretical, that aims to grasp the changes generated by digitalization in policing cities and explicate its social consequences. The paper concludes with the moral, social and political trajectories of these transformations that should be further explored in future research.



**Hadas Zur** is a postdoctoral fellow at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. She is an urban sociologist focusing on topics of violence, policing, and digitalization. Her postdoc research focus on urban violent encounters between political groups and the impacts of social media. Previously, she participated in a multidisciplinary study on Smart Cities and studied the spatial history of prostitution in the city of Tel Aviv. She is a Fulbright postdoctoral fellow.

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**Jan Üblacker** is Endowed Professor for Housing and Neighborhood Development at the University of Applied Science for Housing and Real Estate (EBZ) in Bochum, Germany. His research focusses on the social, economic and technological drivers of neighbourhood change, its forms and consequences for cities and communities. This covers topics such as gentrification, sociology of housing and housing markets, digitalisation and ICT, social integration and social inequality. |

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**Tim Lukas**, PhD, is a Senior Researcher at the University of Wuppertal. In the Institute for Public Safety and Emergency Management, he is the leader of the Research Group Spatial Contexts of Risk and Security. He studied sociology at Bielefeld University and earned his PhD at the University of Freiburg. His research focuses on urban crime prevention, plural policing and police-citizens interactions. Currently, he is the principal investigator of the research project EQAL, which aims at developing an exchange and learning program to promote mutual trust between police, municipal order enforcement and communities in ethnically mixed neighborhoods.

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### **The different faces of digitalized police work: Empirical findings on predictive policing in Germany**

Simon Egbert

In my paper, I will present empirical data from two empirical studies on predictive policing in Germany that show the different faces digitalized policing can have. Firstly, I will present data that support the argument that crime prediction software can have negative consequences, especially for people who are read as foreigners by police officers, as they are checked more frequently in the predicted risk areas. Secondly, I will present results that show that – contrary to the otherwise often assumed contradiction between community policing and digital policing – predictive policing can go hand in hand with policing strategies that involve closer co-operation with the local population. In the predictive policing project in question, further developments are also underway that not only aim to work more closely with the population in relation to problematically identified spatial micro-segments, but also intend to do so in the sense of a long-term prevention approach that comes close to problem-orientated police work. This in turn has little to do with the traditional police response to crime forecasts, which aims to deter or drive away criminals in the short term by increasing police presence. Overall, the data shows that digitalized police work can have different consequences, which in turn depend on which digital information is generated for which purposes and how it is actually implemented.



**Simon Egbert**, PhD, is a postdoctoral researcher at the Faculty of Sociology at Bielefeld University and works on the research project ‘The Social Consequences of Algorithmic Forecasts in Insurance, Medicine and Policing’. He is also Principal Investigator of a research project on police body cameras in Germany as part of the international, ORA-funded project ‘Visions of Policing’. His research interests are digital policing, sociology of prediction, visual studies, algorithm studies, and sociology of testing. | [simon.egbert@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:simon.egbert@uni-bielefeld.de)

## Part 2:

## Police-Community Relations in The New Visibility Era

### **Policing the Police in the Digital Age. How Visual Technologies Transform Police Oversight in French Cities**

Jacques De Maillard and Félicien Faury

The use of CCTV cameras in urban areas, the availability of new video technologies like smartphones with built-in cameras, and the rise of social networking practices have expanded the chances of recording the police and sharing images of police (mis)conduct on a large scale. Digitization has reinforced what has been labelled a 'new visibility' in policing (Goldsmith, 2010). This phenomenon may increase police accountability to the public and improve police oversight in contemporary democracies. However, the link between visibility and control is not an automatic process. Intermediary actors are required to interpret these new images and use them as tools for "policing the police." Drawing on the French case, this presentation examines the activity of these intermediary actors, with a particular focus on crowd policing in French cities during the Yellow Vests social movement (2018-2019). The first section of the presentation discusses police *external* oversight, focusing on the work of journalists, NGOs, and civil society organizations, who use new visual technologies to demonstrate and address police brutality. Secondly, the presentation examines police *internal* oversight, which is led in France by two internal oversight agencies (the IGPN and the IGGN). These agencies have investigative powers and can impose effective sanctions against police officers. However, their activity is less visible, longer, and less oriented towards public opinion. The presentation concludes with a discussion of how this two-tier process can impact police-community relations, with a potentially growing gap between the visibility of police violence in the public sphere and its effective handling by the relevant authorities.



**Jacques De Maillard** is Professor of Political Science at the University of Versailles-Saint-Quentin (University Paris-Saclay) and at Sciences Po Saint-Germain en Laye. He is the Director of the Cesdip (Centre for sociological research on penal institutions), an interdisciplinary research centre specialised on criminal justice issues. His interests lie in the questions of local governance of security, the diffusion of New Public Management in police organisations, the comparative study of policing in Western countries, Stop and search politics, and the pluralisation of policing.

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**Félicien Faury** is a postdoctoral fellow at the Cesdip (Centre for sociological research on penal institutions, University of Versailles-Saint-Quentin, University Paris-Saclay). He holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Paris Dauphine-PSL and a BA in Social Sciences from the École normale supérieure (ENS, Paris). His doctoral work analyzes the electoral success and the institutionalization of the French Populist Radical Right at the local level. His current research focuses

on the use of video in police oversight and training. | [felicien.faury@cesdip.fr](mailto:felicien.faury@cesdip.fr)

## Digitalizing and Diffusing Moments of Urban Police Violence

Michael Leo Owens

Whether in the urban Global North or the urban Global South, urban police violence can occur. Urban police violence – from less-than-lethal use of force to lethal use of force – may be a response to individual behaviors of suspects/subjects/denizens police encounter in cities. Urban police violence may result from police officers, regardless of the behavior of suspects/subjects/denizens they encounter, misusing their discretion and authority to “maintain order,” “keep the police,” and “promote public safety.” It may also result from an overemphasis on the expectation of and preparation for violence in cities, informed by police training, police culture, police leadership, and/or the directives of political elites. Whatever the reasons for urban police violence, violent encounters between police and the public, coupled with disparities in who the police are more likely to encounter and harm, are more public in the digital age. This produces knottier challenges for debating and reducing urban police violence. For instance, does the digitalization and diffusion of information about urban police violence, whether captured and shared by police departments or crowd-sourced initiatives by journalists (e.g., the Washington Post or The Guardian) and civil society organizations (e.g., Mapping Police Violence), alter public attitudes about urban police violence and reforms to reduce it? The presentation will use the case of urban police shootings to illuminate a set of key urban problems the digitalization and diffusion of urban police violence produces for police, the policed, and the broader public in 21st Century cities.



**Michael Leo Owens** is Professor of Political Science and Co-Director of the Politics of Policing Lab at Emory University. A former chair of the governing board of the Urban Affairs Association and former board member of Prison Policy Initiative, Owens now serves on the editorial boards of Perspectives on Politics and the Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and the City. He's also an Associate Editor of the Journal of Urban Affairs. | [michael.leo.owens@emory.edu](mailto:michael.leo.owens@emory.edu)

## What is the Role of the Police in Addressing “Fake News”? Setting a Research Agenda

Nomi Levenkron and Yael Litmanovitz

This paper sets out to explore the role of police organizations in tackling disinformation, as a social phenomenon which can have devastating effects on the safety and well-being of communities and individuals. The paper begins by presenting an overview of the triad of phenomena: misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information, the challenge they present to maintaining the intricate fabric of open, democratic societies, and the avenues currently being pursued in addressing them.

The paper then makes the argument that is necessary to actively address the question: what should be the role of the police in dealing with these phenomena? In order to meaningfully explore this question the paper presents five issues that require examination: the general weakness of police in combating online crime; the challenges of linking virtual and ‘real’ crime in geographic localities; the normative problem of the police policing phenomena which are not a crime and are not being regulated (adequately or at all) by the state; the unique protections offered to disinformation under freedom of speech; and the possibility of police organizations to serve as ‘arbitrators of truth’ in an age of low trust and legitimacy.



Finally, we turn to exploring the effects of disinformation on public order and safety in the city and what can be learned from the current role played (or not played) by the police. We will present a case study of *Shared Cities* in Israel during the May 2021 riots, in which cross-ethnic violence erupted across the country. Shared Cities, in which Jews and Arabs reside, provide an opportunity to examine how disinformation effects security and policing within them. Through this analysis we hope to begin to make the case in favor of the police stepping up to assume a meaningful role in this era-defining social phenomena.

**Nomi Levenkron**, PhD, is a lecturer at Kinneret College, School of Multidisciplinary Studies, and at the Faculty of Law, Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her areas of research and teaching are human trafficking, the sociology of the police, and social and legal history. She previously managed the Legal Department at Israel's Hotline for Refugees and Migrants, focusing primarily on representing women trafficked into prostitution. She was also head of the Center for Clinical Legal Education at the Law School of the College of Management. Since 2017, she is the editor of the journal "Police and History". | [nomi.levenkro@gmail.com](mailto:nomi.levenkro@gmail.com)



**Yael Litmanovitz**, PhD, is a Senior Researcher at The Israel Democracy Institute (IDI). She holds an MSc and a doctorate from the University of Oxford. Her thesis developed the evidence-base for police training in democratic societies. She worked with Israeli Border Police to design and trial a training intervention on procedurally just policing of protests. Since 2008 she has collaborated with and studied police organizations in Israel and abroad, focusing on issues of police reform, police training, fair and equitable policing, and evidence-based policing. Her papers have been published in leading journals. She is also a Teaching Fellow at Centre for Criminology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, teaching policing-related undergraduate courses as part of the Israel Police academicization program. Yael has a broader interest in the development and evaluation of complex social interventions; Prior to joining IDI, she was a Researcher at the Myer-JDC Brookdale Institute, where she led the comprehensive evaluation of the five-year socio-economic development plan for Israel's Bedouin population. | [yael.litmanovitz@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:yael.litmanovitz@mail.huji.ac.il)

## Part 3: Technologies in Policing Cities

Guided tour in the Innovation Lab of the Police North Rhine-Westphalia



## Part 4:

# New Actors, New Spheres: Monitoring and Policing Spaces and Communities in the Digitalized City

## **From Streets to Screens: Assessing Online Neighborhood Groups' Role in Informal Social Control in two German Cities**

Jan Üblacker and Kira N. Freier

Informal social control is crucial for maintaining order and cohesion within neighborhoods and communities without the constant intervention of formal authorities. Unlike formal social control (e.g., exercised by police authorities) it operates through social interactions that transport culturally embedded norms, values, customs and mutual expectations. With the rise of digital information and communication technologies (e.g. smartphones, internet and social media) networked publics (Boyd, 2010) emerged that change human communication behavior and promote collective action (Hampton, 2016). Our contribution focusses on the role of online neighborhood groups (ONG), which we understand as any form of digital communication that allows for each member to engage in one-to-many communication. Examples include neighborhood groups on Facebook, chat groups or channels on messenger services and feeds on Instagram. Drawing on concepts of collective efficacy (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997) and communication infrastructure theory (Ball-Rokeach, Kim, & Matej, 2001) we empirically investigate the relation between ONG and informal social control. Our analysis is based on data from a postal survey conducted in 2022 with a sample of 3,607 residents in 166 neighborhoods of two German cities (Essen and Cologne).

**Jan Üblacker** - see above.

**Kira N. Freier** is research assistant at the University of Applied Science for Housing and Real Estate (EBZ) in Bochum, Germany and studies Social Sciences at the Heinrich-Heine-University in Düsseldorf. Her research interests are collective efficacy and civic engagement in neighborhoods.

## **Digital policing of homelessness: datafication, prediction and biometric control**

Justine Humphry

Homelessness – especially visible street homelessness – has historically been subject to high levels of policing (Wacquant, 2009), and urban objects such as CCTV cameras are co-opted into enacting policies to remove, displace and monitor rough sleepers (Davis 1990). The emergence of algorithmic and automated processes made possible by the embedding of a wide range of sensing objects in objects in urban space, has significant implications for the constitution of public space and the groups who, for various reasons, inhabit public space in distinct ways. Drawing on research conducted on a range of unstably housed groups in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom from 2014-2020, in this talk I examine how processes of digitalization are reshaping policing practices in relation to urban homelessness in three key ways: by providing additional surveillance tools – especially data - to identify homelessness, and in turn, the capacity to act on or against groups identified as homeless; shifting urban policing towards predictive controls, which results in pre-emptive criminalisation of already marginalised and highly mobile populations, and through asymmetries in

forms and practices of algorithmic governance that are digitally and biometrically exercised on (and with) urban citizens, with the smartphone playing a special role as a proxy for the body and identity marker. The talk ends with a question of whether new risks of criminalisation and punishment from digital policing can be minimised while enhancing the benefits of mobile digital access to those who experience homelessness.



**Justine Humphry, PhD**, is a Senior Lecturer in Digital Cultures in the Discipline of Media and Communications and Deputy Head of School of Research of the School of Art, Communication and English at the University of Sydney. Her research examines the cultural and political implications of digital media in everyday life and the lived realities of techno-marginalisation, looking at consequences of mobile, smart and data-driven technologies for under-represented and excluded communities. Her 2022 book, “Homelessness and Mobile communication – Precariously Connected”, published by Palgrave MacMillan, reveals the ways people experiencing homelessness navigate uneven, insecure, and costly mobile communications to access a wide range of information and services while also being subject to existing and new vulnerabilities, as shaped by broader cultural, political, and economic inequalities. | [justine.humphry@sydney.edu.au](mailto:justine.humphry@sydney.edu.au)

### **MyGate: Convenience for residents or pervasive surveillance for data creation? A Study of society management app in India**

Shivangi Narayan

This paper aims to study ‘MyGate,’ a security management app used in India to manage the workings of gated communities in urban areas. I study the app as a data *‘generator’* system to understand the design, the social context, and the workings of the app that come together to produce data that surveil and control all members of the gated complex where it is deployed. The metro cities in India, the large urban centres, are full of gated communities that have come up as a response to the lack of urban planning or as a neoliberal conception of urban living. Gated societies are closed enclaves, with all amenities situated inside, with restricted entry to those who do not ‘belong’ - either by way of residing there or providing service. Hence surveillance and policing of such bodies become an important aspect of their existence. MyGate mobile application first entered the arena to solve and ease the process of entering the space. It automated the entry process, and by its own admission, reduced it to within a range of 30 seconds to 3 minutes as opposed to 15 minutes earlier. This app has collaborated with another services app known as ‘Urban Company’ that schedules home services for residents in India such as cleaning, plumbing, electronic appliance repair and even salon services. MyGate is thus not just a service provider mobile application but a service platform. By its very definition, it amasses a large amount of data about the residents and workers and sells it back to them in the form of products. Following an ethnography study of the use of MyGate in a gated complex in Noida- which is a suburb of New Delhi, the capital city of India, this paper aims to look at how MyGate becomes an extractive apparatus for data which enables surveillance and control of the targeted population. It highlights a) the kinds of data collected by Mygate and b) the ideological, social, political and economic conditions under which this data gathering is both allowed and

legitimised. The paper studies the role of platform capitalism in India in making this kind of pervasive surveillance mechanism possible and for perpetuating it.



**Shivangi Narayan**, PhD, is a researcher on the use of AI in policing and is currently involved with a three year project titled 'Algorithmic Governance and Cultures of Policing - AGOPOL (2021-24)', funded by the Oslo Metropolitan University and the Norwegian Research Council. She is also interested in studying online caste based hate speech in India and surveillance through identification technologies. Dr Narayan is the author of 'Predictive Policing and the Construction of the Criminal: An Ethnographic Study of Delhi Police' (Palgrave MacMillan, 2023) and 'Surveillance as Governance: Aadhaar | Big Data in Governance' (People's Publication 2021). | [shivangi.narayan@gmail.com](mailto:shivangi.narayan@gmail.com)