JUSTICE, EQUITY + TECHNOLOGY PLAYBOOK

A PRAGMATIC GUIDE TO CONFRONTING POLICE TECHNOLOGIES

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CONTENT

ABOUT THIS PLAYBOOK

For us to understand and confront the ways in which data-driven, automated technologies are being integrated into policing, we need to build shared knowledge of how members of racialised, minoritised groups are affected by these transformations.

This Playbook brings together facilitation tools we—Justice, Equity and Technology Project (JET)—have developed and research we have done in cities across Europe. JET is a collaborative network focused on discriminatory technologies and their impacts. This Playbook boils down and presents what we have organised and learned in our hundreds of events and collaborations over the past five years.

When we started JET, we found little guidance or methodologies for the exchanges we wanted to facilitate. But we knew that in-person convenings on discriminatory police technologies and those feeling the impacts and experiencing harm on the ground were *essential*. There was—and very much still is—an urgency to unpack and address discriminatory policing. The quick pace and obscure nature of development and deployment of high-tech tools creates both a palpable anxiety but also a hunger that *together,* we can situate these technologies in the context of systemic inequality and racialised criminalisation. There was—and very much still is—also a need to connect the different groups across Europe starting to question technologies, offer open spaces for discovery, and create durable bonds between us.

This Playbook reflects our specific approach to disentangling the issue of police tech, building webs of relationships and facilitating in-person convenings to build collective understanding and seed collective engagement. Some of these methodologies are very much our own, developed by us to respond to the moment and the needs of the groups in our field. Others are adaptations of tried-and-tested facilitation, research, or engagement techniques.

Most of all, this Playbook offers a framework for curating conversations between organisers. Conversations about the implications of research findings for on-the-ground realities, shared experiences and the intimidation of tech and opportunities for organising. To enable these conversations, we have intentionally developed sessions which balance the needed structure for focused knowledge sharing with the flexibility of spaces which generate organic exchange and creativity.

Together, our methodology and tools have helped us and the communities we work with, to demystify and unpack the issue of data-driven policing and find avenues to collectively

address its impact on racialised and marginalised communities at a local, concrete level. We hope that this Playbook can inspire or support those who are looking for ways to start the work of addressing the harms of data-driven policing tech in Europe.

ABOUT JET

Justice, Equity and Technology Project (JET) is a collaborative network-building effort to address the impacts of data-driven policing on racialised communities throughout Europe. We create spaces of convening to exchange visions and strategies of organising. Centring the needs and experiences of racialised and marginalised communities, our aim is to expose and confront the harms of new forms of policing, surveillance, and control on the ground.

Justice, Equity, and Technology (JET) started its foundational work in September 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Working from the discoveries of the previous research that identified the need for a broader set of visions and strategies in tech governance as well as a dynamic space to incubate these new ideas. Beginning in 2021, the JET Table was established to cater to this need. It formed as an independent network of Table members that constructs collective knowledge, shares timely information, builds solidarity, and co-ordinates strategies around the issues of equality, justice, data-driven technologies, and their governance.

JET is fundamentally driven by a participatory, collaborative research and organising philosophy. We facilitate four distinct but closely interrelated spaces of exchange, inquiry, and coordination among organisers and advocates. We build networks with partners working towards racial and social justice, police monitoring, surveillance tech monitoring, as well as tech justice and digital rights across Europe.

We bring an intersectional, abolitionist, and decolonial analysis of systemic injustice to the world of facilitating, education, and research. We are guided by the principles of justice, equity, co-liberation, and care. We understand that technology is/has power and that technology reflects power in society.

Through our work, we aim to:

- Unpack and understand violent, discriminatory technologies;
- Strengthen collaborative capacity of justice and equity organisers at the intersection of technology governance;
- Build a better world with alternative visions of collective wellbeing.

Authors

Seeta Peña Gangadharan – Associate Professor in the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her work focuses on inclusion, exclusion, and marginalisation, as well as questions around democracy, social justice, and technological governance.

Sanne Stevens – Co-Director of Justice, Equity and Technology Project. Her work focuses on how data-driven technologies reinforce and transform power structures, surveillance technologies and strategies of subversion and resistance.

Esra Özkan – Co-Director of Justice, Equity and Technology Project. She has a background in social justice organising and facilitation. Her work focuses on movement building, individual and community transformation as pathways to experiencing freedom and justice in our lifetimes.

Table Members

AlgoRace: Bringing an anti-racist perspective to the public debate on AI and bringing it closer to migrant and racialised communities in Spain

Border Violence Monitoring Network: Documenting illegal pushbacks and police violence at the European borders

Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG): Defending the rights of the Roma community in Spain and Europe

GHETT'UP: Organising youth empowerment in the banlieues of Paris

Homo Digitalis: The only digital rights civil society organisation in Greece

No Tech for Tyrants (NT4T): Student-led organisation against violent technology and hostile immigration environments

Northern Police Monitoring Project (NPMP): Independent grassroots organisation working to build community resistance against police violence, harassment, and racism

Patrick Williams: Lecturer and social researcher

Stop the Scan: Campaign against the police rollout of mobile fingerprint scanners in the UK

StopWatch: Turning a spotlight on stop and search, campaigning against the over policing of marginalised communities in the UK

Technopolice: Campaign coordinating the fight against new policing tech in France

Transbalkan Solidarity: Solidarity network in the Balkans for and about people on the move of more than 500 individuals and civil society groups from across the region and beyond

Our Funders

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Acknowledgements

We are grateful to be able to work with JET Table members and other collaborators in the extended network of *ThisisWhatPoliceTechLooksLike, Refusing Control* and *Black Data Excavator (BDX)* projects. The work that is documented here is a testimony of the many inspiring moments we have shared within these circles.

We want to thank Brianna Crummy for her diligent proofreading of this playbook.

We would also like to thank Our Data Bodies for allowing us to use and adapt two activities in their *Digital Defense Playbook*: “Systems in Our Lives” and “Surveillance Timeline”.

We also would like to thank JET Advisory Board Members Bogdan Kulynych, Eric Kind and Sarah Chander for being our sounding boards from the beginning as we shape this project into what it has become today.

PART 1

JET'S APPROACH TO TECHNOLOGIES OF CONTROL

‘With these topics there can be a sense of “loneliness" that builds, and it was a much-needed reminder that there are people and networks actively thinking (and fighting against) this issue.’

‘What I’m taking away from this event is the energy which is always prioritising building and supporting relationships between people. And that’s what is going to build a movement.’

ESRA ÖZKAN

SPACES WE HOLD: SEEDING AND GROWING WEBS OF RELATIONSHIPS

Building networks has always been core to JET's approach. There are several reasons for this. First, the context in which we started our journey was a crisis one, and we knew the urgency of building together in uncertain times. Measures against COVID-19 provided the police with more power and additional tools which resulted in an increase in police brutality and racial profiling. So-called health surveillance coincided with growing far-right nativist, populist, and authoritarian political projects that aimed to shut borders, and target and spread disinformation about ethnic and racial minorities. Meanwhile, states transformed counter-terrorism policies—originally designed to target and criminalise Muslims—into mechanisms that extended policing duties to non-policing institutions such as schools, universities, and medical care institutions. By the height of lockdowns across Europe, pushbacks at borders and police brutality reached stunning levels. By and large, technology was a key aspect of the implementation and design of these harmful policies, practices, and narratives, and we recognised immediately that a strong network would mitigate feelings of isolation and helplessness, and yield and help us collectively respond to complex problems in uncertain times.

Second, and beyond the COVID crisis context, new forms of policing demand new thinking and action. An increased focus on technology in policing and the invisibility of this technology has amounted to a new paradigm in policing that requires an evolution of practices to address injustice and, therefore, taking time and space to make these changes possible. We carve out spaces where people from different organisational backgrounds can come together without any pressure of delivering an outcome or following a specific path to push for a collective agenda. Many of our network members do use tools such as litigation and policy advocacy to address issues such as racialised criminalisation and state surveillance. However, JET spaces afford an openness and encourage identification of and experimentation with new methodologies, topics, and

analyses. We recognise that a learning network can serve as effective base building. Learning together builds trust and relationships, which then, in turn, builds the capacity to act together. As facilitators, JET focuses on providing space for deepening the relationships between organisers. Maintaining this unstructured space and tending to those relationships create fertile ground for emergent strategies.

Third, we also got motivated by a thirst for more substantial changes for racial justice and coordination among social justice organisers across Europe. Many organisers are dealing with immense feelings of despair and anxiety. The challenges we face are massive, yet we need to acknowledge the fact that progressive movements have not marked remarkable achievements in the last decade. By contrast, the far right and conservative forces seem to be able to form a shared vision and strategy across a vast array of actors.

What we need in social justice movements is a long-term strategy and compelling narratives representing a worldview of healthy and safer communities. Attaining that vision requires working through difference, embracing different ways of knowing, and valuing the bigger tapestry of contributions by organisers. Spaces to share lessons learned in ways that uplift each other's work are a means to cultivate belonging, trust, and joy. They serve as an antidote to those emotions of despair and anxiety. That is the reason why we organise regular spaces of exchange where each participant has something to offer, and, most importantly, people have a great time together. We build agendas in spacious ways where we can discuss what matters the most at that moment for those who are present. Wherever we go, we choose to organise in local spaces (e.g., community centres, squats, art collectives) which leaves us with great memories of finding collective solutions. Our convening participants have bonded when confronting a leaking ceiling due to pouring rain in Brussels, figuring out where to locate break-out discussions amidst the many tools of a bike repair workshop in Milan, and connecting in a heart-felt way with great hosts in countless other locations. We break bread together in mostly locally catered, community-based restaurants and leave time to chat, unwind, and even dance in local venues. We believe that building relationships cannot be left to coffee breaks.

Different Spaces, Same Purpose

Although JET has evolved and holds many different types of spaces, historically. we approach these spaces with unified purpose. The *JET Project* is the overarching name for all the moving parts of this initiative, and the *JET Table* sits at its centre. The Table is a core network of 12 organisations that participate in bimonthly meetings and steer the work of the project. In 2021, the JET staff team (two part-time workers and a mostly volunteer-based principal investigator) and Table members co-designed two principal documents: Table Principles and Collaboration Guidelines. After composing these foundational values and processes, we embarked upon a long-term strategising effort which informed our objectives. We continually revisit and update these on a regular basis. JET now co-ordinates four spaces in total. We continue to be helmed by the Table. In addition, two new spaces emerged out of the Table: *ThisisWhatPoliceTechLooksLike* and *Refusing Control*. A fourth space—*Black Data Excavator* or *BDX*—also emerged from the

Table as an incubator project. At the core of these four spaces, which emerged from the Table, are fundamental questions. *How can we address the impacts of data-driven policing on racialised communities? What are the potential avenues of support and co-ordination between different efforts of organising? And how do we envision a world where all people feel safer and live the lives they value?*

In short, *ThisIsWhatPoliceTechLooksLike* brings together police and technology monitoring groups. *Refusing Control* has worked in local contexts and organised community workshops with on-the-ground organisers. *BDX* has provided research mentoring to groups in London, Paris, and Barcelona to assist them in connecting issues they face around racialised criminalisation with the challenges of new technologies and invisible policing.

Shifting from Exposing Harms to Strengthening Relationships

With *ThisisWhatPoliceTechLooksLike*, questions we had in mind were: *How does data-driven policing influence racialised policing on the ground? In which ways do the harms of policing change by data-driven tech?* We thought that we could seek answers with a collective of activists and organisers who already document and expose stories and experiences of the harms related to policing and/or surveillance. This space's initial approach was oriented towards unpacking and understanding harms and documenting these harms with the assumption that it would motivate and inform collective action.

Many police monitoring groups participating in *ThisisWhatPoliceTechLooksLike* have shared how useful it has been to identify patterns in policing and surveillance across contexts. Similar narratives of risk, threat, criminalisation, and bordering have been weaponised against certain groups, and it has become evident that effective police cooperation is happening. We have also discussed the problems around quantifying harm and engaging in legal processes. Many cop-watchers are turning to people affected in their communities to seek and document the truth, as opposed to engaging in legal processes which are draining and can lead to less impactful or transformative results. With that said, technology—what it is and how it works—often turns into a sticking point, with groups finding it difficult to rely on community experiences.

That is why one of the initial proposals of the *ThisIsWhatPoliceTechLooksLike* network was building our own police tech database to have better oversight and collect more up to date information. However, after several discussions, we came to the conclusion that we already knew enough and that more data collection would not naturally bring about the change we want. What we needed was to mobilise the trust we held in ourselves and each other to build a collective power analysis. In the end, *ThisIsWhatPoliceTechLooksLike* felt that what we were doing was already enough: building a channel of communication between police monitoring groups in Europe, something that is a first in our field.

Shifting from a focus on exposing harms to one emphasising relationships and collective strength has been a major turning point for JET. The relationships that we have built represent what we want, rather than what we do not want. We have embraced a new model of organising and dialogues between the international network of *ThisisWhatPoliceTechLooksLike* and in-person community workshops called *Refusing Control*.

Being Transformed by What We Learn

Refusing Control takes the broader picture of racialised criminalisation and new forms of police tech into different local contexts and reiterates conversations with on-the-ground organisers. *Refusing Control* puts more effort and resources than *ThisisWhatPoliceTechLooksLike* into organising local events to identify what people need to address policing technologies in their context. These meetings have deepened our existing relationships, sharpened our analysis with context specific realities, initiated conversations about technology in racial justice organisations, fortified relationships between monitoring groups within countries and regions, helped groups formulate political demands, built skills with trainings, and more. Centring in-person community workshops in our work has brought us closer to our intention of rooting ourselves in lived experiences of racialised communities while broadening the movement repertoire of resistance.

After every *Refusing Control* meeting, we are left with resource lists, lessons learned, action points to be taken, practices of care we experimented with, feelings of gratitude, an experience of being tired and happy, and almost always an unexpected challenge we need to navigate as a group, which brings us closer. We then take a pause with those packages we take home. We share back the notes and learnings in other spaces we hold so that different spaces can connect, and conversations can resonate in the whole network. Thinking about how we put our lessons into practice transforms our work while also travelling through communities. Before planning our next step, being transformed by what we learn is what we need most and that ethos of working is what makes JET different from many other networks. Independent from the pressures of funders, institutions, or other systems, JET prioritises trusted relationships as the basis of our collective power.

Space is the Place

JET spaces are places for discovery and building together. Tended to most effectively, they generate new ideas, new relationships, new possibilities. Moving forward, JET will keep on weaving webs of connections that keep us safe, open, and aligned. We are excited to learn more from other network builders about how cultivating connections is powering social change.

SANNE STEVENS

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE AN EXPERT TO ENGAGE WITH TECH

When we enter movement spaces and explain we are working on the impacts of data-driven technology, surveillance, and police tech, people often respond with hesitation. 'Oh, I don't really know anything about tech.' Or 'We don't really work on that.' Time and time again, we see how the issue of police tech intimidates people. It feels like something irrelevant and alien to their organising or experiences, and way too complex to even start to engage with. This common response is especially worrying, given that many are continuously targeted and highly impacted by surveillance and police tech, often without realising it. Moreover, this response shows us how successfully data-driven technology is framed as an *expert* issue that requires extensive knowledge before you engage with the topic or even form an opinion about it. It also shows how hard it is to realise the impacts of data-driven surveillance tech on our daily lives, as well as the injustices we try to address. Whether we want to or not, data-driven tech is an issue we must engage with, as it engages with us.

The veil of tech

The complexity and jargon that surrounds data-driven tech is one of the ways that police tech hides its workings, according to abolitionist organisers Stop LAPD Spying Coalition. The hyper-focus on technical features of surveillance tools and systems disempowers those who are targeted and impacted by tech-aided discrimination. This expert veil takes away people's agency to organise and address harm.

This is why demystifying surveillance and police tech with those who are most impacted is a crucial part of the JET project.

We strongly refute the assumption that you would need to be an expert in data-driven tech to contest the damage it is causing. Think about other, more familiar technologies,

like cars. No one would imply that if we would want to address the damage caused by cars, we should first understand exactly how they work. Many would understand that addressing the damage done by cars does not require a detailed understanding of car engine mechanics—but it does mean engaging with the power structures, interests, and underlying narratives surrounding cars.

However, when it comes to data-driven tech, we are often made to believe that we need to be an expert on the issue. Police tech talk tends to obsess over the finer details of how surveillance 'works' rather than what power it creates or amplifies.

We have dealt with this before and devised tactics and strategies for it. The jargon-riddled and seemingly abstract sphere of AI and data-driven tech resembles the policy and legal spheres that social justice organisers have had to confront for decades: intimidating, hard to engage with, full of gatekeeping mechanisms and attempts to limit issues of power and justice to procedural technicalities.

Addressing the harms of the policy and legal spheres means starting with the daily impact, with our experiences. Time and time again, these experiences tell the story of the systemic racism embedded in policy and legal spheres very clearly. Thus, the main part of the work of groups pushing back against racist policing, is to monitor and address harms as they play out in everyday, lived experiences. For us, this should be the start of the conversation about the harms of data-driven tech as well.

This is not to say engaging with tech experts can't be useful. Groups fighting racist policing are often supported in their work by policy or legal experts to engage with these specialised tools of power. The work of a good lawyer is crucial from time to time. Learning about basic rights to guide everyday interactions with the legal system, such as community focused 'Know Your Rights' campaigns or legal support groups, is an important empowering element of the work against repression.

Similarly, engaging with experts of police or surveillance tech can give practical insights as well as support unpacking the institutional ecosystem upholding these technologies. In some cases, deconstructing an algorithm by reverse engineering, shows how it was designed to discriminate against certain categories such as single low-income mothers, or includes an over representation of racialised youth. Knowing which company has built the tech, whom it has sold to, and which arguments are used in their sales pitch, can help identify points of intervention, underlying narratives, and potential allies. In short, collaborations with people with such knowledge can help organisers translate, prioritise, filter out the noise and strategise. But it is definitely not necessary to be an expert of technology yourself, to know how algorithms work or how to code, to have a say about the impact and harm.

Surfacing everyday interactions

For this reason, a key part of our work is to develop workshops to unpack the issue of data-driven tech and discrimination in a way that directly links concrete implementations

with on-the-ground experiences. Surfacing the many interactions communities already have with data-driven tech—often without realising this—makes people aware it is not some faraway abstract issue. And in fact, that their knowledge and experiences offer many avenues for intervention.

While there is no shortage of great critical research and reports on discriminatory tech, a clear link to the everyday impact of concrete implementations is harder to find. Therefore, we try to take the research into the field and curate conversations with organisers on what these findings *actually* mean for on-the-ground realities—how does this play out in practice? JET's work is anchored in this pragmatic approach. Our workshops build understanding data-driven tech in the context of systemic inequality and racialised criminalisation in relation to what is already unfolding in organising networks.

In this playbook, we combine workshops and methodologies to support those who are looking for ways to start the work on addressing the harms of data-driven tech in Europe. Together, our methodology and tools have helped us and the communities we worked with, to demystify and unpack the issue of data-driven policing and find avenues to address its impact on racialised and marginalised communities at a local, concrete level.

SANNE STEVENS

HOW WE UNDERSTAND DATA-DRIVEN POLICING, AKA POLICE TECH

Our caption with JET is 'Addressing the impact of data-driven policing on racialised and marginalised communities through Europe'. What do we actually mean when we say 'data-driven policing', and how do we understand the role of police tech?

Data-driven policing can refer to a wide range of applications. It can be a shiny new AI surveillance project integrating live facial recognition technologies and movement analysis, such as the 'smart lamp posts' that pop up in cities throughout Europe. It can be decades-old CCTV networks. It can be digital fingerprint scanners, police drones at protests, or in border areas. A fundamental part of data-driven policing is the digital infrastructure required to make all this surveillance tech work: the many databases containing personal information, a local police registry, and the administration of car licence plates. Data-driven policing tools include so-called 'predictive' policing schemes designed on the deluded premise that algorithms can calculate the risk of a future offence occurring or even the 'radicalisation' of a person. It includes the vast array of tech used to assist the border regime. All these different technologies are examples of data-driven policing, or as some call it, digital policing. We have been more conveniently referring to it as 'police tech'. *Note: We use the Police Tech Taxonomy of different kinds of data-driven policing tools to map out examples.*

If we say, '*policing in its broadest sense*', this means we understand policing happens through other institutions besides the police: immigration facilities, schools, social services, and the health care system. A much-discussed example of data-driven policing in this broad sense is algorithms used by social services to predict the risk of fraudulent social welfare beneficiaries, a fictitious assumption which has led to numerous scandals and many wrecked lives throughout the world.

If we speak about the *impacts* of police tech, our focus is on the disproportionate targeting of and causing harm to racialised and marginalised communities. Across all these different implementations, there is a constant: the use of police tech reinforces racism and inequity.

Tech as a tool in the context of racialised criminalisation

Something that needs repeating, again and again: technology is not neutral. Despite corporate sales pitches, fantasies of computer superiority, and other common misconceptions. Data collection and analysis are not objective. In every step of the inception, the programming and piloting, all tech is imbued with and an expression of the values of its creators and the society at large. It is therefore no surprise that the use of police tech reinforces racism and inequity, as policing at large does in a deeply racist, classist society.

One of our important principles is that:

Technology is and reflects power:
The deployment of technological systems exacerbates existing injustices. The structural and institutional harm perpetuated by the use of automated systems can be understood as a continuation of histories of oppression and colonisation.

This principle affects how we work and address the issue.

Exploring the impact of police tech, what we find is racist and discriminatory profiling, leading to violence and other injustice with complete impunity. If we understand technology as a tool of power, the source of these harms, the fact that this tech *exists* in the first place, is not something within these technologies, but structurally racist and discriminatory policing. Tech is one of the many tools to aid an agenda that criminalises racialised and poor communities and has been doing so for many centuries.

Understanding police tech not only as inherently political but also as historical, is recognising that these new technologies are 'not a moment in time, but a continuation of history'. Despite terms such as 'innovative' or 'reinventing policing' being thrown around, the methods of policing these tools support have their roots in long histories of oppression. Policing itself has its roots in colonial oppression, as well as many policing technologies.

Part of our work is to emphasise the above, to repoliticise tech and expose the ideology behind the tools. While in some circles this almost goes without saying, there is still a general misguided conception of data-driven tools as objective, more neutral, and superior to human decisions. This narrative has its function: it depoliticises the use of power through these tools and obscures discriminatory workings. Too many mainstream criticisms of data-driven tech present injustices related to implementations as a tech problem, a faulty algorithm, as if the cause is automation itself. For us, pushing back does not mean fighting against a 'biased' algorithm as an isolated phenomenon, an anomaly in

an otherwise just system. If only this were true. In reality, the algorithm and its harms are part of a deeply rooted structural inequality.

The new capabilities of data-driven tech

While stressing that the root cause of harm is not the technology, the technology is designed and shaped in certain ways with specific characteristics that have consequences for how data-driven technologies can be used as tools of power. Tech does change the landscape in specific ways. Data-driven tech aims to refine, optimise, and intensify existing systems, or as Claudia Aradau observes:

'AI does not alter the core violent social sorting rationale of borders, but rather supplements this rationale with new capabilities' (*Claudia Aradau, Borders have always been artificial: Migration, data and AI)*

Unpacking police tech also means trying to understand what these new capacities look like and what is specific about the reinforcement of racism and discrimination by these tools. Stop LAPD Spying Coalition observes that data-driven tech changes the landscape due to its capacity to 'scale' and 'veil'.

Scale means that police tech has more reach, more efficiency through speed of data processing and record comparison. It also refers to the ever-expanding invasiveness, infiltrating deeper into everyday lives as well as into the most powerful institutions.

Veil refers to the cloak of 'objectivity', the invisibility of digital surveillance, the obscuring complexity, as well as its capacity to transform social and political issues into something to be solved with a tech fix, with more data.

These characteristics lead to a destructive cocktail of harms. For example, due to the veil of objectivity and superiority, tech is depoliticised and racism obscured, while there is an overconfidence in the judgments of algorithms as accurate. People are wrongly targeted in seconds or excluded from services purely based on the trust in an algorithmic calculation or a match of facial recognition AI, with little checks or redress.

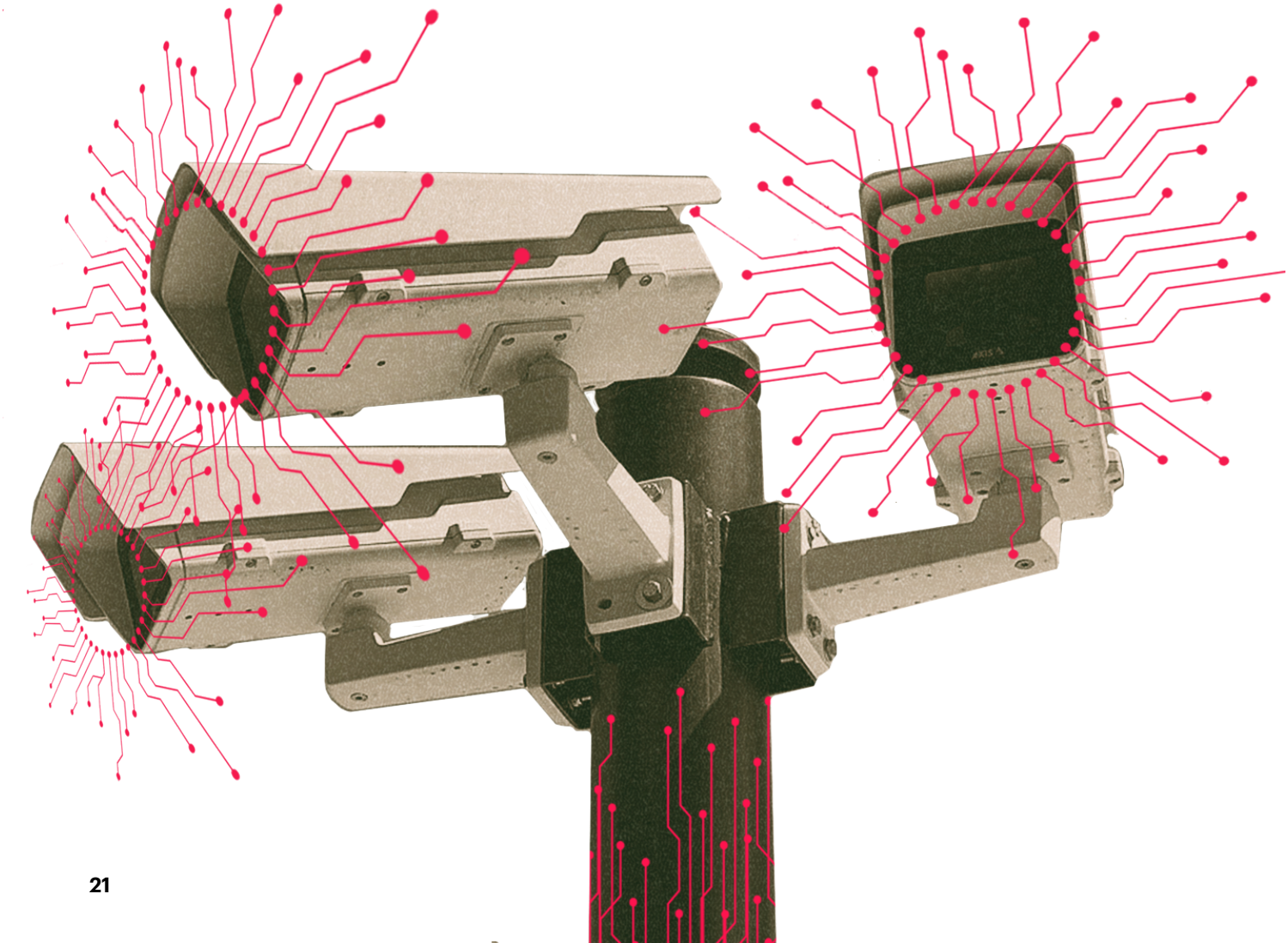
Unpacking the issue of police tech also means looking at the drivers of its implementation, the political field, and other mechanisms facilitating its use. For example, many new tech implementations are outside of any regulation or oversight, with little public, let alone political, scrutiny. There is a lenient attitude to tech, where the interests of a hugely powerful tech industry are facilitated by the state under the guise of innovation and experimentation. The money being poured into AI, combined with a powerful security industry, creates its own incentives.

An understanding of these dynamics and power structures of data-driven tech can help find meaningful interventions to push back. To connect all the dots, ground the work in actual day-to-day impact while dissecting the many different actors, we have found the Algorithmic Ecology Tool an excellent methodology. Through this framework, we can map, visualise, and communicate the relationships of power that surround any example

of police tech, algorithm, or otherwise. The tool, developed by the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition and Free Radicals, looks at the different actors that shape the tech and illustrates whose interests are served. In the process of mapping, this tool not only enables us to visualize the ecosystem of power and intention to inflict harm but also serves to find points of intervention. The explicit aim is not just to have a better understanding, but to connect this to opportunities of resistance and the ultimate goal of dismantling the actors creating tech harms and abolishing systems of oppression altogether.

PART 2

UNPACKING AND UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE



‘A lot of folks that came to technology, came from the migrant space because we were forced to. Technology is used to deport people. I'm not a computer engineer, I don't need to understand exactly how it works. But I know the logic it subscribes to.'

‘We get stuck if we are trying to bring the cops to justice. We have the power of investigating the cases with the community so we can know our own truth. Communities can reveal the truth and expose it to public rather than being denied their dignity.’

SANNE STEVENS

POLICE TECH TAXONOMY: THE TECH YOU ALREADY KNOW

Using four categories of data-driven policing, this taxonomy workshop invites participants to dive into concrete examples of how police technologies are being rolled out. This exercise works well as a method of knowledge exchange and helps people realise they know much more about police technologies than they might initially have been aware of.

Why use the police tech taxonomy?

As the topic of 'data-driven policing' often feels overwhelming and abstract, this workshop will offer a frame within which examples of police tech can be shared to make the issue more concrete, and get more grip on the subject.

Secondly, the taxonomy serves as a prompt to surface knowledge and experiences of participants and speak about examples that are specific to their context, initiating peer-to-peer learning and grounding the issue within people's work and life.

It gets the groups understanding about data-driven police tools on a more similar level and offer them a basis for conversations in later sessions; for example, to identify possible strategies of intervention, advocacy, or campaigning.

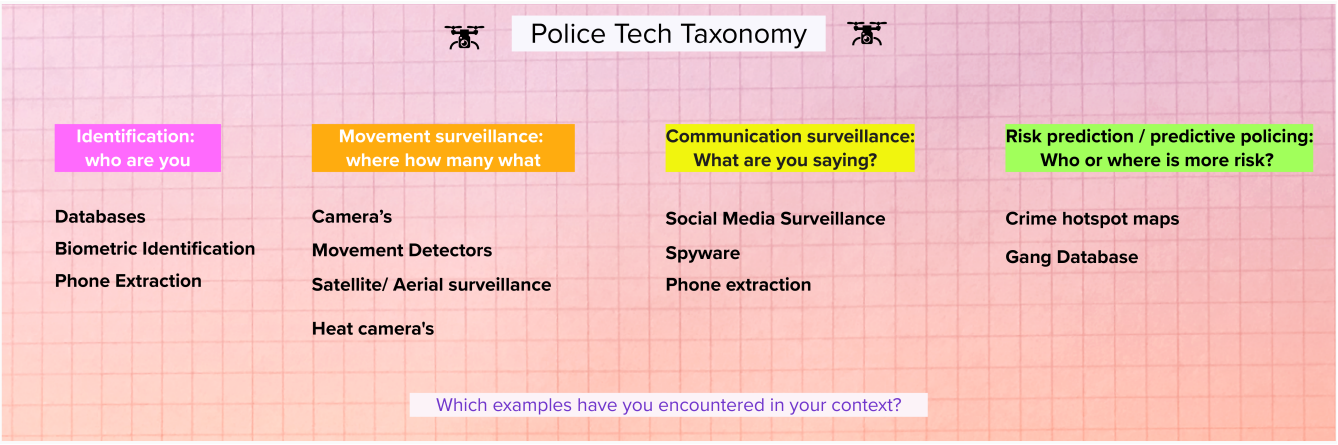
And lastly, the taxonomy offers a tangible output that participants can go back to later, and use in their contexts.

Supplies

- Police tech taxonomy template (page 22)
- Sticky flip charts, one for the collective introductory plenary and one per break-out group
- Post-its, markers, and tape

To Prepare

- Either project the taxonomy template as shown below or draw it on a sheet of paper. The Annex at the end of this Playbook contains a full size taxonomy).



- Create a list of examples of the data-driven technologies that might fit under any one of the four categories that fits the context and audience you are presenting to.
- If you elect to have break-out groups, set aside one flip chart paper per group.
- Make sure a flip chart is prepared to write or stick post-it notes on.

Time

Total: 2 hours
Introduction: 45 min
Break-out groups: 45 min
Final round: 30 min

Description

Introductory Plenary Presentation:

In the introduction we shortly describe what we will be doing and how the session will unfold. We explain that in this session, we will categorize examples of police tech using our prepared taxonomy, as a tool to help us understand the issue and surface concrete examples.

After this, we present the taxonomy. To make sure the intent is clear, we emphasise that any taxonomy is a simplification and inevitably overlooks nuances. In fact, some examples that get discussed may fall into multiple categories. Assure the group not to worry if this happens. The point of this exercise is not to come to an extensive, scientific grouping of all police tech, but to offer a guide to think through what we already know.

Show the image of the police tech taxonomy (see next page) and walk through the taxonomy by addressing each category separately. To make the categories come to life and start the exploration, provide very general examples of the kinds of technologies we can think of in this category.

Category 1: Identification tech: Who are you?

This is technology that aids the police to identify people. It includes databases and biometric identification technologies such as facial recognition technologies, fingerprinting, and so on.

Category 2: Movement surveillance: Where, how many, what?

This is technology that detects movement or detects the presence of something or someone: Where are the people, the traffic? How big is the crowd, how many people? Where are they going?

This surveillance or detection of the movement of people, crowds or traffic, does not necessarily identify the people or vehicles further. We can think of cameras for crowd detection or drone surveillance of protests.

Category 3: Communication surveillance: What are you saying, writing, sharing?

This is technology that follows communication: What are you saying, writing, sharing? Think about phone taps, digital communication surveillance.

Category 4: Risk prediction/Predictive technologies

These are technologies that try to predict the risk of something happening, based on historical patterns. Here we have predictions focused on **areas** (in which area are burglaries likely to happen?) or on **persons** (who might commit a crime, re-offend etc.).

After this general walk through, we want to prompt the participants to give their own examples.

Still in the plenary, ask the group whether they can give a specific example of an Identification technology. Below are some more specific examples provided, which you can suggest if there is little response from the group. This is a good way to identify whether people understood the category and to get interaction started.

For documentation purposes, you can capture the examples raised during the plenary on post-its or write them directly on a flip chart.

Below are some suggested examples for each category which can be discussed during the plenary.

Identification: Who are you?

- Automated number plate registration databases linked with cameras, often deployed by the police in many different cases
- Schengen Information System (SIS)—the most widely used and largest information sharing system for security and border management in Europe, relevant in relation to border technology
- Facial recognition cameras

Movement surveillance: Where, how many, what?

- Surveillance drones, used by the police to monitor protests
- Crowd control monitoring, at stadiums in your city or to track masses in inner cities
- Aerial surveillance, used to monitor movement around borders by Frontex
- Heat cameras to detect people who try to hide themselves in trucks

Communication surveillance: What are you saying, writing, sharing?

- Cases of Social media monitoring that people know of (both of groups, personal accounts and 'sentiment analysis')
- Phone taps
- Cases of spyware used on smartphones, for example in contexts where Pegasus is used

Risk prediction/Predictive technologies

- Area focused 'hot spot' policing analysis, identifying certain areas as more at risk of crime, such as burglary, is widespread. Most bigger cities have an example of such an implementation which you could name.

- Person focused examples include the 'Gang Matrix' database in the UK, risk prediction of reoffense which informs the right to parole, or risk of 'radicalisation' programs. Try to find a good specific example that fits the group.

When going through these categories and discussing examples, initiate engagement and sharing by participants. For example, you can ask: *When we speak of databases as the infrastructure of much data-driven policing, which ones can we identify in that local context? How do these come into play during policing? Has anyone had the experience of being looked up in a database?*

This conversation also offers a way in which we can offer our knowledge where relevant and teach people more about police tech. Following this example, when we discuss databases, we can dive deeper into the example of the ANPR database (which is in use in most countries). What is this? How is it relevant to us?

As a facilitator, being prepared to know more about certain examples and being able to give an explanation is part of the work. Which technologies are discussed depends highly on the focus of the workshop (for example: border tech, police tech within a specific country or targeting a certain group).

Focused Break-out Groups:

After this plenary session, in which we have introduced the categories and have prompted learning and sharing, we move into break-out groups so people can have a more focused conversation, and everybody gets to contribute with examples.

Divide people into break-out groups of about five depending on overall group size and space. Give each group a flip chart, instruct them to write the four categories of police tech on the sheets and populate the taxonomy with their own, specific examples. Walk around the room to see whether all groups understand what is expected of them and to ensure the conversation flows. The time dedicated to the break-out groups depends on the time available, but we recommend a minimum of 30 minutes to enable a lively exchange. After the designated time, call people back into a final plenary recap session.

Closing Plenary:

Bringing it all together, this part of the session is meant for participants to reflect on each other's work and what the exercise brought out. Depending on time, each break-out group can show the taxonomy created on their flip chart, and present one or two take-

aways. Collectively review the work done, summarise findings, and reflect on what is now known.

The *Police Tech Taxonomy* can be used as a basis for further workshops. For example, to think further about interventions, understanding what we need to find out more about, or to use as an input for the *Border Tech on the Move* script.

Tool in Action

We have used this taxonomy activity in many workshops, and it always sparked lively conversation and exchange. One of the use cases was during a regional convening on border tech in the Balkans. During the plenary exchange on the 'Identification' category, as well as in the break-out groups after, part of the exchange revolved around the many databases as an infrastructure of policing and control. Participants shared their knowledge about the different databases in use, such as the Eurodac database, or the Schengen Information System. But it was not only an exchange of technicalities and information systems. Soon after posing and answering questions, a conversation on databases as tools of power emerged. Participants reflected on the different ways they are used: not only to register and identify, but also to profile, categorise, and sort; not only to decide who is allowed to cross a border, but also to decide who gets included and excluded from medical care, social security, and shelter within a country. Examples of the workings of power and privilege through databases were linked to examples of resistance and solidarity, such as how doctors in the United Kingdom refuse to limit access to care, and in The Netherlands, people provide their social security number for those without one.

We also have used this taxonomy tool in a workshop in Italy. During a similar conversation, one of the participants pointed out that the criminalisation of people on the move was reflected in the fact that Eurodac—which is designed to assist with the management of asylum applications and support efforts to detect, investigate, and prevent terrorism and serious crime—lumps these categories together as similar threats.

At the Justice, Equity and Technology Project, we are committed to linking police tech to a wider analysis of power structures, how racialised criminalisation operates through these systems, and the identification of narratives which are lingering either in debates around the technologies or in the design itself. By using the taxonomy as a prompt, we find these issues naturally come up during workshops in a manner that encourages mutual exchange and learning.

Moreover, these analyses are never merely academic or abstract, through the experiences of participants, an on-the ground realism is brought to the conversation. In the Balkans, when we moved on to the category of movement surveillance, this sparked a lively exchange on the many different detection technologies deployed at borders with real life examples. It also grounded us in another sense. People in the field reported a certain paranoia or stress around drones, which more often than not, turned out to be from drone hobbyists and not police or border surveillance deployments. The conversation also surfaced a disturbing characteristic of digital surveillance—namely, people often do not know whether they are surveilled or if the surveillance is targeted at them. The group identified this as another way digital technology veils surveillance. However, at the same time, these shared sentiments also led to other important points. We were reminded of the proliferation of non-digital methods to advance control over movement when another participant noted the crude tactic deployed by the police to simply cut large swaths of forest on the Serbian Hungarian and Bosnian Croatian border.

The Police Tech Taxonomy has worked in many of our convenings as a great tool to unpack police technologies, surface context specific knowledge, and spark conversation and analysis.

SEETA PEÑA GANGADHARAN

NEIGHBOURHOOD SURVEILLANCE TIMELINE AND TOUR

In 2022, Dr. Patrick Williams (Metropolitan Manchester University) and Eric Kind (AWO) proposed that the Justice, Equity and Technology Project mentor Barcelona, London, and Paris-based organisations who were starting to question new police technologies in their respective locales. This initiative, called Black Data Excavator or BDX, aims to equip groups on the ground with the resources they need to connect their ongoing racial justice work to emerging technological developments in the world of policing.

JET is fundamentally driven by a participatory, collaborative research, and organising philosophy. So, it made sense to accept the invitation, listen, learn, and build with the BDX cohort in each city.

As part of our involvement, JET travelled to Paris a number of times to help its staff, volunteers, and allies in staging discussion and strategising around surveillance infrastructures. For way of background, the BDX anchor group in Paris is GHETT'UP. This banlieue-based organisation works at the intersection of media literacy and youth empowerment to fight racialised criminalisation of youth and Islamophobia. It has produced an original report that details the experience of surveillance in St. Denis by young residents, captures public opinion about surveillance and safety based on a representative survey, and connects the phenomenon of racialised surveillance to a longer history of surveillance, colonialism, and post-colonialism in France.

Our main mentoring effort took place in May 2024, when we staged an introductory discussion with staff and volunteers about participatory research on surveillance. We adapted two activities from published (*Digital Defense Playbook*) and unpublished activities developed by Our Data Bodies. Over the course of a few hours, the group mapped the meaning of surveillance, named surveillance systems that people in the neighbourhood of St. Denis encountered on a regular basis ('Systems in Our Lives'), and created a timeline of significant surveillance-related events in the neighbourhood, city, country, and overseas territories ('Surveillance Timeline').

In the debriefing of the event, GHETT'UP reflected on the substance of people's experience of surveillance and the various tools for engagement and generated a process they thought would work best in St. Denis. Specifically, GHETT'UP decided to develop the activity of a surveillance walk (see ODB's 'Look Up: What's in Your Community?'), with the organisation's own flare. They took the idea of a neighbourhood tour—something that one of GHETT'UP's volunteers was already doing to preserve local knowledge of important people and places in St. Denis—and merged it with that of the surveillance walk, with the goal of understanding different historical and current forms of surveillance in the built environment in the context of local history.

With more than a dozen allies, staff members, and volunteers, GHETT'UP led a day-long discussion. The day began with an introduction to the organisation's growing awareness and involvement with issues of surveillance and surveillance technology on site at the organisation's headquarters. Heading outdoors, over the next two hours, we stopped at five sites within a 15-minute radius of the organisation to learn about their significance to the unique neighbourhood history of a diverse and postcolonial France, neighbourhood pride, strength, and resilience. The stops also taught us what the technology means for the experience of anti-terrorism, racialised criminalisation, urban planning, and gentrification. At each site, after participants learned about each landmark, they were invited to draw the surveillance architecture they could observe.

After the group returned to GHETT'UP headquarters, and following lunch, they then took turns explaining their drawings. As participants explained choices and features in what they drew, discussion bubbled over with additional stories of being proud of the neighbourhood and of being watched and policed in the neighbourhood. The day ended with GHETT'UP talking about their plans to continue working on the issue of surveillance and engaging residents throughout.

Time

- Part 1: 2-hour workshop
- Part 2: 5-hour plus time for breaks/meal

Group size: 5-15 (any more than 15 might, ironically, raise suspicion!)

Overview

The idea of surveillance can seem abstract and surveillance technologies may be too specialist and too invisible. However, the experience of being watched and policed often leaves an indelible mark on the mind and body. In this two-part activity, participants take stock of physical evidence of surveillance in public places while also documenting memories of being watched, policed, 'stalked by the state' (SLSC), and local responses to these infringements. This process can serve as a jumping off point to deepen both research and organising efforts to challenge the surveillance practices driving criminalisation.

Goals

- Create collective understanding of local history of surveillance and resistance to surveillance
- Document in images/drawings and text what surveillance looks and feels like
- Archive base-level awareness in anticipation of strategising and organising

Prep Time

This is an activity which can be shortened or lengthened as time permits. Preparing for both the timeline (Part 1) and tour (Part 2) activities will require some amount of background research, walk-throughs, and consultation with allies and/or local residents. The preparation can be time intensive, taking several full days, if not more than a week.

Note that you can opt to run both activities as exploratory exercises that help identify what technical, political, and neighbourhood knowledge you may need to cultivate. In other words, you can choose to do relatively little preparation at the outset, hosting the Part 1 and Part 2 and generating insights based on what participants share (as opposed to merging participant insights with background knowledge you have prepared).

In either the time-intensive or time-conserving approach, consider partnering with someone from your local area who is familiar with its past or accessing local archives to gain insight.

Total anticipated prep time:

Part 1: 5-10 days (depending, see below)
Part 2: At least 2 days

Part 1: Surveillance timeline

Supplies:

- Sticky paper, a blank wall (for putting the sticky paper and post-its),
- coloured post-its,
- marker pens,
- clip boards,
- A4 paper,
- tape or blue tack (to adhere drawings to the wall).

Roles

There must be a dedicated facilitator and a dedicated note-taker. It is essential to capture participants' stories, insights, and questions in the moment, and to adequately document and summarise the timeline activity at its conclusion. Additionally, you may want to designate a researcher who is singularly tasked with responsibilities, such as background desk research or interviewing neighbourhood figures.

Description

Welcome (5 minutes)

Welcome participants and explain the goal of this activity, what participants should expect by the end of the activity, and how the information generated in this activity helps set the stage for Part 2 (the surveillance tour). Any relevant guidance for workshop participation norms should be introduced here.

Opening (1 minute per person, roughly 15-20 minutes total)

Have participants go around the room and introduce themselves, sharing the name of the neighbourhood/locale where they are from, and the name of the neighbourhood/locale where their mother's mother is from. Conclude with reflections on routes/roots.

Defining surveillance (30 minutes total)

Have people take 2-3 minutes to think about a system that required they give up information about themselves and that they encountered today when getting to the venue. Have them write this down on a sticky note. Popcorn the answers, collecting and posting the sticky notes as they answer.

Then ask, 'When you hear and think about these systems, which ones of these systems is a surveillance system?' Recategorise the sticky notes. [Note: this is a slight adaptation of the 'Systems in Our Lives' activity in the *Digital Defense Playbook*.]

Introduce the definition of surveillance and of surveillance technology.

Mapping surveillance events (2 hours)

Facilitate conversation and/or introduce the connection between surveillance and the systematic criminalisation of minoritised and racialised groups. Take five minutes to draw the link.

[Local context] Introduce the next process of discovery: identifying surveillance events in the neighbourhood. Have participants think about the neighbourhood or locale where they live and jot down events, incidents, or examples of where surveillance techniques and surveillance technologies have been put to use. Ask, 'What happened? When? To whom? By whom or what? Why? What surveillance technology was involved?' Have participants jot down one experience or example on a single sticky note (same colour).

[Wider context] After a few minutes, have participants repeat the task, but invite them to record the same, but for broader jurisdictions. (This could be the city or town, the state, former colonies) Make sure people scribe on the same colour for the same jurisdiction.

[Discussion and categorisation] Have participants put their sticky notes on the wall in chronological order. Select as many events as possible to get people explaining each event.

At a certain point, it is very likely that examples of resistance to surveillance start to emerge, such as an example of residents using their camera phones to 'watch the watchers' or document police violence. At this point, you can start constructing a second timeline that also chronologically details acts of resistance. If there are none, interrupt the discussion and prompt participants to note events or examples on post-its. To move things along, collect, and display these before launching into discussion.

Reflecting back insights (15 minutes)

At this stage in this timeline activity, you can now draw out or ask participants to draw out similarities, differences, or surprises they observe in the two timelines ('surveillance' and 'anti-surveillance'). You can also have participants share any points or questions they would like to find out more about. Remind them how this activity links to the surveillance tour (e.g., helps identify places to tour, surveillance technologies and law/policy backgrounds to learn about, and local people to remember and uplift). Describe relevant next steps.

Closing (2 minutes)

No grand suggestions here... just a reminder to wrap up any logistical items and close out the day with thanks.

Part 2: Surveillance tour

Supplies

- Sticky paper, a blank wall (for putting the sticky paper and post-its),
- coloured post-its,
- marker pens,
- clip boards,
- A4 paper,
- tape or blue tack (to adhere drawings to the wall),
- a timeline and visual map (preferably digital) that you have prepared in advance based on the insights and stories of Part 1,

- consent form or script (i.e., what you are going to say or obtain signatures to gain permission from participants to capture their stories and insights)

Roles

There must be a dedicated facilitator and a dedicated note-taker. It is essential to capture participants' stories, insights, and questions in the moment, and also to adequately document and summarise the timeline activity at its conclusion. You can elect to have a third person as the designated tour guide. Otherwise, the facilitator can function as tour guide too. Additionally, you can designate a researcher (or researchers) who is singularly tasked with research tasks, such as doing background desk research or discovering the history of specific surveillance technologies found in the local surroundings.

Description

Choosing landmarks in advance:

Pick your team (e.g., decide whether you want a separate facilitator and tour guide or whether this will be the same person; designate a note-taker who can scribe during the day, but also take charge of the archiving process; select researcher or researchers to do desk research or interviews.

Once you have done this, get started on the research to narrow your choice of landmarks. Talk to key figures in the neighbourhood and/or consult a neighbourhood historian and get a sense of what they think are important to the locale's history. Compare these stories to the ones mentioned in the surveillance timeline activity (Part 1).

Create a detailed visual map of the landmarks you choose. On the map, narrate the event, people, and surveillance infrastructures that exists. Meanwhile, produce the tools that will help the tour guiding go smoothly:

1) prepare or collect glossary terms that people might find useful (e.g., names of surveillance technologies and an explanation of their uses or applications and how they work);

2) make a basic script to keep you on time.

Devise an FAQ or information sheet that contains a number of scenarios that might arise during the surveillance tour and a set of actions or responses. For example, neighbours and/or other random strangers might also join the tour and, in some cases, disrupt the tour. Alternately, some participants may have alternate histories than the ones narrated by the tour guide. In either case, having an FAQ or information sheet will help the facilitator and tour guide best anticipate deviations from the script.

To double check the sites you have selected for the surveillance tools, do a dry run of the tour with at least two people to get a sense of the ebb and flow of the activity. If time permits, consult with allies about the information, resources, map, and/or invitation list that you have compiled.

Finally, become familiar with the archiving process and archive as you move through each stage of the activity. This will make it easy to compile and share back material at the end.

Welcome (5 minutes)

Welcome participants and explain the goal of this activity, what participants should expect by the end of the activity, and how the information generated in this activity connects to Part 1 (the surveillance timeline) and what influence this activity will have on future research, strategising, and/or organising. Make sure you get consent from participants in terms of how much they would like to be named/affiliated with the tour artefacts (e.g., drawings, direct quotes). Any relevant guidance for workshop participation norms should be introduced here.

Openings/Story share (about 2 minutes per person or 30 minutes)

Have participants go around the room and introduce themselves, share the name of the neighbourhood/locale where they are from, and identify one thing they love the most about their neighbourhood and one thing they think has changed in the neighbourhood. Conclude with drawing out connections and disconnections.

Setting the stage (10-15 minutes)

Inform participants how the tour is going to unfold and provide them a general overview (ideally with the one you prepared beforehand, but with only scant details). Explain that the tour guide will typically walk the group to a landmark, explain the history, field any questions, and then invite the group to draw what surveillance architecture they see (or imagine, since some surveillance architecture is invisible). Acknowledge that the group should be discreet when appropriate and that a 'tour group' like this one can sometimes attract attention, including from police, other residents, shop owners, etc. Offer them suggestions for how to respond to inquisitors. Then hand each participant their clipboard, paper, and marker pen, and initiate the tour. Give participants the chance to ask any questions.

Touring the landmarks (about 20 minutes per site, for a total of no more than 5 sites, estimated total time is 2 hours)

When explaining the history behind place you visit, feel free to incorporate any information from the surveillance timeline activity (Part 1). Also feel free to call on any participants with relevant knowledge, such as familiarity with surveillance technology, policing and police presence, police tech, gentrification, local politics, local organising, and more. Make sure your notetaker captures the conversations that happen on site and en route. Again, remember that the tour guide will bring participants to the landmark, explain the history, field any questions, and then prompt the group to do their surveillance drawings. Remind them that there is one drawing per location and that they should only draw on one side of an A4. Head back to the starting point when finished and give people a rest or sustenance before entering discussion, interpretation, analysis.

Doing a gallery walk (5-10 minutes)

While participants are resting or eating, collect all their drawings and put them up on a wall in columns. Make sure there is enough space to commingle in front of the pictures. A U-shaped seating arrangement is ideal for when all participants have done their viewing.

Once ready, invite the participants to look at the 'gallery' of surveillance drawings. Prompt participants to think about three things they have observed in the pictures: similarities, dissimilarities, and surprises.

Discussing the themes (60 minutes)

This part of the discussion can flow organically. However, it is helpful to bookend the discussion with two or three people sharing the similarities, dissimilarities, and surprises they observed, at the beginning. Give participants the opportunity to explain features that come up.

Preparing/presenting the timeline (10 minutes)

Based on the conversation and participants' stories and insights, make minor changes to the timeline you generated to help formulate the surveillance tour.

Planning next steps (45 minutes)

Invite participants to articulate new questions and new discoveries coming out of the tour and the post-tour discussion. Take the opportunity to summarise how you will make sense of all the inputs, what directions you might take this work for the purposes of research and/or organising.

If you are using this activity to do research, you can share back to the group how the tour helps refine questions/concerns and the urgency with which they should be answered. You can also reflect on what further research and investigation might be needed to deepen collective understanding of neighbourhood surveillance and anti-surveillance.

If you are using this activity to do strategising and organising, you can give the group the opportunity to generate a few goals and allies in relation to questions, concerns, or insights that are surfacing.

Whatever the case, give participants a look at the adjusted timeline, and use that to also introduce future plans, including what you will share back with them, when, and if and when they will reconvene as a group.

Closing (2 minutes)

No grand suggestions here...just a reminder to wrap up any logistical items and close out the day with thanks.

Archival Process:

As mentioned above, make sure your note-taker and researcher (if you have a designated researcher) have collected and organised all resources, interview transcripts and notes, background research and relevant analysis, visual map, timeline, in advance of the surveillance tour.

On the day of tour, make sure you have a note-taker on the day of the event scribing the discussion. The note-taker should be tasked with gaining (written or oral) consent of participants.

Make sure you collect all the artefacts generated from the tour. For example:

- Historical descriptions of each landmark
- Citations to any external resources related to each landmark
- Brief biographies or further information on neighbourhood figures/local hero's past and present
- Surveillance technology histories (e.g., technical, political, commercial details)
- Names of people/resources for further help
- Drawings of each landmark and a quote or quotes that capture the significance of the participant's explanation
- Timeline based on information/stories about surveillance, information/stories about resistance to surveillance, and important events/developments in the neighbourhood

You can decide whether you are going to summarise each of these in an easy-to-read document and/or if you wish to release the whole archive to participants to access and make sense of themselves. If your consent agreement includes public release of the archive, make sure to communicate the launch of this public archive to participants. If appropriate, consider sharing this material with neighbourhood libraries or archives.

SANNE STEVENS

BORDER TECH ON THE MOVE

'AI does not alter the core violent social sorting rationale of borders, but rather supplements this rationale with new capabilities'

– Claudia Aradau

While the obsession with border control and the policing of freedom of movement is intensifying, the conditions of 'legitimate' stay in Europe become more restrictive and the curtailing of immigration more violent and ruthless. Border control is no longer limited to the physical border areas but can happen everywhere all the time. This 'everywhere border' includes the creation of hostile environments internally within nation-states for those whose stay is considered illegitimate, as well as an externalised border regime trying to stop people from reaching Europe in neighbouring territories. A digital border infrastructure is fundamental to enable the expanding and targeted surveillance needed for the violent social sorting of this everywhere border. The border tech this digital border infrastructure consists of spans from databases to surveillance drones and heat cameras. There is a growing body of research and reports on the role of border tech in the border control regime, including different concrete examples in a variety of contexts in Europe. Despite the availability of excellent critical research, it remains a challenge for people working on the ground to connect the findings with their work and experiences. This workshop offers a framework to map different examples of border tech onto a concrete example; to think through which capabilities it provides the border regime, all the while surfacing knowledge and experiences of people in the workshop. This workshop is intended for practitioners who are working to support the freedom of movement for all and are addressing the harms of the border control regime in practise.

Why Use This Tool

As many of JET's tools, this exercise is designed to prompt participants to surface knowledge and experiences specific to their context and generate peer-to-peer learning, while grounding the issue within people's work and lives.

The tool also offers a tangible output that participants can go back to later, in other sessions the same event or in their work in their local context.

Supplies

- Workshop Worksheet: Tech taxonomy colour categorisation (see Annex)
- Post-its, markers or stickers (to colour code tech examples)
- Sticky flip chart paper

To Prepare

Read through this production, as the example scenario that demonstrates to participants how border tech intersects with different points in a migration journey

Time

Total: 1.5 hours – 2 hours
Introduction: 15 min
Break-out groups: 60 min
Final round: 10 – 30 min (depending on the rest of the program)

Description

This workshop is inspired by Tracked: Stories at the Intersection of Migration, technology, and human rights. This production follows two scenarios of people wanting to migrate, the different borders they cross, and the examples of border tech they encounter throughout their journeys. In this workshop we will ask participants create something similar: sketch a scenario of migration based on a fictitious persona in a smaller break-out group and collaboratively try to map out which tech participants are aware of as it is encountered at different points of the journey.

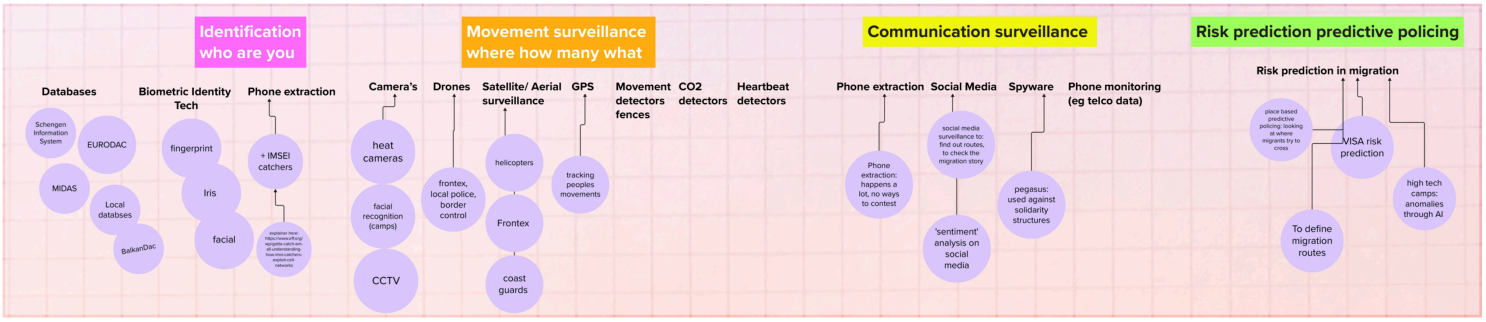
Plenary Introduction and Instruction Session:
First, in a plenary instruction session, go through the European scenario of Tracked. Walk through the story step by step, showing how different examples of border tech are surfacing in the story. Explain to the participants that in the following part of the session, they will be asked to create their own persona with its travel scenario and map examples of border tech based on this route.

Further clarify the intention of this session: each break-out group will create their own (fictional) persona with its travel scenario. For example, a person going from Afghanistan ends up in Germany after several border crossings and pushbacks. How would they travel? Which borders, checkpoints, border police units, camps and so on would they encounter during their journey? What do we know about the surveillance that is active in an area, the data collected in camps, identification databases that register them? Emphasise that it makes most sense to choose a fictional scenario and journey based on the experience of people in the break-out group. For example, if people are working at a

specific location, try to include that location in the fictional route. The route does not necessarily have to make sense in reality—it is a tool to share knowledge and get a better understanding of the digital border infrastructure that is encountered by people on the move.

Then show them the Police Tech Taxonomy Worksheet, as shown below (see in the Annex for a bigger worksheet version) and explain that when mapping the border tech onto the journey of the persona they have chosen in the break-out group, they can use the categories and the corresponding colour coding to mark their border tech: pink for identification tech, orange for movement surveillance tech, yellow for communication surveillance tech, and bright green for risk prediction tech.

Go through the categories and one or two examples for each. This is both a form of knowledge sharing and a way to prompt participants to understand all the different technologies that are part of the digital border infrastructure.



Police Tech Taxonomy, short explainer

Category 1: Identification tech: Who are you? - pink

> This is a technology that aids the police and immigration services in identifying people.
>
> This includes databases and biometric identification technologies such as facial recognition technologies, fingerprinting and so on.

Category 2: Movement surveillance: Where, how many, what? -orange

> This is technology that detects movement or detects the presence of something or someone: Where are the people, the traffic? How big is the crowd, how many people? Where are they going?
>
> This surveillance or detection of the movement of people, crowds, or traffic, does not necessarily identify the people or vehicles further. We can think of heat

cameras used at several borders, or drone surveillance.

Category 3: Communication surveillance: What are you saying, writing, sharing? - yellow

This is technology that follows communication: What are you saying, writing, sharing? Think about confiscation and phone extraction of the phones of people on the move or digital communication surveillance.

Category 4: Risk prediction/Predictive technologies - green

These are technologies that try to predict the risk of something happening, based on historical patterns. Here we have predictions focused on **areas** (in which area are burglaries likely to happen?) or on **persons** (who might commit a crime, re-offend, etc.). Part of the digital border infrastructure is risk prediction programs for migration movements.

After explaining the taxonomy, now give instructions to clarify what is expected from participants in the break-out groups.

1. Agree on a persona and scenario: where are they coming from, where do they end up and how could their journey have looked like? Define a starting point and an endpoint, as well as some of the places their persona will pass through. Remind participants that when choosing different points the persona travels through, they should consider the knowledge, and experiences present in the break-out group. Ask them to describe their persona in a couple of sentences on the right upper corner of the flip chart.

2. The second step is to draw the route on a flip chart paper, starting at the beginning, slowly working towards the endpoint during the session, marking different relevant crossings, detention facilities, checks, and so on.

3. Now brainstorm, using this route, which technologies the persona would encounter at which points: the different databases and border technologies, and what information is collected there. Use the colour coding of the taxonomy worksheet to mark different technologies during the mapping exercise.

4. If any questions come up during the process, write these down as well—they can inform other sessions or future information sharing.

5. If there is time, look at how certain elements of the digital border infrastructure affect different points along the route. For example, how registration in a database such as the Schengen Information System, affects different parts of the journey and how identification on a certain point can pop up later.

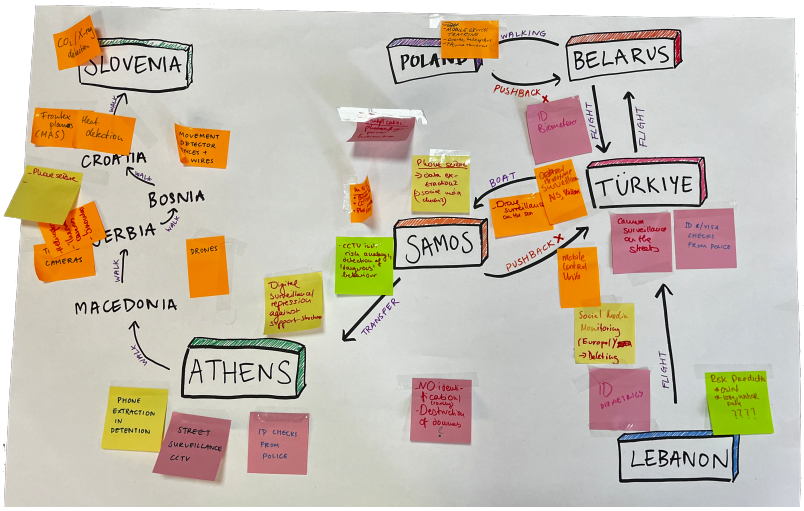
Now divide the participants in break-out groups, and provide each participant with a Border Tech Worksheet, each group with a flip-over sheet, post-it's and markers or stickers to colour code tech examples. Visit break-out groups while they are working to see whether all is understood.

Plenary:

After this, gather again in a plenary, where each break-out group shows their map. Ask each group not to share their routes in detail but instead focus on three main take-aways.

Tool in Action

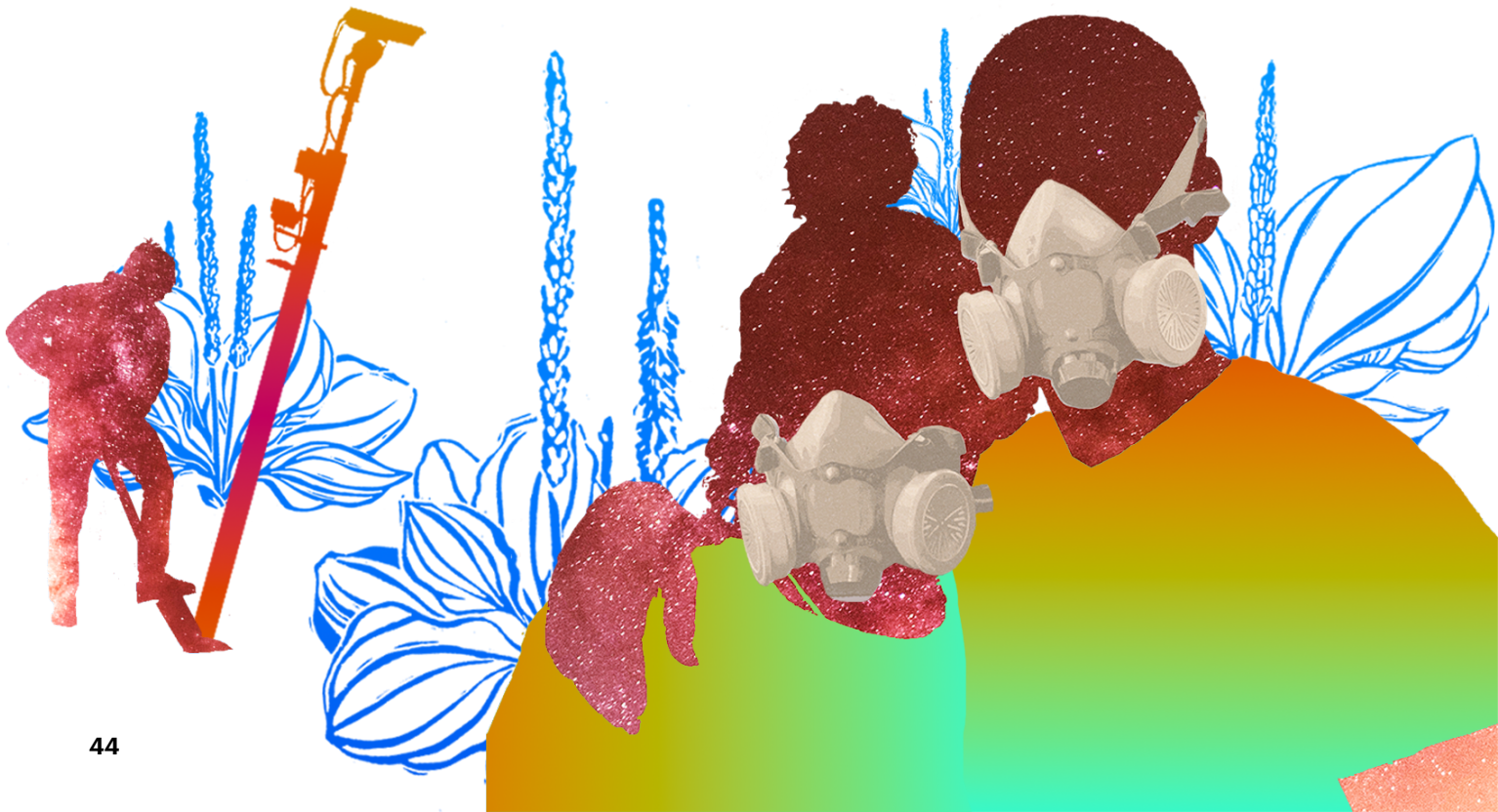
We designed the workshop when the Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN) had just published a research series on border tech in many different contexts, Surveillance Technologies at European Borders. Publication of this report seemed a good moment to explore what the findings of this research would mean for support systems fighting for freedom of movement. We initiated a convening with BVMN and their network members working on the ground. The session resulted in a variety of routes and examples of border technologies. What was particularly enjoyed by participants, was that the route offered them a way to exchange experiences and knowledge about the different contexts and countries they work in. Participants shared that the invitation to colour code the different technologies that would be encountered on the route, using the different functions of border tech according to our police tech taxonomy, was providing the needed structure that helped to grapple with the wide array of technologies. One of the groups decided to use the actual journey of one of the participants, that he had made from Africa to Europe, as an example. This worked very well; it was a great opportunity for him to share more about his flight story and manage to tie the general information of tech in the reports directly to lived experience. Many participants felt this Border Tech on the Move scenario exercise was something they could use for their work in the future.



Border Tech On The Move tool in action

PART 3

STRENGTHENING COLLABORATIVE CAPACITY OF ORGANISERS



‘Liberation comes from relationships. We do all the things: the meeting notes, data collection, meetings with lawyers...We also have commitment towards our loved ones. The time is limited. When we get stressed, we turn to each other as a collective. We take walks, we cook, we get to know each other.’

ESRA ÖZKAN

POLICE TECH WEATHER REPORT

This activity is a discussion and workshop starter. It allows participants to see that they already know and experience many aspects of policing technologies. It helps to reveal which technologies affect their daily lives and which ones seem to create relatively neutral or positive feelings. It provides facilitators with a better understanding of the group's context and shared experiences which might need to be dived deeper later in the workshop.

Prepare before the session

Prepare a flip chart with three symbols drawn on it representing sunny, cloudy, and rainy weather.

Supplies

- Flip chart papers
- Markers, pens
- Sticky notes

Description

This activity is inspired by the popular education framework pioneered by Paulo Freire. Popular education guides us in our work as one of the best ways to spur critical thinking and critical awareness while learning.

Starting the learning process where the group is at and engaging in a participatory learning process is a key principle.

Individual reflection (10 mins):

Hand out sticky notes and ask participants to reflect on one of the following questions:

- What are your experiences, encounters, thoughts, concerns, questions about policing technologies?

- What comes to your mind when you hear these words: police, surveillance, technology?

Provide an example to help kickstart the process, such as:

'*How do I best secure my mobile phone?*'

'*I was filmed by the police at a recent protest.*'

Let them make note of one thought on each sticky note. Invite participants to post their notes on the flip chart under one of the categories of sunny, cloudy, and rainy, depending on how that particular note makes them feel. Positive, elevated emotions should go under sunny, neutral or mixed feelings under cloudy, and difficult ones under rainy.

Group discussion (30 mins):

Take initiative as facilitator and regroup similar themes under each category and ask for clarification where needed. Present the themes to the group by distilling examples from each category and asking for more context from the participants who have written them.

Identify common perceptions, context-specific concerns, and open questions to be explored later in the workshop.

Tool in Action

Most of the time, we tend to think of 'rainy' experiences or concerns when it comes to surveillance. It might be overwhelming to start a workshop with a list of far-reaching technologies which we seem not to know much about. However, the underlying aim of this conversation is to surface the existing awareness within the group and cultivate a sense of knowingness even though we are not technology experts. In a way, here we start practicing relying on the lived experiences as the basis of our organising efforts. On the sunny side of things, it feels great to generate examples of how people resist, refuse, or even obfuscate data collection processes, as well as, how we do want to make use of technology in a world that we want to live in.

We kicked off a workshop on border technologies by using this tool with a group of organisers in Ljubljana, many of whom do migrant solidarity work on the ground throughout the Balkan region. Initial concerns that we heard in this session revolved around how technology enables criminalisation of solidarity and how the police confiscating devices of people on the move puts them at further risk of pushback or deportation. Obviously, these are their daily struggles which need to be addressed. Still, when we invited them to think of other situations where they felt more empowered about tech, an interesting turn in the conversation occurred. The experience of 'surveillance

tech failures' was grouped as 'sunny'. However, one participant shared that they had mixed feelings about these so-called failures. The group talked about how policing technologies fail (like any other technology) or deliver wrong results, leading to a discussion as to whether and how such failures can be used in our organising. Participants also shared quite a few positive notes such as tech-enabled decentralised knowledge sharing and how organisers use technology to surface the truth about pushbacks and support the families of enforced disappearances. This last point then provoked a deeper brainstorming about organising strategies around border technologies.

In Manchester, JET did the same exercise with a gathering of police monitoring groups in the UK. The group was well aware of the role of technology in encroachment of the police into public services such as health care, welfare system and education. Prevent, the counterterrorism policy of the UK which is seen as a major driver of racialised criminalisation by anti-racist organisers. When asked to think about the reach of surveillance and the speed of technological development, many participants expressed anxiety—a sense of falling behind or not knowing enough. During this exercise, the idea of situating the conversation within its social, political, and historical context became a useful opening point for the group. In this manner, the group was able to see novel technologies such as facial recognition, fingerprinting, ankle monitors are merely a continuation of histories of oppression, surveillance, and dispossession. They connected these points to Prevent's surveillance architecture and discussed the need to go deep, but not narrow. That is, the group talked about the importance of challenging the political choices that scapegoat racialised communities within a securitisation culture, rather than getting too focused on an isolated technical infrastructure.

By the end of the exercise, this group realised that, in fact, police monitoring groups and anti-racist organisers have been doing this type of connective work for decades: building power within the communities while evolving a political analysis. As a result, this discussion helped the group to situate their core work as the basis of challenging, exposing, and eroding technological infrastructure of harmful policies like counterterrorism.

ESRA ÖZKAN

WHAT ARE YOU GOOD AT ?

This activity is designed to provide space for participants to look at the bigger picture and reflect their role within the movement ecosystem. It helps to identify complementary work being done by different groups and forge collaborations. It is a great tool to get inspired for collective action and seed potential partnerships between digital rights and racial justice organisers.

Prepare before the session

Flip chart paper or presentation with examples of organising around policing, surveillance, and technology

Supplies

- Flip chart papers
- Sticky notes
- Pens
- Projector for presentation (optional)

Description

Presentation and group discussion (30 mins):

We start by presenting some clusters of organising efforts around data-driven policing in Europe. These categories are just there to make it easier to see the division of labour between different organisations. With some groups, we classify actions according to their main political motivations and common tactics such as:

- political motivation: *individual freedom, rule of law*
  tactic: *strategic litigation, awareness raising, advocacy*

- political motivation: *social and racial justice given the disproportionate impacts of surveillance*
  tactic: *monitoring and documenting injustice and campaigning for justice*

- political motivation: *community self-defence and collective liberation*
  tactic: *non-compliance, community organising, direct support*

In the last year, we have been discussing various initiatives based on their contributions to the building blocks of a simple organising model that we have identified in the movement. These blocs are as follows:

- *demystify police tech, expose harms*

- *analyse, politicise, historicise the issue*

- *build power: disrupt and repair harms, build visions and practices of justice, safety, collective wellbeing*

Both groupings are obviously simplifications of the organising landscape in Europe. Many groups are working in all of these areas and there are significant overlaps. However, it helps us to structure the conversation to come up with a rich list of examples of resistance across different contexts.

While presenting each category, we ask participants to think of examples of resistance and complement them with our relevant picks depending on the focus of the workshop. This part is not only for exchanging inspiring initiatives but also for addressing some of the parked conversations or open questions of the group which we might have identified beforehand.

Individual reflection (10 mins):

Give participants some time and reflect on their organising and their main contribution to the movement. Ask them to write their notes on two questions (each point should be noted on a different sticky note) with their or organisation's name:

- *What are you good at?*

- *What do you want to get good at?*

Invite the group to post their notes on the flip chart with the same categories presented before.

Small group or pair work (20 mins):

Collectively review and reorganise the notes based on the complementary skills (what are you good at) and needs (what do you want to get good at). Let people go around and have

conversations with individuals to explore potential collaborations or simply how they can support each other.

Debrief (10 mins):

Collect and make note of key takeaways from the activity and if there are any action points to be followed up after the conversations in small groups.

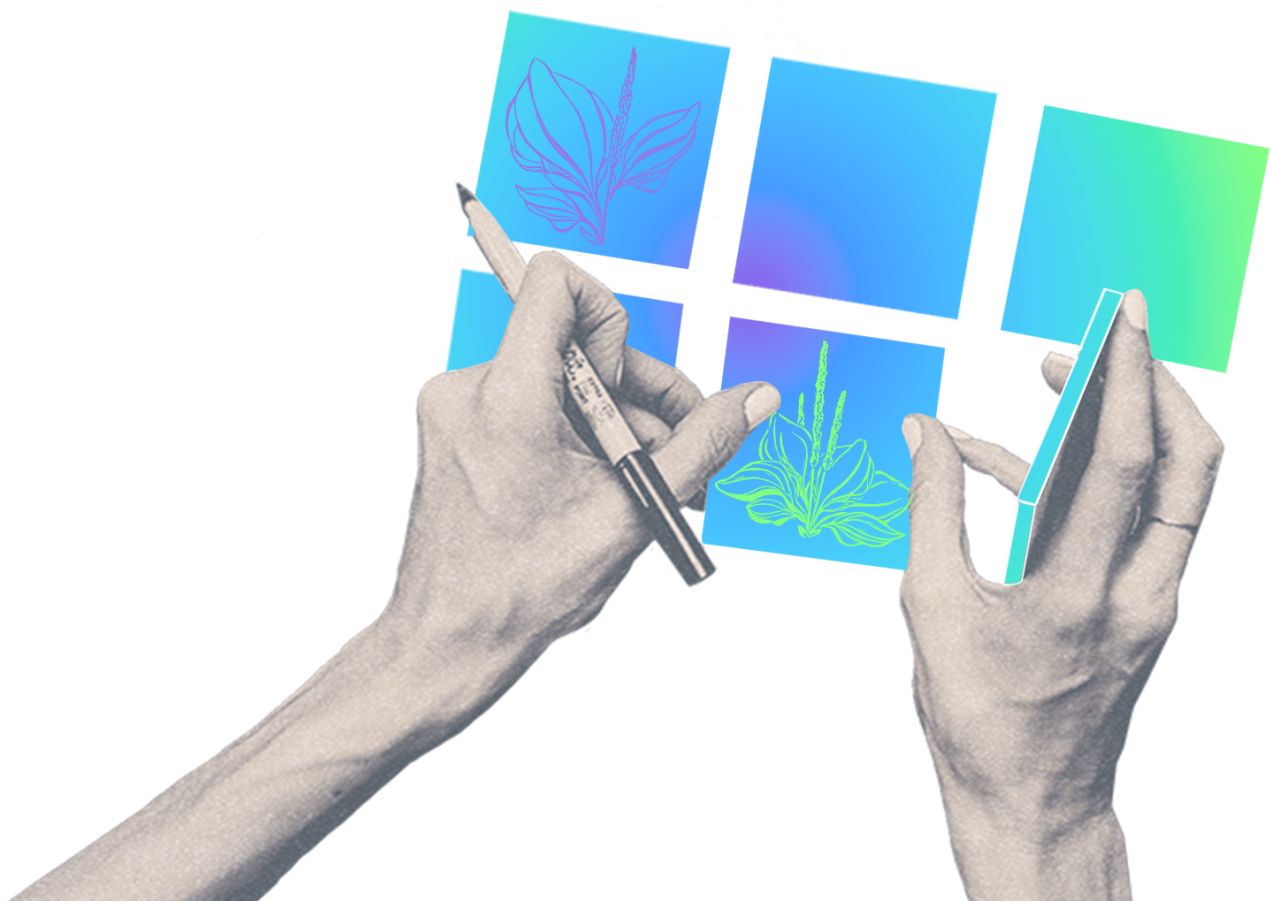
Tool in Action

The first part of this tool is powerful when participants get engaged in a conversation about the political motivations and matching tactics of their organisations. It turns into a critical inquiry where they revisit their organisational strategy. Looking at the building blocks of the movement strategy collectively shows us where the gaps in the movement are that we might be missing out on. How can we address those gaps? How can we intentionally co-ordinate our actions to be more effective? What are the areas where we spend disproportionate number of resources and where we might be weakening each other's efforts?

We ran this activity on a second day of an event that brought together a diverse set of civil society workers, community organisers, academicians, and lawyers with different backgrounds in digital rights, social and racial justice, and youth work. The organisers aimed at carving out a space to clarify a collective strategic direction of organising and advocacy regarding police tech in Europe. JET's main contribution to the discussion comes in mostly on the second pillar: *analyse, politicise, historicise the issue.* Having had taken notes during previous sessions, we invited the group to investigate the political function of technology. Someone had said that 'it is diverting attention away from the failures of capitalism' such as meeting people's needs and 'disguising or veiling that failure with a veneer of objectivity'. Soon after we drew a parallel between the police and tech industry that they are both presented as solutions to complex social issues such as poverty, pandemic, or (in)security. Both are deployed to 'maintain order' and they uphold the conditions which produce those problems. On the other hand, their failure to solve these problems is used as justification for maintaining and expanding their existence.

Another point that we amplified was how 'both tech and the police are exceptions to the law'. Participants in the room engaging with the EU AI Act and other legislative processes were aware of those exemptions that were made for 'high-risk' AI systems used by the police and border control authorities. While these areas were the primary reasons why many social justice organisations got involved in the advocacy process around the AI Act, by rendering policing and migration 'exceptions', tech industry gets a similar incentive that the police often get: crossing the line. What should then be organisers' next move in the process? Should we push for an 'inclusion' in the law or 'divert our own attention' to something else? For that matter, a participant shared something which resonated with others: 'they keep us busy with litigation'. Consequently, there is less movement capacity and energy left for *building visions and practices of justice, safety, and collective wellbeing.* This work is mostly left to under-resourced community organising groups on

the ground. Another pitfall of an isolated litigation focus is that some implementations of police tech that were once illegal can be legalised. Even though the legal process itself can be an opportunity for creating a public debate, if not supported by diverse courses of action, the benefits of it are often temporary. To navigate these challenges, some proposals focus on redistributing and redirecting resources to community organising, sharing a praxis of community safety and justice, surfacing the truth about surveillance within racialised communities, leading political education about police and surveillance. Initiatives like Erase the Database, Abolish Frontex, Docs Not Cops, A11, The People's Tribunal and many police monitoring groups across Europe are embodying these proposals. Using policy advocacy and strategic litigation as tools in service of such groups would then be a great effort to co-ordinate actions at the movement level.



ESRA ÖZKAN

MOVEMENT TIMELINES

ThisisWhatPoliceTechLooksLike is one of the main initiatives of the Justice, Equity and Technology Project. Started with the intention of unpacking and understanding experiences of harm caused by data-driven policing, it has been facilitating a space of convening and support between police monitoring and technology monitoring groups across Europe. Over the years, it has grown into a loose but trusted network of organisers that regularly gets together to share knowledge, experience, and resources, in addition to helping each other build an evolving analysis of the issue with inputs from different contexts.

Many of these groups which met each other for the first time when joining this space, have formed partnerships to varying degrees beyond this initiative. A number of the racial justice organisations involved, for example, have started incorporating questions around technology in their work. Overall, this space centres building power over time, a long-term goal that manifests itself as maturing and deepening relationships, an increased capacity of organisers to engage with tech and justice issues, and an expanding container where diverse interventions, approaches, and analyses can interact to deepen our understanding of the issue.

The following activity was helpful to get to know 'the network' which we were collectively building—interacting groups and individuals which came from diverse backgrounds with different approaches to social change.

Why use this tool

Every social movement has its lifetime with its ups and downs. Bill Moyer's *The Movement Action Plan* (MAP) written in 1987, explains the stages and advocacy roles in each successful social movement and is still very relevant today. This activity is a similar effort of looking back to a movement history and mapping series of events that resulted in people gathering in a room. It is an exploration of the past to see the patterns which influence current practices and struggles. It can be helpful at gatherings where individuals represent diverse groups and backgrounds to see what motivates each person to be part of the 'new' space, network, coalition in the making.

Prepare before the session

This tool works best with preparatory thinking and research into the histories of movements that people are part of. Giving notice to participants before the event about the timelining activity would make the discussion more engaging and generative.

Supplies

- Flip chart paper
- Markers and sticky notes

Description

This activity was designed by the ULEX Project, and we learned it at the *Ecology of Social Movements Course*. Below is how we used it given the limited time we had:

Intro discussion (20 min):

Ask participants how they define a 'social movement"' Make note of each point on a flip chart. Then ask which social movements they feel that they have been part of, if any. Make a list such as feminist movement, anti-racist movement, climate movement, etc.

Small group work (50 min):

Organise break-out groups based on the main social movements that are present in the group. Later, ask participants to make a timeline of their movement history. Which major events, shifts in context, changes in other movements, for example, have influenced the development of that timeline? Which actions, success stories, or failures marked their past?

Then ask the groups to plot four graph lines on their timeline indicating the rise and fall of:

- Power: Momentum, capacity, numbers of people in the movement
- Cohesion: Relationships within the movement, shared vision
- Progress on the issue: Shifting beliefs and perceptions, narratives, contracts in the society
- Opposition: Pushback and repression

Debrief (20 min):

Invite participants to go around to see other groups' timelines. In the debrief, have a discussion on which patterns they see in each timeline. Ask: Which patterns are shared? Which ones are unique to each movement? What kind of events seem to trigger major

changes in power? How can this help organisers to work in a more anticipatory way? Which actors played important roles and how did the opposition respond?

Tool in Action:

ThisisWhatPoliceTechLooksLike started organising online meetings in January 2022 amid the pandemic. When we finally had an opportunity to organise an in-person event in March 2023, getting to know each other was a priority since online spaces would not cater to that need. We were planning to dedicate some time to understanding each other's work, motivation, style, and approach. In the evening before the event during a conversation over dinner, one of the participants said that he would have loved to know which movements, traditions, histories were present in the group. He thought that it would help us create a container which holds all of us in our individual and group contexts.

Feeling excited about the proposal, we decided to map our group's movement history even though we were new to each other, and most of us new to the topic. However, we all had been active in different social movements, organisations, action groups before entering that space of investigating and challenging power around technology.

We first discussed what a movement was and whether that particular group of people felt they belonged to any social movement. There is no clear definition of what a social movement is. In *All About Movements: Why Building Movements Creates Deeper Change* (2021), Srilatha Batliwala defines movements as 'a set of people with a shared experience of injustice, who organise themselves to build their collective power and leadership, develop a shared agenda for change, which they pursue through collective action, with some continuity over time', In light of this, as people who were exploring links between justice, policing, and technology, we found it difficult to identify with a social movement yet. We were rooted in racial justice, anti-oppression, anti-authoritarian, and feminist movements. But as a collective we neither belonged to *digital rights* nor *tech justice* 'fields' even though some of us in the group clearly worked in those areas. The digital rights 'sector' could encompass us and other similar initiatives. But it still lacked some aspects of becoming a movement, such as unstructured relationships between actors and spontaneity. Many in our group argued that the agenda of digital rights actors was/is mainly driven by technocratic institutions, practitioners, experts, or established non-profit organisations with a fixed set of methodologies.

In the debrief, we discussed the patterns that we see in the timelines: 1) racial justice and migrant solidarity movement 2) digital (human) rights movement 3) anti-oppression movement. Out of this we made four discoveries.

First, it was fun and empowering to reflect on the generations of organising experience that we stood upon. Challenges have always been there, and getting challenged is the only way of creating any kind of change.

Second, even seemingly new movements such as digital rights have roots—in this case in the pushback against initial forms of automation and surveillance which took place in the early 19th century.

Third, all three of the movements marked pivotal events that deeply affected them: September 11 attacks in the United States, migrant movements in the summer of 2015, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Political responses to these major events set the tone for many years to come, including counter-terrorism laws, which increased powers for the police and border control agencies, massive investments in surveillance and social control, and austerity measures. Despite challenges, our group noted historical responses to these turning points. Movements stepped up into their power with the proliferation of No Border Camps, migrant solidarity groups, whistleblowers' actions, data protection acts, cop-watch organisations, mutual aid groups, and national issue-based coalitions.

Finally, this timelining activity produced the shared observation that successful movements create more power, tools, and narratives for other movements. We acknowledged the boost of energy and momentum that was unleashed by the Arab Uprisings in 2011 and Black Lives Matter protests in 2020 which sparked widespread mobilisations throughout Europe. May 15th demonstrations in Spain in 2011 or anti-austerity actions and strikes in 2011 and 2012 in Greece were inspired by Arab Uprisings. Similarly, 'defund the police' was echoed as an ask in many racial justice demonstrations in 2020 and onwards in Europe.

Taking the historical route is one of the many approaches to movement mapping. Having tried a few others as well, we believe that it is worthwhile to evaluate the strength and health of a movement. It gives meaning to and inspiration for future interventions.

PART 4

EXPLORING INVISIBLE POTENTIALS

‘We need to recognise that the police, and the legal system is a microcosm of society as a whole. We must do everything to make sure their [police] work is in no way a reflection of us. We are not following their lead. We step outside of the restrictions and create our own ways.’

SEETA PEÑA GANGADHARAN

PUBLIC RECORDS RESEARCH

In Spring 2024, a coalition of racial justice activists in Barcelona—organised under the moniker of BDX Barcelona or Black Data Excavators of Barcelona—innovated on a model of participatory research to get clarity on the political landscape, history of police technologies and their impact in the Catalonian region of Spain. The typical participatory research design invites members of an affected community to define a research problem, formulate a question which they would like to answer, and get involved in every other step of the research process, from recruiting research participants to collecting and analysing data to writing up and disseminating results. In this case, BDX BCN faced a few too many black boxes with respect to information and learning about police technology in their specific locale. While many in BDX BCN were centrally involved in confronting traditional forms of police profiling, the complexity of new surveillance technologies proved too challenging to crack, and the typical participatory research method needed to be forked. The group made the decision that they wanted JET to assist them with desk research that would help them understand the ecology of police technology. The results of this desk research would then help the group figure out problems, concerns, and questions that best matched their interests and organising approach.

No one on the team, including the JET researchers, could have anticipated the complexity and opacity of the public records system at city, regional, and European levels. JET confronted a vast array of obstacles. In the first instance, we lacked full understanding of the different police bodies in Catalonia, who they reported to, and who funded them. Thus, we needed to establish this background knowledge by building an organisational map of these forces before we could begin our search for police technologies being used or piloted throughout the region. We identified that Catalonia has four types of police forces (e.g., National Police, Guardia Civil, Mossos d'Esquadra, and local police forces, such as Guardia Urbana) that could purchase and deploy police technologies. The different ways in which police forces are named or referred to internally

are integral to searching public procurement notices for the purchase of supplies or services. Knowing the variety of names, for example, that the government officials use for Mossos d'Esquadra, speeds up the search of contracts.

After gaining a sense of the security architecture in Catalonia, we needed to decide which police technologies to examine: a fixed list of police technologies that is based on common police technologies used throughout Europe, or a list of technologies that we generate by scanning various police websites. We decided to perform internet searches trying to imitate an ordinary citizen who wants to know more about police technologies. We settled on six categories:

1. energy conductive devices (commonly referred to as Tasers),
2. AI-enabled internet threat technology (also known as cyberthreat technology),
3. cameras (on helicopters, fixed devices, personal devices),
4. drones (including drone-detection technologies as well as unmanned aircraft),
5. biometric technology, and
6. analytic tools for crime prediction and prevention.

Third, we needed to gain an understanding of the complex maze of Spanish and EU government websites and how they were constructed from a technical point of view. We needed to know whether they were created for certain initiatives. Indeed, there was no consistent logic in the construction and development of these websites. In the third instance, we had to learn how to use these often badly designed sites effectively. Some of the web pages and other information that we found disappeared or changed locations, meaning it was difficult to keep track of original files or monitor deployment of a particular police technology.

Last, but not least, we needed to keep reminding ourselves of the questions: Why does this information matter? What ought we do with our knowledge of police technology once we discover key information? We wanted to make certain our public records research had momentum and not just be an exercise in information acquisition for its own sake, but rather a critical piece of the puzzle in amplifying on-the-ground capacity to engage and confront the real-world impacts of police tech use. We held three meetings, as research progressed as well as at the conclusion of report writing. One of the most powerful outcomes of these meetings was the framing of our discoveries. That is, BDX BCN landed on the term 'invisible policing' to capture not only the fact that these different tools are not as obvious or physically present as a policeman, but also the fact that these technologies are governed by complex, hidden public institutions, often working with vendors or partners in unobvious or unscrutinised ways.

Duration: 3 hours per workshop with one 45-minute and two 5-minute breaks

Group size: 2-10 (will vary depending on capacity and research/organising aims)

Overview: This 5-part workshop focuses on cultivating public records research skills for the purposes of developing and acting upon knowledge about police technology and police institutions in any given region.

Goals:

- Develop and refine search techniques of public records systems
- Become familiar with the arcana of police institutions and procurement processes
- Know where to look for and archive police tech information
- Connect research to engagement with police tech governance

Prep Time:

Planning will depend on capacity and research/organising aims. If hosted as a set of workshops for a general audience (i.e., likely not all workshops, but just Parts 1-3), then prep time will take less time. If these workshops are offered to a more specific audience (i.e., within your organisation), you may want to create a backwards timeline and secure commitments from advisory group members.

Supplies:

- Laptop or other device with browser and reliable connectivity
- Excel or similar spreadsheet software application for documenting information
- Bibliographic software to track information sources
- Access to databases, such as European procurement databases
- Flip chart papers, sticky notes, pens
- Projector for presentation (optional)

Roles:

Facilitator
Note-taker/archivist

Additional Pre-Workshop Preparation:

Form an advisory group: Set dates to meet a group that you can consult with and present research-in-progress and results to.

Description:

Each workshop should begin with a welcome, introduction, and ground rules.

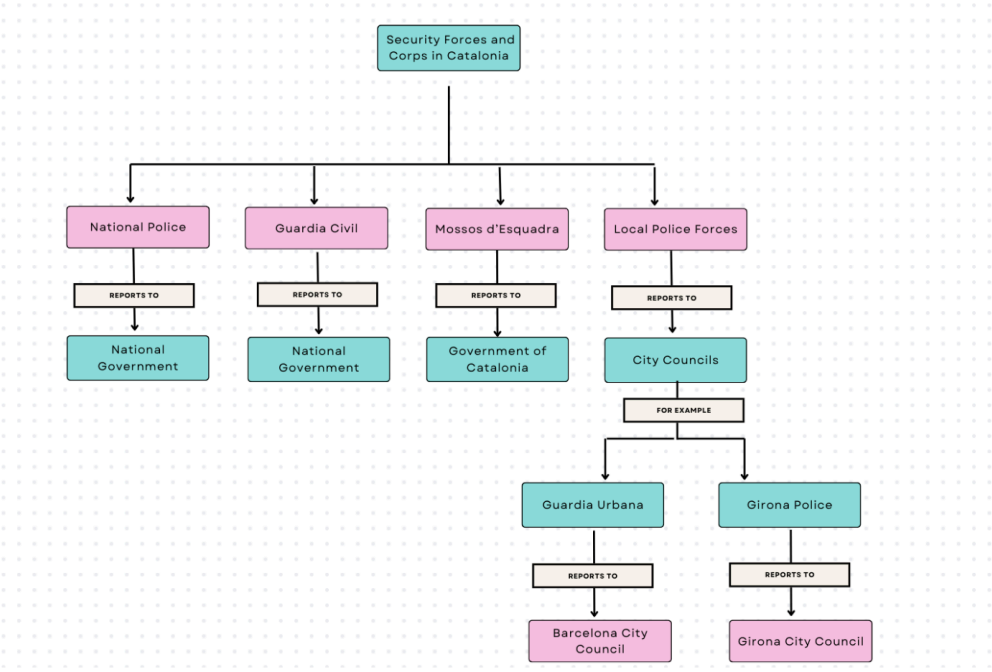
Workshop 1: Sketching the security architecture

Begin by asking participants what they know about police tech and police institutions. Ask the group to write names of either tech or institutions (one per sticky note). Then ask them to put their stick notes on flip chart paper, under the two different headings.

Once you have completed an initial map, you can then start scanning news articles (e.g., by searching Google News). You're looking not only for search terms (e.g., different ways in which officials refer to these agencies or technologies, or in other words shortened or alternate names) but also names of other agencies or technologies that are referenced in discussion.

Keep your list of police technologies to one side and concentrate on the institutions. Begin visiting the websites of these institutions to understand what they are, who they report to, and who they are funded by. You may need to double check the website against additional news reports that you search for to better understand them.

At the conclusion of this process, you should be able to create a visual map of this security architecture. For example, when documenting police tech in Catalonia, we found it useful to create the following map:



Source: *Making sense of the invisible police in Catalonia/ La policía invisible: tecnologías de vigilancia en Cataluña (Justice, Equity, and Technology, 2025)*

Conclude the workshop by previewing the goals of the next workshop.

Workshop 2: Developing search fluency and a 'data storage' plan

Develop your fluency with search tricks, such as finding key words within specific websites. For example, when mapping police tech, we discovered the term 'DGP PG-ME' was significant. 'DGP' referred to 'dispositius personals de gravació' or personal recording devices. 'PG-ME' referred to 'Policia de la Generalitat—Mossos d'Esquadra'. We typed 'DGP PG-ME site:contractaciopublica.cat' which allowed us to learn about government purchases and intended uses for such devices. You will find it helpful to develop a list of public procurement sites, not only the websites for police institutions when doing such targeted searches.

Because the websites of police institutions change frequently, you will find it useful to save relevant pages (as screenshots, pdfs, or print-outs) manually and to use a spreadsheet or bibliographic software to immediately capture information such as date, title, urls. Use this workshop to craft a 'data storage plan' which identifies key steps you will take when capturing evidence: What will be captured (e.g., screenshots, citation information, etc.)? Who will capture or store this information? Where will it be stored?

Finally, become familiar with the Wayback Machine (now owned by Google) to find specific web pages that are no longer functional.

Conclude the workshop by previewing the goals of the next workshop.

Workshop 3: Establish the scope of your research and dive in

Return to your list of police technologies that you originally brainstormed. Try to 'validate' this list by doing some background reading on police technology or police 'innovations' in the city, state, or region of interest. You can search news, think tank, academic research, and academic grants databases.

After expanding or amending your list of police technologies, you can now 'sample' from the entire 'universe' of tools that you have generated. Develop criteria that helps you focus, for example, geographical scope, jurisdictional scope, or technical features. Prioritise which ones you would like to study based on these criteria. Finalise the 'sample' of police tech you will search, making sure that your list contains any alternate names used (e.g., energy conductive devices are also commonly referred to as Tasers).

Using the skills you developed in Workshop 2, you can now conduct your search. You will likely need additional time outside of the workshop to continue finding results. At each step of the way, make sure you document evidence manually, in your spreadsheet, and/or with your bibliographic software.

Conclude the workshop by previewing the goals of the next workshop.

(Optional) Workshop 4: Deliberate over interim findings

If you set up an advisory group, consult with them to help you refine your research. Present to them your process and initial findings.

Basic questions to pose to advisors include: have we missed any police technologies or information about police technologies that you were expecting to see? What is surprising about our findings so far? How do our discoveries connect with work that people are doing already? What would be the most useful way for this information to be shared? How should people be acting up on this information—immediately, in not-too distant future, or several years down the line?

Workshop 5: Discuss and strategies how to act upon findings

This last workshop puts the findings of public record research in conversation with organising, advocacy, activism, and other forms of practice. It is a time to consider the implications of what you've discovered and translate what you've discovered for those who will be affected by police technology. You can also use the workshop as an opportunity to train others who are interested in monitoring developments in security architectures, local, regional, or Europe-wide.

ESRA ÖZKAN

OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY

In May 2024, the Justice, Equity and Technology Project convened its first semi-public conference in Athens: *Undoing Police Tech, Reclaiming Safety*. As an initiative that mostly operated behind the scenes, weaving and supporting interconnected networks of organising, we felt the urge to broaden our circles of inquiry, to engage with a broader set of perspectives against carceral and colonial technologies. The event brought together those who are impacted by the use of police tech—organisers, researchers, and journalists—to explore the intersections of social control and data-driven technologies.

JET has been a container hosting various spaces and projects while interacting with its larger field. This gave us the opportunity to engage with many people working on interrelated and complex issues such as policing, racism, technology, borders, and repression. Some of these relationships were deeper and some were rather sporadic. Nonetheless they all have contributed to our journey—let it be with a piece of information, a question, connections to another partners, resources, invitations to events, sharing spaces, joining actions, or breaking bread.

The conference was a celebration of all these relationships over the past years and an invitation to new ones. It was a semi-public event. Namely, all our friends and friends of friends were invited with the intention that they could meet each other.

In such an intriguing setting, what we wanted first and foremost was to create generative spaces where new ideas could emerge, where the group would not feel stuck with a script of an agenda and where people could take time for what was important for them and their communities at that moment. For that reason, we spared a considerable amount of time for 'Open Space'. It is one of JET's absolute favourites that we use whenever we have the time, especially at convenings where we want to move our attention away from reacting to our contexts to creating the change we want to see. It is when we want to shift from the feeling of *probable* to *possible* by creating a set-up where things are possible.

Why use this tool

This methodology was developed by Harrison Owen and is described in his book *Open Space Technology: A User's Guide* (2008). It is particularly effective when there are no blueprints, and when a diverse group of people with different backgrounds try to find a solution to hugely complex problems.

Description

Please find *A Brief User's Guide to Open Space Technology* by Harrison Owen here in which he explains how to facilitate an Open Space.

In Owen's words, there are four (five, in some applications) principles which underpin the process:

* *Whoever comes is the right people.*
* *Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.*
* *Whenever it starts is the right time.*
(Wherever it happens is the right place.)*
* *When it is over, it is over.*

There is also the 'Law of Mobility' (aka the Law of Two Feet) which means that if people find themselves in a situation where they are neither learning nor contributing, they can go and find a new place.

Tool in Action

Simple yet so enlightening, the principles and the Law of Open Space can be seen as guidance for organising in general. Harrison Owen referred to the principles as an intense focus on the present moment. These five elements are different perspectives of the now. For instance, 'Whoever comes is the right people' is an invitation to acknowledge all who are engaged in that particular moment. People who are already there are the ones who care enough about the issue. They are the people who will bring about a change. It does not matter what their role in an organisation is. They are the ones who are willing and able to join in the present. Similarly, with the principle, 'Whatever happens is the only thing that could happen,' we are called to embrace whatever result will be delivered at the end of a conversation, and this result will be the unique possibility of the *now*, given the unique composition of a group. When we let go of expectations, agendas, and to-do lists, a space opens and brings possibility. New perspectives can be discussed. New narratives can be built. New solutions can emerge. New priorities can be defined. New actions can be planned. The emergence of the new is somehow always highly generative.

In Athens, we incorporated open spaces into our event. Our intent was to seek new perspectives against carceral and colonial technologies while deepening bonds of solidarity between groups. After a day of introductions, workshops, and case studies of different implementations of police tech in Europe, we dedicated most of Day 2 (the final

day) to open space. Having collated many issues which resonated across contexts on Day 1, we were happily surprised with the diversity and richness of proposals that emanated from the open space process and that were posted on the 'open space market' wall. Participants self-organised and documented ten sessions in two rounds. Some sessions merged multiple proposals into one.

These were all powerful topics that concerned organising around policing and surveillance and that we, as organisers of the event, could never have thought of in our initial event planning. The discussions were a direct representation of what was alive in that group at that particular moment, in that particular space, yielding an impressive range of questions. '*How do we break crime-tech nexus?*' '*Which radical actions should we consider actions when legal actions against the police violence and surveillance are unjust?*', '*What is our role in resisting settler colonialism in Palestine solidarity?*' '*How do we hold on to optimism and hope in the fight against oppression and discriminatory systems?'* Seeing the level of engagement and enthusiasm in the group, and reading the report-backs, JET was left wondering about what holds us back from hosting one big open space event rather than cordoning it off as a separate track at a convening.

While for some task-oriented folks, the lack of next steps for some sessions might have looked like nothing really happened, curiosity and inspiration that held people staying together voluntarily in conversation until the end (instead of moving to somewhere more interesting) was deeply significant.

Getting beyond the business as usual is critical to the open spaces that JET holds. These spaces help groups discuss matters which are seen as beyond their conventional remit. For instance, in many of our events, participants held conversations dedicated to solidarity with Palestine. Whether it was about exploring the links between Israeli border and surveillance technologies being deployed in Palestine and in Europe or identifying common state repression practices being used against people organising in solidarity with Palestine. These open spaces allowed people to take the time to reflect on how these conversations could and should transform the way they work within organisational routines or work plans. Open spaces at our convenings have also yielded a commonly recurring discussion about building new narratives. These sessions allowed participants to get out of a reactive mindset and orient their thinking towards a generative one. Time and again, these kinds of conversations germinated ideas about how to tell stories and reshape dominant narratives focused on the rhetoric of counterterrorism, technosolutionism, securitisation, migration as a threat, youth criminalisation, racialised criminalisation. Participants investigated deep-seated beliefs, probed commonly held assumptions. They posed questions such as: '*What does it really mean to be part of a community? Does tech equal violence? To what extent do you validate the violence of tech systems while organising to* address some facets of its performance*?'*

In future applications of the open spaces process, we will remember a key lesson learned from Athens: documentation. We approached documentation in a conventional manner that didn't quite capture the freshness and frankness of the discussions. We handed out 'open space harvest sheets' to the facilitators and asked them to make note of the key

insights and next steps, basically anything that the rest of the group should know. Some facilitators filled in the sheets. Some drew mind maps on flip charts. Some took notes on sticky notes. What we ended up with was a pile of papers to be typed up by a group of notetakers. It was not an easy task to decipher everyone's handwriting afterwards. What could have worked better was to ask facilitators to type up a summary of their notes or assign someone in their group to do so, albeit taking into account the flaws of any documentation platform. This would make it easier for all participants to access the material and provide us with a distilled version of the report-backs and any subsequent action points in our hands before closing the event.

These exercises have been helpful catalysts to spur out-of-the-box thinking on narratives rather than feeling stuck in a box or boxes. Across our many open spaces, participants have noted that cultivating awareness around myths like 'scarcity of resources' and distorted imagery of 'gangs, drug use, ruined public spaces, crying shop owners' is the first step of constructing a new narrative. Some have even come up with guidelines. For example:

- *Do not centre the conversation around legality but power and inequality.*
- *Shift the notion of criminality from individuals to institutions.*
- *Describe experiences instead of using legal categories and state narratives.*
- *Alternatively, reclaim a dominant category and expand its meaning.*
- *Uplift community needs, health, safety rather than trying to win the narrative battle.*

To sum up, organising around police tech necessitates the capacity of reading the world with new eyes. These new eyes help us to see how quickly the field is changing. Key actors, funders, laws, priorities, and technologies are constantly shifting. Open space has a lot to offer both in terms of process and outcome to navigate this uncertainty and to come up with solutions that require system change at every level. What's next is then a choice of what we want to with our time, resources, and communities.

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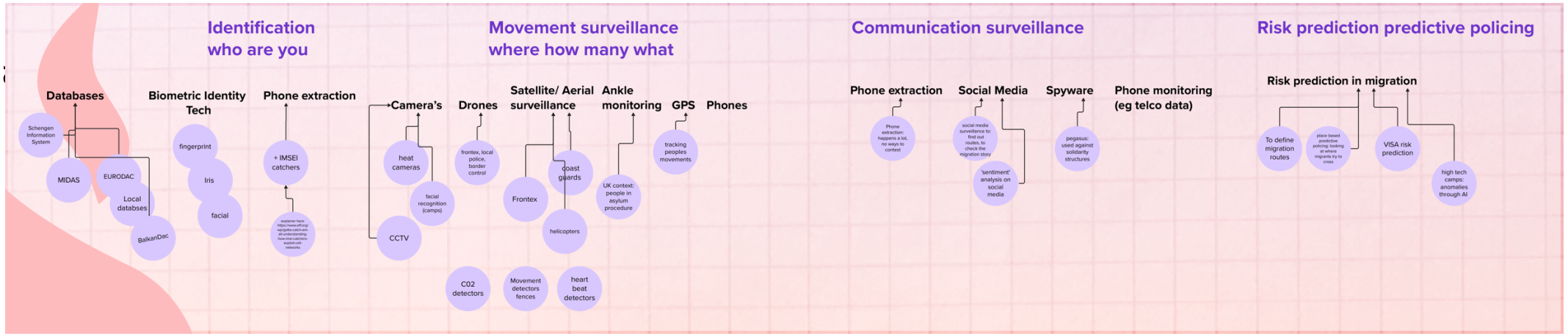
ANNEX

WORKSHOP SHEETS POLICE TAXONOMY

Police Tech Taxonomy

Identification: who are you	Movement surveillance: where how many what	Communication surveillance: What are you saying?	Risk prediction / predictive policing: Who or where is more risk?
Databases	Camera's	Social Media Surveillance	Crime hotspot maps
Biometric Identification	Movement Detectors	Spyware	Gang Database
Phone Extraction	Satellite/ Aerial surveillance	Phone extraction	
	Heat camera's		

Which examples have you encountered in your context?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MIDAS
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+ IMSEI catchers
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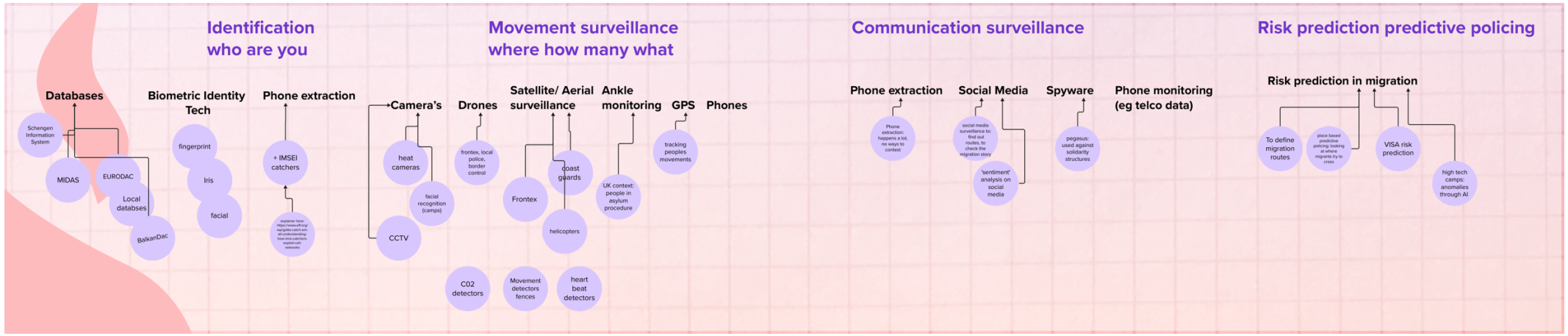
Frontex
helicopters
Movement detectors fences
heart beat detectors
Ankle monitoring
UK context: people in asylum procedure
GPS
tracking peoples movements
Phones
Communication surveillance
Phone extraction
Phone extraction: happens a lot, no ways to contest
Social Media
social media surveillance to: find out routes, to check the migration story
'sentiment' analysis on social media
Spyware
pegasus: used against solidarity structures
Phone monitoring (eg telco data)
Risk prediction predictive policing
Risk prediction in migration
To define migration routes
place based predictive policing: looking at where migrants try to cross
VISA risk prediction
high tech camps: anomalies through AI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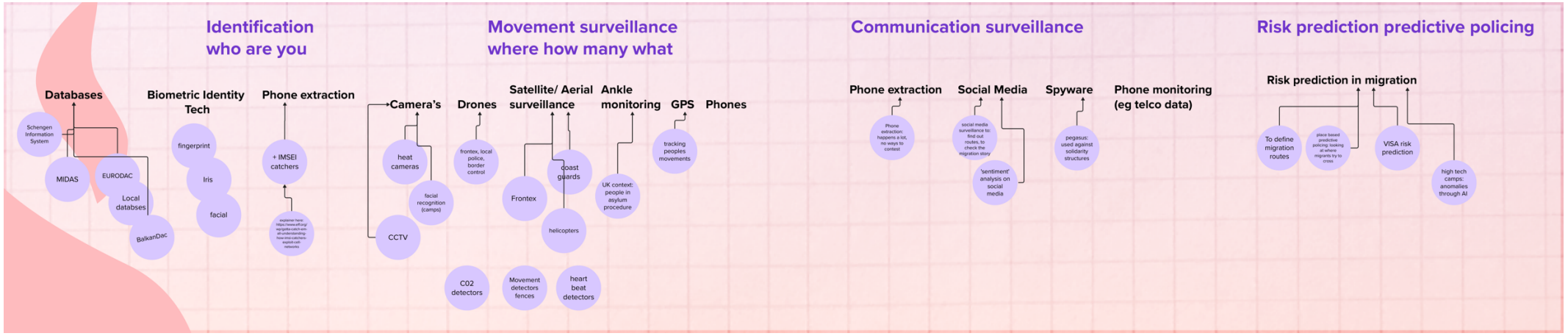
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