

Call for Abstracts

Harmful policing

International and Transdisciplinary Symposium on Police Violence

Date: 10 November 2026

Location: Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands

The lethal violence being perpetrated by ICE in the United States and the death of a migrant worker in French police custody have caused widespread outrage and reinvigorated concerns about harmful policing and disproportionate uses of force. Whilst police violence is often viewed as a physical force, the increased digitization of policing produces new forms of harm. By connecting both dimensions, this symposium aims to contribute to the interplay between technology, policing and harm.

Research into 'traditional' forms of police violence tend to focus on physical force, less-than-lethal weaponry, crowd control and fatal incidents. The digitization of policing brings about the potential for a new range of harms, such as through facial and speech recognition software, algorithmic decision-making, risk-profiling and online surveillance. Moreover, the usage of digital technologies can influence discriminatory practices such as stop-and-searches and other traditional forms of police violence.

Harmful policing manifests itself in a wide range of lived experiences and employs a diverse, increasingly digitalizing, set of methods and applications. In this symposium we explore the interactions between digital policing and physical manifestations of police violence, and ask if our algorithmic society calls for redefining police violence and the use of force. How are people impacted by digital police violence? Does digital policing influence and intertwine with traditional modes of police violence and, if so, how? But also: which tools can foster police transparency and accountability that earn public trust and reduce harmful policing?

The symposium is a prelude to an international exhibition on building public truths and fatal police violence in *het Nieuwe Instituut* in Rotterdam, opening in 2027. The symposium provides a platform for researchers, practitioners, activists, and experts through experience to come together and reflect on police violence, its temporal and systematic effects, material and digital technologies, lived experiences of policing, and the harms of digitalized police practices. Non-academic presentations are welcomed. Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- 1) New definitions of police violence (legal/sociological/criminological);
- 2) Reflections on how digitization influences the employment of physical force;
- 3) The mental, social and democratic consequences of harmful policing;
- 4) Disproportionate policing practices as a result of racial profiling, risk profiling and use of force;
- 5) Accountability and oversight in digital policing (transparency, audits, bodycams, governance);
- 6) Effects of digital policing such as loss of privacy, chilling effects, social sorting, etc.

The deadline for proposals is June 1st 2026. E-mail in a single, combined pdf file (title the file with your name) the following to driessen@law.eur.nl: presentation title, abstract (250 words maximum), and short CV. The symposium is free of charge but has limited spaces. Beware the symposium will be held in person and in English. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

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