

Establishing legitimacy in the age of digital policing: On the dialogic nature of big data-driven predictive policing (PhD Project)

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Abstract

The recent acceleration of technology-enabled policing has been met with concerns about privacy due to the expansion of police data-related powers, and even the emergence of a police state. In response to these concerns, this thesis aims to examine the normativeness of technology-enabled policing through the lens of police legitimacy theory. Based on a review of existing studies, this thesis identifies the structure of police legitimacy as three layers: the factual basis of legitimacy claims, the perceptions of police officers, and the perceptions of citizens affected by policing, and conducts empirical studies on each layer. It diagnoses the multi-layered structure of legitimacy as unstable. While both police and citizens share the value of 'effectiveness' in recognising the legitimacy of policing, while the factual evidence of 'effectiveness', the basis of the claim, is still lacking. This study explains the process of demonstrating the factuality of legitimacy claims and shared perceptions between police and citizens under the concept of 'systematic procedural justice' and presents it as a normative criterion of legitimacy.

Biography

Youngsub Lee is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Security and Crime Science at UCL (University College London) with two current teaching appointments in South Korea (Visiting Professor at Chung-ang University and Lecturer at the Korean National Police Human Resource Development Institute). His research focuses on legitimacy in the digital age of policing and evidence-based approaches to technology-enabled policing programmes. In 2024, he had the honour of presenting his work at the National Academy of Sciences (USA) and won the ministerial prize in Korea for his work on preventive policing. He has also published in renowned journals such as Asian Journal of Criminology, International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice. His work is ongoing and several more studies are expected to be published in the coming years. Prior to joining UCL, he worked extensively with INTERPOL Seoul and the Korean Prime Minister's think tank (Korean Institute of Criminology and Justice).

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