The politics of data-driven governance

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Structure

1. **Data Justice Lab**

2. **The Snowden moment**

3. **Beyond privacy**

4. **Situating data in practice (a case study)**

5. **Politics of data**

6. **Social justice response?**

Data Justice Lab

**Exploring social justice
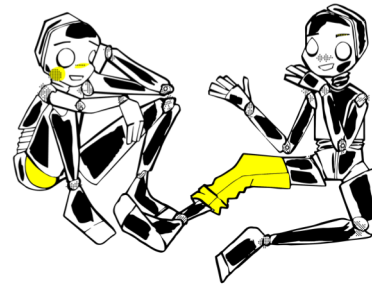in an age of datafication**

Lina Dencik   Arne Hintz   Joanna Redden   Emiliano Treré

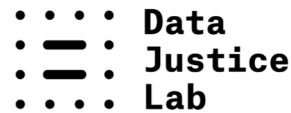Cate Hopkins   Jess Brand   Harry Warne   Isobel Rorison   Philippa Metcalfe   Fieke Jansen   Javier Sanchez

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. . . . . .   Data
: : ━ : :     Justice
. . ━ . .     Lab
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- Public launch: March 2017
- Situated within the School of Journalism, Media and Culture (JOMEC), Cardiff University, UK
- Expanding team (PhDs, post-docs, established scholars)

Projects:
- DATAJUSTICE (European Research Council, 2018-23)
- Data Scores: Investigating uses of citizen scoring in public services (Open Society Foundations, 2017-18)
- Data Policies: Regulatory Approaches for Data-Driven Platforms in the UK and EU (ITforChange/IDRC, 2017-18)
- Data Harms Record (ongoing)
- Big Data from the South (ongoing)
- Towards Democratic Auditing: Participation in the Scoring Society (Open Society Foundations, 2018-20)

Events/workshops:
- Data Justice Conference, 21/22 May 2018, Cardiff University
- Fact-finding and stakeholder workshops – practitioners and civil society
- Public events – policy-makers
- Critical data journalism / data justice journalism training

The Snowden moment

Digital Citizenship and
Surveillance Society: UK
State-Media-Citizen Relations
after the Snowden Leaks
(2014-2016)

Historical juncture
- Big data and surveillance
  capitalism as governance
- Normalisation of data
  collection and surveillance
  culture

Public and civil society response
- Digital resignation and
  surveillance realism
- Disconnect in understandings
  and concerns

The datafied society....

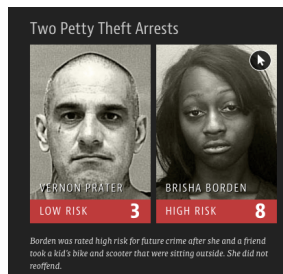**Refugee or Terrorist? IBM Thinks Its Software Has the Answer.** *Defense One*

When your boss is an algorithm. *Financial Times*

Exclusive: Use of algorithms to identify families for attention raises stereotyping and privacy fears
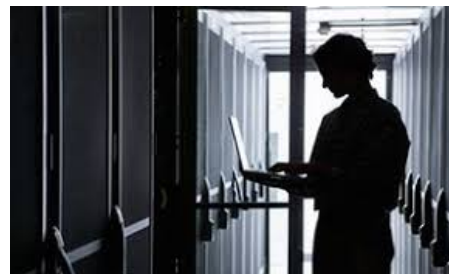
▲ At least five councils have developed or implemented a predictive analytics system to safeguard children. Photograph: Alamy Stock Photo
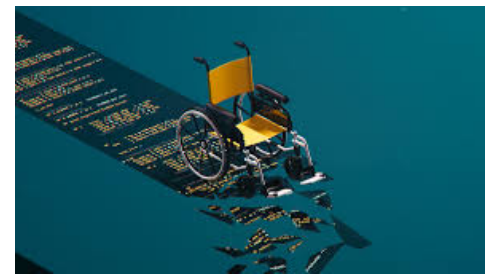
Councils use 377,000 people's data in efforts to predict child abuse. *The Guardian*

Two Petty Theft Arrests

VERNON PRATER — LOW RISK 3
BRISHA BORDEN — HIGH RISK 8

Borden was rated high risk for future crime after she and a friend took a kid's bike and scooter that were sitting outside. She did not reoffend.

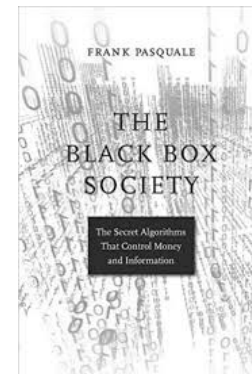**Machine Bias: There's software used across the country to predict future criminals.** *Propublica*
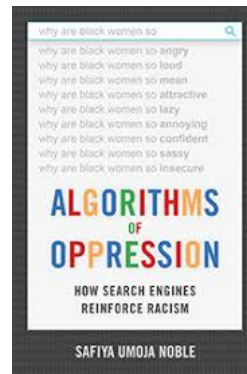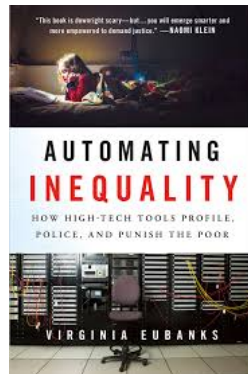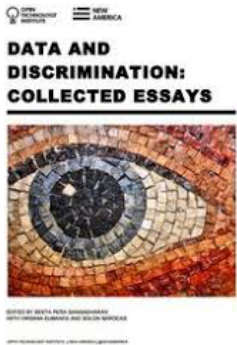

New Zealand experts warn Australia data-driven welfare 'abuses and brutalises'. *The Guardian*

What happens when an algorithm cuts your health care. *The Verge*
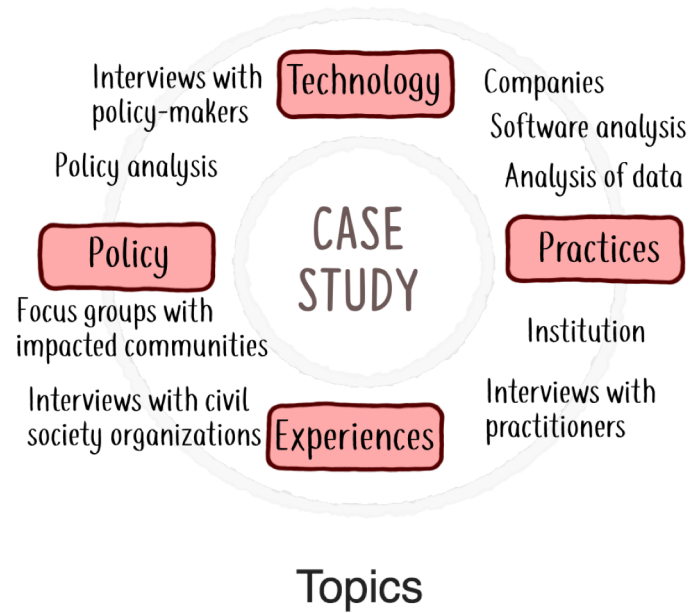
Data Justice Lab

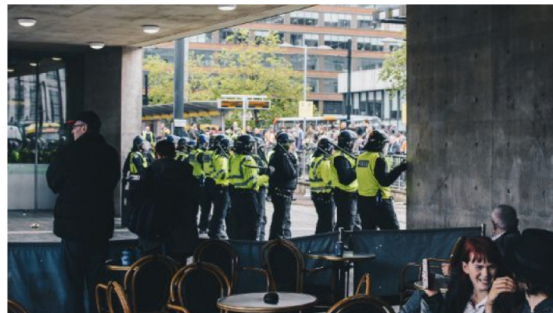# What is at stake? From privacy to fairness

- Focus on 'data ethics'
  - ➢ Technological solution(ism) (e.g.'debiasing' ML, fairness-by-design)
  - ➢ (Re)training engineers (e.g. ethics curricula)
  - ➢ Guidelines and principles (e.g. code of ethics, certification)

Neutralisation (depoliticisation) of challenges?

HOW? DATA JUSTICE

Technology

Interviews with policy-makers

Policy analysis

Companies
Software analysis
Analysis of data

Policy

CASE STUDY

Practices

Focus groups with impacted communities

Institution

Interviews with civil society organizations

Experiences

Interviews with practitioners

Topics

Border control and migration

Law enforcement and policing

Low-wage work

"We are witnessing the gradual disappearance of the postwar British welfare state behind a webpage and an algorithm. In its place, a digital welfare state is emerging."
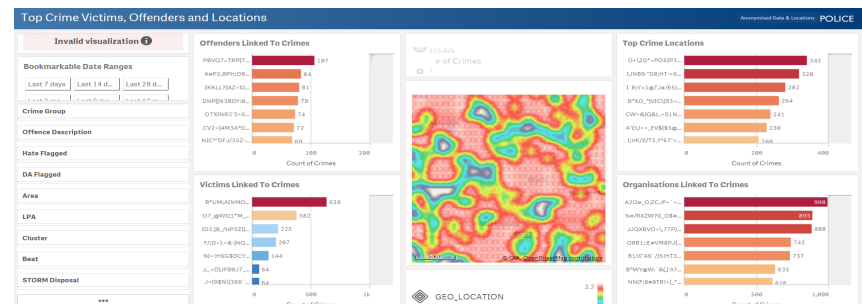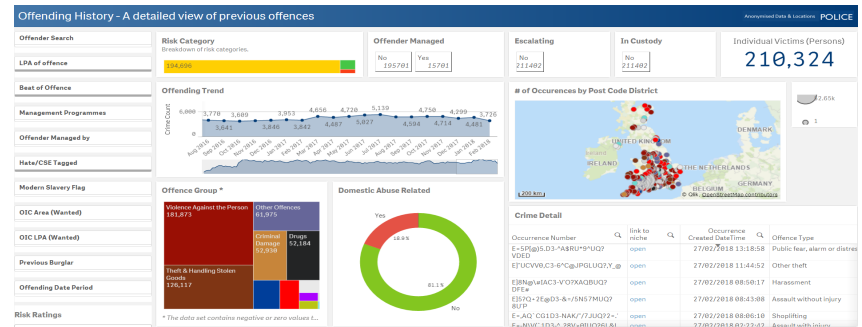
Statement On Visit to the United Kingdom by Philip Alston, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, 16 November 2018

DATA SCORES AS GOVERNANCE: Investigating uses of citizen scoring in public services

- Comprehensive mapping and analysis of the use of data analytics by government and local authorities in the UK

- Desk research, automated searches (gov't and media), FoI requests

- Case studies: Interviews with public officials and civil society organizations

- Multistakeholder workshops

- Journalist training workshop

Data Scores as Governance: Investigating uses of citizen scoring in public services

Project Report

Lina Dencik, Arne Hintz, Joanna Redden & Harry Warne

www.data-scores.org

Data Justice Lab

- 53 Councils
- 14 Police forces (Liberty report)
- Public-private partnerships (e.g. Capita, Xantura, CallCredit, Experian)
- Data warehouses and predictive analytics
- Prominent areas: benefit fraud, child welfare, policing
- Citizen scoring: identity verification, risk assessment, ranking

- https://data-scores.org/overviews/predictive-analytics

Context of 'citizen scoring'

Public sector workers

o **Interpretive and regulatory vacuum (heterogeneity of data practices)**

o **Austerity context**

o **'Golden view'**

o **Challenges seen as cultural and technical**

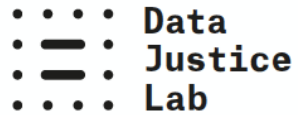o **Lack of impact assessment**

Civil Society

• **Extent of data collection and sharing**

• **Bias and discrimination**

• **Targeting, stigma and stereotyping**

• **Lack of agency (professionals and service-users)**

• **Politics, not technology**

Politics of data: Transformations in governance?

o **Expertise transferred to (commercial) calculative devices**

o **Citizens positioned as (potential) risk**

o **Rationalisation of lived experiences**

o **Individualisation of social problems**

o **Pre-emption over prevention**

Data justice – data as part of integrated social justice agenda

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