

Article

Camera-friendly Policing: How the Police Respond to Cameras and Photographers

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Abstract

How do police respond to the presence of cameras and photographers? Many speculative theories have been proposed offering mixed and sometimes contradictory answers to this question. Some theories propose that cameras will deter police misconduct, others suggest that cameras might improve police accountability, others suggest that police might respond to cameras by engaging in a risk-averse style of policing. Unfortunately, little empirical data is available to assess these theories. Drawing on data from a participant-observation research study conducted in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, this paper helps fill this gap in research and argues that police might be learning to adapt to cameras by engage in what I call camera-friendly policing. This style of policing involves efforts to control how the police are perceived by photographers, and how they will be perceived by viewers of any recorded footage. In this paper, I outline the basic elements of the police's camera-friendly tactics, and discuss the implications of these tactics for contemporary understandings of police visibility.

Introduction

The popularization and affordability of smartphones and other portable cameras has created a population of citizens both more willing and better equipped to record police officers (Goldsmith 2010). Accordingly, the police's growing visibility has been the subject of extensive debate and speculation in recent years, likely in response to the regular influx of controversial videos showing police violence (Wilson and Serisier 2010; Greer and McLaughlin 2010, 2011, 2012; Stuart 2011; Toch 2012; Schaefer and Steinmetz 2014; Evans 2015; Brown 2015; Sandhu and Haggerty 2015). Activist organizations like *CopWatch* (see <http://www.berkeleycopwatch.org>) speculate that the surveillance of police offers citizens a new way to expose abuses of power and deter misconduct. Sociologists speculate that the surveillance of police is producing an "image management crisis" as police organizations are forced to try to explain away videos exposing malpractice (Haggerty and Sandhu 2014). Some academics speculate that, given the emerging image management crisis, police officers may respond to cameras and photographers by waging a "war on cameras" by confiscating cameras, destroying footage, and arresting photographers (Wilson and Serisier 2010; Simon 2012; Wall and Linnemann 2014). Because of a lack of empirical evidence, little is known about which, if any, of these theories best describes the way that the police understand and respond to cameras and photographers.

This paper helps fill the aforementioned gap in research and contributes to the empirical study of police visibility by drawing on data from a participant-observation case study that examines police responses to cameras and photographers in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Based on an analysis of research data, I

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propose that one way that police respond to the presence of cameras and photographers is by engaging in what I call *camera-friendly policing*. Camera-friendly policing represents a series of adjustments that an officer makes to what Erving Goffman (1959) calls the “presentation of self” (including speech, physical grooming, and body-language) in an effort to control how they will be perceived by photographers and viewers of recorded footage. In what follows, I detail the varieties of camera-friendly techniques used by the police officers who participated in my research study, and then consider the implications of these techniques for contemporary understandings of police visibility. Specifically, I consider if camera-friendly policing represents a disciplining effect on police behaviour in the way that panoptic theories of surveillance predict (Foucault 1977), and if police officers’ efforts to *look good* via camera-friendly policing are equivalent to an effort to *be good*.

The Surveillance of Police Officers

To begin, I want to ground my discussion of camera-friendly policing by considering why and how police visibility has seen such substantial growth in recent decades. The answer to both questions lies in a discussion of the politics of police, an institution which has immense power under the law as its officers bring abstract legal rules to the “real” world, where laws are enforced, obeyed, and broken (Manning 1997; Ericson and Haggerty 1997; McLaughlin 2007; Reiner 2010). Among the most difficult elements of policing is that officers must use their discretion to make notoriously difficult decisions such as how and when to use the law to punish citizens, including how and when to injure and even kill (Manning 1997). The controversial nature of these decisions mean that officers are regularly accused of misconduct, especially when police make said decisions on the basis of personal and institutional prejudices, which have the effect of reproducing what many consider an unequal status quo (Ericson 1982). Accordingly, the history of police institutions is defined by regular attempts to reform policing, so that police officers’ decisions are increasingly subject to intense scrutiny by members of the general public who want to ‘police the police’ by improving accountability systems and the visibility of police work (Walker and Archbold 2014). The surveillance of police via contemporary camera technologies represents one of the most recent trends in these attempts to improve policing (Goldsmith 2010).

The development of camera technologies, smartphone cameras in particular, have created an increasingly large population of citizens, sometimes known as “citizen journalists” (Goldsmith 2010; Allan and Thorsen 2009; Toch 2012), who are equipped to record high definition footage of police behaviour. In addition, the development of social media has enabled these citizens to easily share any footage they record with a potentially massive body of Internet users who can discuss what they see (Greer and McLaughlin 2010; Schaefer and Steinmetz 2014). The surveillance of police, therefore, represents an empowering form of “sousveillance” (Mann, Nolan, and Wellman 2003) as members of the general public are increasingly able to engage in bottom-up observation which denies legal authorities their ability to work under low visibility conditions, and creates opportunities to observe, scrutinize, and critique police work so that officers will be held accountable for their decisions.

Having reached the same conclusion about the potential for sousveillance to improve police accountability, activist organizations like CopWatch and *Photography Is Not A Crime* (see <https://photographyisnotacrime.com>) urge citizens to record police work. Activists hope that by doing so, images of police work will have two effects. First, the spread of images of police misconduct will initiate critical discussions of policing which, if they encourage activism and political action, may result in improvements to police behaviour, training, and policy. Second, activists hope that the knowledge that police work is subject to surveillance will encourage police officers to improve their behaviour. In Foucaultian words, activists hope that sousveillance targeting the police will have a disciplining effect on police behaviour.

Recent incidents in North America lend support to activist hopes, as police officers are regularly caught on camera while engaging in controversial behaviours, and the resulting footage is often used to expose and criticize police as well as improve police policy and police behaviour (Goldsmith 2010). For example, in a 2007 incident in Vancouver, Canada, police officers were caught on camera aggressively tasing a Polish immigrant named Robert Dziekanski. When it was released, a video of the incident sparked criticism of the police both on and offline, and eventually resulted in a large internal investigation entitled the “Braidwood Inquiry,”¹ which was followed by changes to taser policies, and a public apology to the Dziekanski family.

Similar incidents around the world seem to support the conclusion that increasing police visibility may be a method with which to improve accountability and discipline police behaviour. Accordingly, the surveillance of police is regularly described as a progressive action by activist organizations like CopWatch and Photography Is Not A Crime. On the other hand, one can easily see how the consequences of the police’s growing visibility from a police point of view are likely to be associated with excessive criticism, public shaming, and unfair complaints. Accordingly, questions about how police respond to the presence of cameras and photographers have emerged: do the police have legal mechanisms available to them which can limit their growing visibility? Can the police legally restrict citizens from recording police work? Does the presence of cameras have a disciplining effect on police behaviour?

The Police’s Counter-Sousveillance

Existing research suggests that police often express resentment of photographers and resistance to cameras (Wall and Linneman 2014). This resistance is not the same as what Torin Monahan (2006) calls counter-surveillance, the “intentional, tactical uses or disruptions of surveillance technologies to challenge institutional power asymmetries.” Instead of challenging power asymmetries, police resistance represents an effort to prevent themselves from being recorded, and an effort to protect existing power asymmetries. Policing’s counter-surveillance might, therefore, be best referred to as a form of counter-counter-surveillance or perhaps counter-sousveillance, as it attempts to counter the “watching from below” of citizens with smartphones (Mann, Nolan and Wellman 2003).

Reports of the police’s counter-sousveillance tend to focus on tactics used to nullify sousveillance, often by breaking, distorting or blocking cameras, and/or preventing citizens from recording police by masking officers, avoiding cameras, or arresting photographers (Wilson and Serisier 2010; Simon 2012). Building on Gary Marx’s (2003) categories of resistance, I categorize the police’s counter-sousveillance tactics into four groups: intimidation, legal punishment, confiscation and destruction.

Intimidation: Police may try to nullify sousveillance by commanding photographers to stop recording and threatening them with legal punishment should they refuse. In order to rationalize their threats, officers might claim that photography obstructs police work. In extreme cases, officers might go so far as to claim that photographers may be a national security threat, the assumption being that the monitoring of law enforcement agents is the work of people conducting research in preparation for a terrorist attack (Simon 2012). If intimidation is successful, photographers will respond to an officer’s commands by turning off their phones and/or moving away from what they want to record.

Legal Punishment: Police may also try to nullify sousveillance by claiming that photographing and/or recording police work is illegal. Officers justify their claims by citing abstract privacy laws and/or declaring the surveillance of police an obstruction of justice (Potere 2012). Based on these claims, police officers have fined and arrested photographers who continue to record them (Bodri 2011), and in rare circumstances, police officers might aggressively approach and subdue a photographer. A recent example

¹ See <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/about-bcs-justice-system/recent-inquiries>).

involved the arrest of the *New York Times* photographer, Robert Stolarik, who was accused by New York police of interfering with an arrest by blinding officers with his camera's flash function. Stolarik was charged with obstruction.²

Confiscation: Another counter-surveillance tactic involves confiscating cameras. Though the legality of such confiscation is questionable, police officers sometimes claim that it is acceptable if police believe that some footage will be a vital piece of evidence in the investigation of a criminal offence. If photographers refuse, police officers have been known to seize cameras from photographers (Wall and Linnemann 2014). Crucially, the confiscation of cameras also means that police officers can prevent footage about a given incident from being accessed by the public. By doing so, the police can maintain their 'account ability' (Ericson 1982), which refers to their status as the primary source of information about police activities.

Destruction: If they confiscate cameras, some police will also delete any footage that was previously recorded and/or destroy cameras (Wall and Linnemann 2014). A recent example saw a South Florida police officer confiscating a camera and then deleting footage recorded by Juan Santana, who had recorded an Officer Sentamanat aggressively stopping-and-frisking an 18-year-old male.³ Unfortunately for the South Florida Police, Juan Santana responded by retrieving a second camera and covertly recording his ensuing interaction with officer Sentamanat.

As Juan Santana's interaction with South Florida Police implies, each of the counter-surveillance tactics mentioned have significant flaws. Most of these flaws are grounded in the fact that photographers are not particularly obstructive. Rather, photographers can record from a distance, and can use various applications which allow them to conceal the recording process.⁴ Without knowing that they are being recorded, police officers have significant problems trying to intimidate or legally punish photographers, and an even more difficult time trying to confiscate cameras or destroy footage. Moreover, even if photographers are aggressive in their recording, police may have some trouble accessing their cameras. For example, some social activists have developed various strategies for recording police without having their videos confiscated. These strategies include hiding their phones or passing them off to fellow activists in order to prevent officers from getting to them. Wilson and Serisier (2010) describe the resulting tension between police and photographers as a "surveillance arms race," as both sides attempt to find more complex tactics for locating/hiding cameras. Given the practical limitations of most of the counter-surveillance tactics mentioned, it is no surprise that I did not witness any of those tactics during my research.

Research Method

This paper is a report of one of the key findings of a much larger project on police visibility. As part of this larger project, I conducted a participant observation case study (Stake 1995; Yin 2013) in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. I observed and spoke with over 60 officers from three police organizations; a city police force, a university campus police force, and a transit police force. I spent over 200 hours in the field with police officers over the course of six months. Most fieldwork lasted from 3-5 hours at a time, though sometimes fieldwork lasted over 12 hours. I focused my research on the experiences of patrol officers given they are the most likely to be recorded by cameras. The vast majority of my participants were white males. Though future research would benefit from interviewing a more diverse sample, this mostly white

² See <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/06/nyregion/robert-stolarik-times-photographer-is-arrested-while-on-assignment-in-the-bronx.html>.

³ See <https://photographyisnotacrime.com/2013/03/south-florida-cops-confiscate-camera-and-delete-footage-claiming-they-feared-it-was-a-gun/>.

⁴ See see Police Tape at <https://www.aclu-nj.org/yourrights/app-place/>.

male sample is consistent with the traditional structure of police organizations (Bolton Jr. and Feagin 2004) and therefore my data should not be considered skewed or misrepresentative.

Most of my data comes from conversations or observations during fieldwork with police officers. As opposed to formalized semi-structured interviews, participants in my study seemed more willing to speak openly during fieldwork. Accordingly, conversational interviews (also known as informal interviews) helped avoid some of the limitations associated with semi-structured interviews, including the tendency for anxious participants to censor themselves when in a formalized interview environment (DeWalt and DeWalt 2010). During interviews, I documented my findings by writing field notes in small notebooks which I carried everywhere. I took notes in an overt style as this allowed me to record lots of data quickly. Participants did not seem bothered by this note taking, and many supported it, sometimes encouraging me to write their responses down during conversations.

As with any interview research, there is a chance that participants might exaggerate when responding to a researcher's questions (Waddington 1999). I tried to address this limitation by building rapport with my participants and by encouraging them to speak frankly and honestly as they would a "buddy" (Snow et al. 1986). My age (late 20s) and gender (male) might have helped, as they might have made me relatable to many of my participants. In addition, I consistently referenced my own interest in a policing career as well as my credentials as a way of encouraging officers to trust me. This seemed to work as was confirmed when a transit police sergeant pulled me aside and told me that the officers had grown to trust me and enjoyed my company as it offered them a chance to speak with someone about their thoughts and experiences.

I also acknowledge that having a researcher with a notebook in the field may have influenced my research participants' behaviours and skewed my data (Jorgensen 1989). However, I do not believe that my findings reflect uncommon police behaviour. The length of time I spent with officers in the field mean that any initial changes in behaviour caused by my presence might have faded as officers became more comfortable. In addition, where possible, I triangulated my research data by asking several officers to confirm what their peers told me, and by comparing my participants' claims during interviews with what I observed in the field. Assuming that an officer's claims are more likely to be true if they are consistent with observable behaviour (Jick 1979), I based my conclusions on the most consistent and common themes I discovered in my research.

After analyzing my data, several consistent themes concerning participants' response to cameras and photographers began to emerge. Participants in my study claimed to respond to cameras and photographers in two ways. A minority of participants claimed that in certain circumstances they would engage in a traditional form of resistance known as an avoidance tactic in an effort to stay out of sight (Marx 2003). On the other hand, a majority of my participants claimed to engage in camera-friendly policing. Camera-friendly policing can also be considered a form of resistance in the sense that it attempts to disrupt surveillance; however, instead of staying out of sight, camera-friendly policing represents a form of adaptation as police officers try to become more comfortable in a camera-packed environment. I discuss both avoidance and camera-friendly policing below.

Avoidance

A minority of research participants admitted that they sometimes respond to cameras and photographers with efforts to avoid being recorded. Avoidance includes any and all efforts made by those who are monitored to stay out of sight. Participants explained that this is not motivated by a desire to conceal misbehaviour. Instead avoidance is motivated primarily by a desire to pre-empt what participants consider unfair criticism from photographers who edit and manipulate images to make law enforcement agents "look bad," as one research participant put it. Most participants were quite skeptical of photographers and

often claimed that they use their cameras to “get them [police officers] in trouble.” For example, a veteran police officer said the following about photographers,

They don't want to police you and then tell you, you're doing good. I got hired doing loss prevention when I was 18 years old. I'll be 27 next month, ... and I have had hundreds of people pull out cameras and cellphones, and it has never been with pure intentions. It has always been to get me in trouble.

Most officers also expressed a worry that viewers of footage recorded by photographers might misinterpret videos because of a lack of knowledge of law enforcement tactics and strategies. For example, a research participant proposed that many videos present a skewed version of events which are likely to be misinterpreted by viewers who lack the “insight” required to assess police work,

...I take it with a grain of salt, whenever I view those type of videos. I'd rather prefer for the investigation to come out regarding the incident rather than to jump to a decision. And again, that's my insight. The public doesn't have that insight...

When they engage in avoidance in response to these concerns, participants claimed that they attempt to stay away from people or locations where cameras were prevalent, even if it delays police work. For example, participants admitted that they will try to control the location of their interactions with suspicious persons by either following or leading them into spaces where cameras and crowds are less common. I witnessed some examples of this while patrolling with research participants. In one case, near a university campus, a participant recognized an Asian male walking out of a crowded pub. The officer explained that the male was known to many police officers in the area as he had been involved in a number of domestic violence incidents. The male was joined by a young girl and the officer responded by stating that he would like to stop and question the male. Despite his better instincts, the officer did not stop the male. He later admitted that the nearby crowd was the reason. The crowd and, crucially, its cameras meant that the officer would likely find himself under extensive surveillance which may be used to make complaints, particularly if the male were to respond to the officer aggressively. The officer added that he worried that the male may notice the crowd and try to use them to his advantage by launching criticisms at the officer in an effort to attract the crowd and its cameras. The officer decided that the best course of action would be to confront the male only if/when he entered a more private space. We followed the male for a few blocks, but the officer eventually grew tired of waiting for the male to enter a private space and decided to return to the headquarters to finish writing reports about a recent traffic ticket he had issued. The officer told me that he would probably run into the male sooner or later, and would confront him when there are less people around.

Avoidance tactics are only possible with an awareness of when one is being recorded, accompanied by an ability to locate or create a private space. The participants in my study claimed that they relied on spaces like the police cruiser or the police headquarters, which are accessed only by authorized personnel and/or security agents. For instance, police officers patrolling a subway station would avoid conversing with suspicious persons and/or issuing a fine or making an arrest until they could lead them into the police cruiser. Once inside, the police could do their duties without concern that they would be recorded.

Several participants said avoidance was most common when confronting individuals in social areas of the city where pubs, nightclubs, and bars were common. One participant claimed that during these nights, confrontations with “partiers” was common, as were large crowds of people who used their smartphones to record confrontations between partiers and police. In response, participants had to lead suspicious partiers, usually drunken students, outside a bar and into their cruisers. If this was not possible, then participants would try to lead partiers into secure locations inside of a bar/nightclub such as the kitchen or the security area. Though this change in location was motivated by various considerations such as the

danger a suspicious partier might pose to onlookers, participants made it explicitly clear that the desire to avoid cameras was a key motivation as well. I was first told of this type of avoidance while on patrol with two police officers. The officers explained that they had recently been called to help nightclub security remove a drunk and violent male who had begun to threaten other patrons as well as the security guards. Once they arrived, the officers led the disruptive male to follow them to the entrance where they could speak with him about his behaviour and determine how to proceed. Unfortunately, when they did so, several patrons, including the male's girlfriend began to criticize the police while recording them with a smartphone camera. Worrying that the resulting videos might be used to shame them online, the police officers decided to lead the male to their cruiser where he could be spoken to without interruption and without the risk of being heckled and recorded by bystanders.

Though several participants admitted to engaging in avoidance, particularly in circumstances in which people with cameras became obstructive, most participants stated that avoidance was extremely rare. When asked why they did not engage in avoidance more regularly, most participants claimed that they usually had no need to avoid cameras or photographers and gave two reasons. First, the majority of participants expressed confidence in their conduct and claimed that they had "nothing to hide" (this phrase was used repeatedly by many participants). The risks associated with being recorded were often dismissed as only relevant for those officers who were guilty of abusing their power. For professional police officers, on the other hand, cameras need not be avoided. Second, most participants claimed that even if they felt it necessary to avoid cameras and photographers, this would be a flawed strategy given how many cameras often target the police. Most participants concluded that rather than trying to avoid cameras, a better strategy for lowering the risks associated with being recorded would be to conduct one's self in a *camera-friendly* manner.

Camera-friendly Policing

Camera-friendly policing involves a shift in focus away from cameras and photographers, and towards officers' expressions and bodies. Rather than trying to prevent themselves from being recording, police officers begin to adjust the way they present themselves. By doing so, the officers try to influence how they will be perceived by viewers, and to make footage appear as favourable to themselves as possible. This is not a radically new phenomenon. The police's presentation of self has received extensive study. For example, research shows that police try to craft a particular image of themselves by speaking, dressing, and behaving like representatives of the legal system (Paperman 2003). To do so police follow both formal and informal "display rules" (Martin 1999) which govern how a police officer should perform to give the impression of a respectable authority figure, and encourage officers to conceal any behaviours that do not meet the standards of display rules in back regions including the police headquarters (Parnaby and Leyden 2011). Camera-friendly policing is based on these same principles except that it appreciates the expansion of police visibility as a result of cameras, and the need to consider what a police officer looks like not only to those around him or her, but how they look on-camera. I categorize camera-friendly policing tactics into two groups based on behaviours that I either witnessed while conducting my research or incidents that were detailed to me by police officers during interviews. These categories are camera-friendly speech and camera-friendly body language.

Camera-friendly Speech

Camera-friendly speech involve oral efforts by police officers to control how their recorded behaviour is perceived by viewers. These efforts can range from trying to sound professional, respectful, and masculine, to efforts which try to rationalize and justify police violence. A rookie police officer told me about such a situation when she described the way officers are now trained to engage a criminal while being recorded by a bystander. She explained that when criminals resist arrest, she may decide that she has no option except to use her baton to strike the criminal. At this point she may attract the attention of photographers, who witness the scene from some distance, sprint towards the officer, and begin recording

the scene. Footage recorded by these photographers will show an officer violently striking the criminal with a baton and could be misinterpreted as a police using violence without reason. Recognizing this, the officer claimed that she would continuously yell, “stop resisting arrest!” loud enough so that it will be picked up in the video recording. In doing so, the officer becomes a performer, reshaping the meaning of any video recordings by inserting commentary that rationalizes her violent behaviour. Accordingly, the video becomes a text demonstrating the professionalism and rationality of the officer’s actions rather than something that could be used to accuse her of police brutality.

Camera-friendly speech can be used outside of violent interactions as well. For instance, during interactions when they issue instructions to individuals, participants explained that they speak in a fashion that accounts for what they might sound like in a recording. This usually means speaking in a stern but respectful tone and issuing extremely detailed instructions. While interviewing an experienced veteran who is sometimes involved in training recruits, I was given the example of camera-friendly speech when stopping and searching a suspicious person. First and foremost, officers are repeatedly told not to use racial or controversial language and to instead use neutral but polite language like “sir” and “ma’am” when referring to others. Second, officers are trained to issue specific instructions. For example, rather than asking a suspect to “spread ‘em,” which is a generic way of telling a suspicious person to assume the position to be searched, and an instruction that could be easily misinterpreted, a camera-friendly officer would issue instructions like “sir please stand facing the wall with your legs spread so that I can search your pockets.” The officer would also detail their behaviour as a search is conducted. They may even list the behaviours they are engaged in as they do them by saying something along the lines of “I am now searching your pockets” and “I am now patting your shoulders and arms sir,” all of which will be caught on camera and contextualize the officer’s actions. By doing so, the police veteran explained, the officer reduces the risk that they will be criticized for making inappropriate comments or abusing their power.

Similarly, participants claimed that they will sometimes approach photographers and speak directly to them in an effort to rationalize their behaviour and help viewers of any video recordings interpret the footage in a way that, participants alleged, is more accurate. For instance, after conducting a search or an arrest, a police officer may approach a crowd of photographers and explain why the search was conducted, what contraband was found, and why an arrest was necessary. By doing so, the police hope that they grant viewers the “insight” to interpret footage in a way that better reflects the police officer’s perception of events.

The value of camera-friendly speech becomes clearer as we recognize the malleability of video footage. Despite a commonly held belief that camera footage is an objective record (hence the old adage “the camera never lies”), footage is subject to editing and interpretation, and their meaning is therefore subject to negotiation (Stuart 2011). The camera-friendly speech strategies described here allow police officers to participate in this negotiation and perhaps sway the meaning of footage in such a way that serves their interests. In some cases, the resulting footage may be used defend officers from criticisms or complaints. Camera-friendly policing is, therefore, not a resistance tactic meant to nullify sousveillance, but a tactic that attempts to take advantage of the police’s visibility by producing favourable and perhaps even promotional images.

Camera-friendly Body Language

Camera-friendly speech has several limitations. Police officers engaged in particularly brutal actions will find it difficult to avoid criticism by simply yelling “stop resisting arrest!” Moreover, camera-friendly speech will be completely ineffective if cameras without audio are used to record police officers. So camera-friendly policing relies on body language strategies as well, including any and all bodily efforts by police officers to control how their recorded behaviour is perceived by viewers.

Some camera-friendly body language strategies involve following basic expectations about dress and grooming. Police officers must wear pressed uniforms, they must stand with a tall and confident posture, and they must also avoid sitting down or resting in public spaces where accusations about laziness could be made. In addition, trainers tell rookies to smile and look as approachable as possible by making eye contact with citizens and offering a nod of the head. These rules may seem trivial, but they can make significant difference in terms of whether or not footage of police will be used to criticize or praise an officer's behaviour.

Another feature of camera-friendly body language involves considering the visuals of hostile interactions with individuals. For instance, during an interview with a police veteran, I was told of how the presence of cameras can affect how he recently interacted with a violent and armed subject. Recognizing that the incident was being video recorded by audio-less surveillance cameras overhead, the officer explained that he began to use his body language to reassert his instructions to the criminal and to make clear what his instructions were for secondary audiences. For instance, his verbal commands like "drop the weapon!" were followed by physical gestures like pointing to the weapon (a metal bar) in the criminal's hand and then the floor in the smooth motion. By doing so, the video recording could be used to show that the officer had made several efforts to de-escalate the situation before eventually using physical force to subdue the criminal. If a complaint of excessive force was made, the veteran knew he could use the video to defend himself as it showed he only used force after all other tactics had failed. Similar strategies could be used when being recorded by citizens with smartphone cameras.

Another veteran police officer told me about how he could use cameras to document his professional behaviour. For example, while searching a suspected criminal, the officer would regularly locate drugs in pockets, which he could then hold up towards a camera in order to both record the evidence that he had found, and justify whatever actions he took from thereon. If the suspect were arrested, even aggressively so, the officer's performative search could influence how such actions were perceived by viewers. In some cases, footage would be willingly supplied to police officers by photographers who complimented the police on their professionalism and claimed they wished to help the police do their duties.

Camera-friendly body language strategies also include efforts to control the in-field arrangement of police officers. I witnessed an example of this during fieldwork with transit officers as they patrolled subway cars checking passenger's tickets. I watched as one of my participants named Officer Jacobs engaged Jack, an Aboriginal-Canadian student riding the subway. The interaction was stereotypical in appearance: Jacobs, a 30-something, Caucasian, male officer was dressed in a traditional black and grey uniform, and Jack, a young, member of a marginalized social group, was dressed in sagging jeans and white T-shirt. When Officer Jacobs approached, Jack immediately responded to Jacob's request to see his ticket with accusations of racism. I sat and listened to Jack loudly scold the officers for constantly monitoring "his people" and issuing them fines and making arrests without cause. The word "racist" was yelled several times. Jacobs responded by telling Jack to "calm down." He held his hands up with palms open as he did so. Jack was not responsive and continued to accuse Jacobs of racism, and so two officers, including Officer Marcus and Sergeant Steeves, joined Jacobs for support.

The ensuing confrontation was loud and eye-catching. I looked around to see other passengers watching intently as a group of officers now surrounded Jack. Few passengers made any effort to conceal their staring. Everyone seemed to want to know what was going on. Most, if not all, of the passengers also had smartphone cameras in their hands, ready to record the interaction between the police officers and Jack. Steeves, noticing the attention that her officers were receiving from passengers, suddenly told everyone besides Officer Jacobs to disperse. The officers followed her directions and returned to checking other passengers' tickets. Steeves advised Jacobs to calm Jack down, and to avoid using any language that might be perceived as racist by any viewers. Jacobs promptly led Jack into a corner where he was less likely to be seen by other passengers. He had strategically positioned himself between Jack and the

subway doors. Intentionally or not, his body also obstructed the other passengers' ability to easily record Jack's accusations.

Having reorganized her officers' positions, Steeves joined me at my seat and smiled. She explained that she noticed how many people were watching her officers as they spoke with Jack. She said that their interaction would probably be perceived badly by the other passengers, especially as Jack loudly accused the officers of racism. If a passenger recorded the interaction, they might use the footage to support formal complaints even though, Steeves added, the officers were not acting because of any racial prejudices. Predicting complaints, Steeves said that she had to make the scene "look good" by spreading her officers out across the length of the subway car instead of having them crowding around Jack. Having done so, the interaction appeared less hostile and was less likely to look bad on camera. As Steeves put it, officers always have to think about the "optics" of their behaviour when there are people and cameras around.

To my surprise, some participants were so confident in their camera-friendliness they claimed that in tense and potentially violent interactions with others, they might make their way towards cameras. These participants argued that trying to avoid cameras is not only unnecessary but actually works against police interests. Rather, by allowing themselves to be recorded, these participants suggested that they take advantage of opportunities to create images which will later be used to defend themselves from criticism. For instance, a participant who worked nightshifts in a popular social district in the city claimed that he once bobbed and weaved away from a drunken man's punches in order to ensure that the ensuing interaction would be recorded by nearby cameras. The officer explained that he could have easily subdued the drunken man but recognized that doing so would in a low visibility environment might make it easy for the drunken man to issue a complaint and misrepresent his interaction with police. So, the officer backed away from the drunken man until he was certain that he was in view of cameras which would document him as he subdued the individual. In this case, being camera-friendly involved not only the effort to subdue the drunken male in a way that looked good on camera, but going to great effort to get in-view of cameras. Rather than trying to nullify cameras or avoid photographers, in situations like this, participants seemed to want to place themselves in direct view of cameras so that they could make the best of their visibility.

Concluding Discussion: Discipline and Camera-friendly Policing

My research suggests that the police are adapting to their increasingly visible work experience by learning how to look good on camera. This finding begs questions such as, what are the implications of this camera-friendly behaviour for existing theories of police visibility and, more generally, for contemporary understandings of policing? I address both questions by responding to the increasingly popularly speculative theories mentioned in the introduction to this paper, specifically the belief that the surveillance of police offers members of the public a new opportunity to expose police misconduct, scrutinize police work, and deter misconduct.

Those who rely on Michel Foucault's (1977) panoptic model, one which presumes that surveillance can be used to observe, correct, and discipline behaviour, are likely to conclude that increasing police visibility is a recipe for disciplining police behaviour, and this conclusion has received some empirical support (Brown 2015). However, I am somewhat skeptical of the idea that we can confidently make the conclusion that increasing police visibility also increases disciplined behaviour among police officers. Based on my findings, I argue that although surveillance can encourage changes in police behaviour, these changes might not reflect a step towards disciplined behaviour, but an increase in camera-friendly behaviour. The difference between the two is subtle but important; while disciplined behaviour implies police work that abides by formal rules and avoids abuses of power, camera-friendly behaviour refers to any and all behaviours which *appear* to be disciplined, including undisciplined behaviours which are made to look disciplined.

To grasp the difference between disciplined and camera-friendly behaviour, reconsider the interaction between transit officers and Jack that I outlined in the previous section. Officer Steeves's decision to spread her officers out while officer Jacobs interacted with Jack could be motivated by a desire to discourage her officers from behaving in an excessively hostile fashion when interacting with racial minorities. Accordingly, the officers' behaviour could be referred to as more disciplined. On the other hand, Steeves's decision to spread her officers out might be motivated by a desire to make the interaction with Jack *appear* less hostile, a decision that does not address the racial prejudices that may have informed Officer Jacobs' initial decision to approach Jack. If the latter is true, then Steeves's decision may not represent a more disciplined approach to policing, but a method of concealing problems of prejudice via surface level verbal and physical adaptations. Critical race scholars would call this as an example of hidden racism (Bonilla-Silva 2003), and surveillance scholars could think of it as a way of hiding in plain sight.

Thus, my findings directly challenge panoptic theories of discipline where subjects who are placed under surveillance are described as passive victims of a disciplinary gaze which forces them to correct their behaviour according to some socially constructed standards. Instead, my findings suggest that visibility is something which subjects can adapt to and perhaps learn to take advantage of, if they determine how to behave in a camera-friendly fashion. The study of police visibility is, therefore, best suited by theories of surveillance which acknowledge that, in some circumstances, visibility can be empowering not only for those who engage in surveillance/sousveillance, but also for those under surveillance/sousveillance. These include theories of visibility proposed by Andrea Mubi Brighenti (2010), which allege that increases in visibility do not have a steady or predictable effect on power relations. Rather, increases to visibility can have vague and unpredictable implications. In the context of police visibility, this means that sousveillance does not equalize the power inequalities between police and citizens-with-cameras. Rather, the camera-friendly techniques used by police seem to be designed in a way which allows police officers to maintain an existing asymmetry by concealing illegitimate police practices behind an illusion of disciplinary behaviour. Ironically then, camera-friendly policing suggests that raising police visibility may not reveal undisciplined police work, but offer the police a sophisticated mechanism with which to *conceal* undisciplined police work.

In conclusion, my findings confirm that the police are aware of the risks associated with being recorded. The police recognize that video footage can be used to launch complaints against police, and that they might result in the loss of employment opportunities. Furthermore, embarrassing videos can earn officers criticism resulting in shame, stigmatization, and the loss of employment opportunities. Accordingly, the police are likely to respond to cameras and photographers with efforts to lower said risks. However, my findings also suggest that these efforts do not necessarily take the form of traditional resistance tactics including intimidation, arrest, confiscation and destruction. Instead, police officers can respond to cameras and photographers by trying to look good while being recorded. What I've called camera-friendly policing represents an effort by police officers to adapt in a modern landscape where avoiding or neutralizing cameras is increasingly difficult.

It is my argument that in order to understand the implications of camera-friendly policing, it is important to recognize that as the police learn how to control how they are perceived on video, their growing visibility is not guaranteed to operate as a disciplinary gaze. Policing's "new visibility" (Goldsmith 2010) may not be a form of disciplinary power, but a form of power that encourages police officers to *act* more disciplined. Whether this means that the police will avoid undisciplined behaviour is a different question all together.

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