Smartphone security
The smartphone as a security device and the public/private
production of security

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Abstract
This thesis examines the smartphone as a security device through a comprehensive summary and four independent papers. The thesis starts from the observation that a central and yet underexplored characteristic of contemporary security politics is that the smartphone, as one especially important piece of consumer technology, is increasingly being transformed into a security device. Given the smartphone’s close connection to the human body and self, and the device’s dominant influence across societal domains, it is crucial to account for how the device operates in security settings and with what consequences. Combining an ‘analytics of security devices’ with the theoretical concepts of materialisation, co-production and inscription taken from Science and Technology Studies (STS), the thesis’ papers address the problem of how to understand the implications of the smartphone’s operation as a security device by providing background on the commercialisation of intelligence and surveillance (paper I), and by offering three different conceptualisations of the smartphone as a security device (papers II, III and IV). The papers also explore and illustrate these conceptualisations through empirical analyses of the smartphone’s role in the Black Lives Matter protests (paper II), the United Kingdom’s Covid-19 track and trace programme (paper III), and President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky’s communication through selfie-videos (paper IV). These case studies examine three important security practices that are enabled by the smartphone – surveillance, resistance and communication – and therefore also highlight how the smartphone mediates relations between a multitude of security actors: states, tech companies, citizens, politicians and audiences. Through these studies, moreover, the thesis shows that the smartphone produces security by (re)locating the practice of security and the negotiation of competing security interests to the human body, and thus makes security dependent on consumerist behaviour. This is politically significant because it entails a redistribution of agency and authority in the security domain, both between humans and machines and between public and private sector actors, which challenges the limits of what a democratic politics can do and what it can mean.

Keywords: Smartphone, security devices, appropriation, public/private security, Critical Security Studies, Science and Technology Studies