



## Privacy statement

### **Citizens to the rescue or going rogue? Harnessing the potential of online self-organization against crime**

#### **Sub study among online collectives engaged in police tasks**

##### **What is this research about?**

Online citizen self-organization against crime is a relatively new phenomenon that has several advantages and disadvantages for the security of our society. I examine how citizen participation in policing is changed by the logic of social media, how law enforcement evaluates this phenomenon and how online self-organization against crime can benefit policework.

The research runs from May 2023 to April 2027. The research is funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO): <https://www.nwo.nl/projecten/viveni211r032> More information can be found on the project website: [To the rescue or going rogue | Universiteit Utrecht \(uu.nl\)](#)

##### **What is the exact purpose of the data processing activities carried out as part of this study?**

In one of the sub studies of this project, I analyze social media data from online forums and groups concerned with crime and safety. The purpose of this analysis is to examine what activities these groups are engaged in and how they organize themselves. I am not actively disclosing in advance to these forums and groups that they are part of the research, in order not to unduly influence the results of the analysis.

To place this analysis in a broader context, I also conduct interviews and make observations among some of the people involved. I inform them about the research prior to their participation in the study.

##### **Has this research project been ethically reviewed?**

Yes. The Faculty Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance (LEG) of Utrecht University issued a positive review on this research on 4-4-2023. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) of the study also took place.

##### **What is the legal basis of the data processing activities?**

The legal basis of our processing activities is the fact that the processing is necessary for the performance of a task of public interest. Conducting scientific and historical research is a task assigned to Utrecht University under the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (WHW).

##### **Who are the people involved?**

Data subjects are those individuals whose personal data are being processed. In this sub study, it concerns people who engage in police tasks on social media. For example, those helping to search for missing persons, recover stolen goods or track down suspects.

## **What categories of personal data do we process?**

Personal data means any information about an identified or identifiable natural person (i.e., the "data subject" mentioned earlier). We process the following "regular" personal data:

- Social media data (profiles, message content and metadata) of individuals who engage in police tasks online (citizen-led policing). The purpose of this analysis is to examine what activities these individuals engage in and how they organize themselves into online collectives.
- Interviews (raw audio/video files and transcripts thereof) with individuals who engage in policing online. The purpose of this analysis is to examine what activities these individuals engage in and how they organize themselves into online collectives.
- Observations (researcher's notes, photographs and possibly products) of individuals engaged in citizen-led policing, collected during physical or online activities. The purpose of this analysis is to examine what activities these individuals engage in and how they organize themselves into online collectives.
- Contact information - To contact participants to schedule an interview or observation.
- Signed forms from participants in interviews and observations - to ensure that participants are properly informed about their participation in the study.

In addition to these data, we process the following categories of special personal data. These are personal data that are more sensitive because they may give rise to exclusion or discrimination:

- Social media data of individuals who engage in police tasks online (citizen-led policing) may contain special personal data such as data on political beliefs. These data are disclosed by the individuals themselves online.
- Interviews and observations among individuals who engage in police tasks online (citizen-led policing) may contain special personal data such as data on political beliefs. I ask participants for their consent to process these data.

In addition to these data, we process the following personal data of a criminal nature:

- Social media data, interview data and observation data of individuals who engage in police tasks online (citizen-led policing) may contain personal data of a criminal nature such as information about criminal offenses (e.g., doxing, threatening). The researcher is required to report evidence of major criminal activities or conduct to the police.

## **From what sources are the personal data derived?**

In this research, I analyze social media data from online forums and groups engaged in citizen-led policing. I also invite a selection of participants for an interview and I will ask if I can observe them in online or offline activities.

## **Will the collected personal data also be provided to others?**

Only social media data that have been pseudonymized to the extent that it is highly unlikely that they are traceable to the individual will be made available for reuse for research purposes. Strict conditions are placed on any form of scientific reuse to prevent personal data from becoming public.

## **Will the data be exported to a country outside the European Economic Area?**

Many countries outside the European Economic Area (EEA) offer a lower level of protection of personal data than countries within the EEA. Therefore, it is important for you to know if we intend

to export personal data to a country outside the EEA. As far as this study is concerned, we will not export any personal data to any country outside the EEA.

### **How long will the personal data be kept?**

Research data are retained for a period of at least 10 years. This retention period has been mutually agreed upon by the Dutch universities.

### **What are your rights when it comes to our data processing activities?**

You have the right to object to the processing of your personal data. This means that, based on your specific situation, you may object by notifying the researcher (Rianne Dekker: [r.dekker1@uu.nl](mailto:r.dekker1@uu.nl)). Please include the reason(s) why you object to the processing. We will then weigh your specific rights and interests against ours. Do your rights and interests outweigh ours? Then we will terminate the processing of your data and we will delete your data.

If we process your personal data because you have given your consent to do so, you have the right to withdraw that consent. To do so, please contact the researcher (Rianne Dekker: [r.dekker1@uu.nl](mailto:r.dekker1@uu.nl)).

You also have the right to file a complaint with the Dutch data protection authority. To do so, go to [www.autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl](http://www.autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl)

**Note:** Based on Art. 44 of the Dutch implementation law of the AVG, the UAVG, the right to inspection, the right to rectification and the right to restriction do not apply to data processing within this research. This is due to an exception that applies to scientific or historical research.

### **How will your personal data be secured?**

Utrecht University has taken several technical and organizational measures to optimally protect your personal data against loss, data theft and unauthorized access. We will report (attempted) abuse.

### **Are personal data used for automated decision-making or profiling?**

No.

### **Data processing manager**

The data processing manager is the organization that determines the purpose and means of processing personal data. For this research project, the data processing manager is:

Universiteit Utrecht  
Heidelberglaan 8  
3584 CS Utrecht

Your contact person is: Dr. Rianne Dekker

### **Data Protection Officer**

Utrecht University has appointed a data protection officer (DPO). This officer can help you exercise your rights under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

You can contact the DPO by sending an e-mail to: [fg@uu.nl](mailto:fg@uu.nl)

### **Remaining questions?**

If you have any remaining questions, please contact the researcher, Rianne Dekker: [r.dekker1@uu.nl](mailto:r.dekker1@uu.nl).