The Annual Review of Interdisciplinary Justice Research Volume 9, 2020

Edited by
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The University of Winnipeg
Centre for Interdisciplinary Justice Studies (CIJS)
ISSN 1925-2420

"Take a Look at Yourself": Digital Displays at Police Museums as Camouflage

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Abstract

Museums are sites where members of the public learn about history and dominant social institutions. One little examined cultural and heritage site in Canada is the police museum. These sites are full of relics from the early 20th century that tend to depict a limited version of public police in Canada by focusing primarily on the establishment of police services. One emerging trend we have discovered in our fieldwork is that some Canadian police museums are moving toward digital displays. According to interviews with those working in these heritage spaces, their digitization initiatives are an effort to draw from best practices in the field of museum design and curation. It is also an attempt to connect with more diverse and younger audiences whom the police are supposed to serve. Drawing from critical media and information studies we liken these new digital displays at police museums in Canada to a kind of camouflage that (1) deters critiques, (2) distracts from major controversies that are unfolding concerning police, as well as (3) boosts the perception of police legitimacy and transparency. In our discussion, we draw attention to critical museum and curation practices that could be used to disrupt the current maintenance and promotion of the policing status quo that occurs within these cultural sites.

Keywords: digitization; media; police; police museums; ideology; screen culture; power

Introduction

Brick and mortar museums are vessels of history, and for that reason may not be thought of as the most fun or interactive sites to visit, especially among younger persons who readily have access to social and digital forms of media that shape how they make sense of, and engage with, the world around them. Many museums have responded to this development by implementing digital displays in cultural sites (Olesen 2016). We define digital displays as museum displays that use computer, electronic or digital technologies — rather than analogue or mechanical devices — to communicate and/or interact with visitors. The implementation of digital displays is meant to refresh the aesthetics of museums spaces (Bedford 2014; Bertacchini and Morando 2013; Thomas and Mintz 1998), appeal to younger visitors (Andre et al. 2017), allow some degree of visitor choice in the selection of content (Lydens et al. 2007), as well as provide more interactive displays and experiences (Chan and Cope 2015). Interactive digital signage allows museums or cultural sites to update content more effectively (Devine and Tarr 2019), while allowing visitors to access content within (Chan and Cope 2015) and beyond the walls of the traditional museum remotely through virtual spaces online (Shook et al. 2018). There is no shortage of tourism literature, both academic and industry, touting the benefits of digital displays (e.g., Andre et al. 2017; Bedford 2014; Murphy 2018). New companies specializing in digital displays at museums (Wright 2017) that are part of a growing industry now serve heritage sites seeking to digitize their displays.

Some penal history museums have tapped into this trend in museum design and curation. From prison to courthouse to police museums, digital displays are becoming more common. Yet, little research has been conducted on the role that these digital innovations in curation play in penal history museums or police museums specifically. Rather than view digital displays in police museums as markers of transparency that allow visitors to gain new insights into the backstage of police work, we conceptualize these innovations as one way museums control knowledge and create categories of intelligibility that shape how museum goers understand the world (Bennett 1995; Macdonald and Silverstone 1992; Hooper-Greenhill

1992). Contrary to the idea that digital displays boost transparency and openness as it relates to phenomena that are the focus of museums (Yoon and Wang 2014), here we examine digital displays as a form of camouflage that distracts or moves attention away from police-involved controversies and violence. We focus on two facets of this camouflage: representation as mere distraction and as channelling into hegemonic subject positions, notably the police officer as a societal guardian against "criminals."

This paper is organized in four parts. First, we review literature on critical media and information studies to conceptualize digital displays at museums. Second, we offer a note on method. Third, we analyze our findings from research at police museums across Canada. Drawing from critical media and information studies (Fuchs 2011) we liken new digital displays at police museums in Canada to a kind of camouflage that (1) deters critiques, (2) distracts from major controversies concerning police, as well as (3) boosts the perception of police legitimacy and transparency. Our inquiry focuses on how these displays digitally interpellate or hail (Althusser 1971) viewers and visitors in ways that legitimize policing as a dominant social institution. Fourth, we explain what our findings and arguments add to literature on cultural sites where the penal system is represented.

We also draw attention to critical museum and curation practices that could be used to disrupt the current maintenance and promotion of the policing status quo that occurs within these cultural sites. In so doing, we invite law enforcement organizations involved in memorialization work to, in the words of the Calgary Police Museum, "[t]ake a look at yourself" as a means of acknowledging and offering alternatives to the violence of policing.

Meaning, Museums, and Police in the Digital Age

Police museums are being established around the globe, often by police services themselves or ex-officers who have joined police or local heritage associations. Existing literature has examined how police museums communicate ideas about social control and force to visitors (e.g., Buffington 2012; Caimari 2012), as well as how these spaces obscure or simplify issues of violence and harm in society by

ignoring them or creating an us-versus-them dichotomy whereby criminalized persons are constructed as deserving of any fate that becomes them, including death at the hands of police (e.g., Jackson 2017; McNair 2011; also see Ferguson, Piché, and Walby 2019). This literature connects to broader literature on public police, memory, and meaning (Linke 2018; Phillips 2016; Palmer 2012; Pemberton 2008; Mulcahy 2000; Taylor 1986), which examines how police try to generate legitimacy, authority, and sympathy for their work among the citizens they serve.

More research is needed on the form and the content of representations at museum sites, and by focusing on digital displays we attend to both form and content in our analysis. Digital displays obviously involve new technology, which may be familiar to a generation raised on computers and smartphones. For Fuchs (2011) technology is not neutral, neither in its form nor in the content it conveys. The technology and ideas accompanying it are ideological insofar as these operate to communicate dominant ideas that promote the existing social order. Information and technology need to be understood in the broader context of critical political economy (Schiller 1988). Digital technologies promoted under the auspices of participation and openness are also ideological insofar as they tout the notion that information is free, accessible, and available (Stadler 2018; Bollmer 2018). The content is also ideological. According to Fuchs (2011), a critique of ideology should "uncover and deconstruct false reality claims, to show how these claims try to legitimize domination and to provide alternative analyses that explain the actual state of society" (p. 327). State agencies advance these false reality claims, sometimes strategically. In a sense, this paper explores the form and the content of digital displays or the ideological confluence we are observing in the form and content of police museum displays. We understand ideology as the pervasive set of ideas that reproduce structures of dominance (Hall 1985) including the "criminal justice" system. With our research we examine the ideas and material contexts that reproduce the idea that penal system agencies are necessary and socially valuable in contemporary society (Walby and Piché 2015a, 2015b).

For Reeves and Packer (2013), police have a history of using innovative media to boost their legitimacy with the public. From mug shots to Crime Stoppers, public police rely on media to circulate their messages, but also enlist citizens to their cause of social control. Digital media may allow police to reach even further, especially into younger minds, to shape messaging about police and social control circulating in given contexts more effectively. Reeves and Packer (2013) explain that an important ideal of police agencies is the digital ideal, which refers to "the rapid and flawless storage, translation, and dissemination of evidence and other data" (p. 361). Along with adopting forms of innovative media, the police are also increasingly looking for ways to monitor and control the digital and the virtual realm of communication and information sharing.

Electronic and digital forms of communication have erroneously been characterized as promoting openness and transparency (Barbrook and Cameron 1996). Digital media have the capacity to send messages and bring people together instantaneously (Pertierra 2018; Bennett and Segerberg 2012). Virtual or digital worlds are not only an escape from material reality, but are a way of creating new realities and meanings (Bollmer 2018; Kücklich 2009). State entities and actors, including policing organizations and police leaders, are interested in digital technologies not only because of efficiency, but because of the ability to communicate more rapidly and reach broader audiences (Schneider 2016; Reeves and Packer 2013). Digital displays also increase the perception of science-based communication (Isaac 2008) or the idea that the information contained in the display is scientific and factual.

Ritchie (2015) argues that forms of digital displays are designed to make us feel something for the state. Ritchie uses the notion of an affective economy to refer to the emotions generated by digital displays and state communications. Similar to printed displays (see, for example, Piché and Larsen 2009), the most blatant form of communication in this regard may be anti-terrorism communications that are meant to make citizens feel afraid, but also protected by state security agencies by alluding to the omnipresent threats to national security and efforts by authorities to neutralize them with the involvement of a responsible citizenry on the look-out for threatening

non-white others (Corbin 2017). In these ways, trust in and strong feelings for state agencies are fostered and sustained in museums.

State agencies are undergoing a process of datafication, which is the transfer of social action into online and digital forms (van Dijck 2014). Datafication can increase trust and legitimacy for a state agency. If data is mishandled or used in malicious ways, trust and legitimacy can decrease. The transfer of social action into digital forms could be seen as a strategy to increase trust and legitimacy for public police. Tolbert and Mossberger (2006) have found that e-government can boost trust and confidence in government if these mechanisms are viewed as respectable. While digital initiatives could boost citizen views of the state, this is contingent on the use of information being viewed as ethical.

In the process of revealing certain aspects of a given phenomenon, datafication and digitization can also conceal others. Such information is not without framing that limits access (Shapiro 2018). Digitized forms can appear open, yet be full of abstractions or ideological messages. The digital display can be a form of camouflage that creates obfuscation or misdirection that hails an individual as a subject of law, while appearing entertaining and arousing. State communication espouses a dominant ideology which people are interpellated to conform to (Althusser 1971). In this model, ideology operates through hailing (also see Montag 1995; Purvis and Hunt 1993). Ideology hails or calls out to people in the way that the police officer might shout to a citizen, "Stop! Police!" The process is spontaneous. When we stop and turn to face the officer we are constituted as a subject of law and liberal democracy. We internalize this belief so that the response becomes automatic. Such communication constitutes people as subjects and makes certain forms of consciousness possible, while rendering other ways of conceptualizing the past, present, and future as unthinkable or off limits. Museum curators may be more or less aware that they are engaging in this ideological hailing and creation of camouflage for police.

Bousquet (2018) reviews the relationship between the digital and camouflage. The thing about camouflage is that it is an attempt to

evade a particular kind of seeing. We argue police museum communications in digital form are a way of evading scrutiny from those who trust digital communications and do not have the attention span to look beyond or behind them. Stobiecka (2018) likewise argues digital displays in museums generate a form of escapism. Digital displays in museums are meant to create a sense of openness. However, new digital forms that may appear cutting-edge can actually vacate important content. The digital form appears more legitimate and believable, but the content can be more easily manipulated. Escapism emerges when some content is vacated because it is not cool or compelling. This can create a "quasi-sci-fi re-creation of past reality" (Stobiecka 2018: 12). The digital is an escape from the past. It is also a form of escape from the present when the displays obscure or ignore current contentious issues in policing.

Research Methods

As part of a larger project on police, courthouse, and prison museums in Canada (Piché and Walby 2016), which draws from sociology, visual studies, cultural studies, as well as criminology and "criminal justice" studies, we conducted observations at 23 police museums across Canada. Most of the museums in our sample are situated in police stations and/or funded by police forces or police associations. During fieldwork, research team members took detailed field notes on the displays and placards. Photographs of displays and placards were taken for use as visual data and for later reference. All textual and visual data have been analyzed using open coding to locate prominent themes. We include visual data here since these pictures provide a texture to our account that serves to enhance the credibility of our claims about such representations (Banks 2018). Data on digital displays were located in the larger dataset and analyzed thematically to locate subthemes. Interviews were conducted with curators and museum staff where possible. A guide informed these interviews, but participants were able to take the discussion in directions that they considered relevant. Interviews were transcribed. Most curators were associated with police organizations (e.g., ex-officers). With few exceptions, those who were trained in curation had a history of working in "criminal justice" or military museums, and were in this sense partial to social control agencies.

We focus on two facets of digital displays as camouflage: representation as mere distraction and as channelling into hegemonic subject positions (i.e., the police officer versus the "criminal"). Below, we focus on four museums from our datset that feature the most prominent digital displays. Not all police museums in Canada feature digital displays. This could be because of cost, since some types of technology must be purchased and consultants must be hired to program and install such digital displays on the museum floor. The absence of digital displays in some police museums warrants further investigation.

Digital Displays: Sanitizing and Simplifying

A hallmark underpinning the use of digital technologies is that they provide users with more control over what content they produce and consume (Lydens et al. 2007). This is an illusion because within each platform there are limits placed on what can and cannot be produced and consumed (Stobiecka 2018). This is true of police museums, where all possibilities offered through digital displays are mapped-out by those curating them, often with the institutional objectives of policing organizations in mind. Thus, while a police museum visitor may feel in control as they interact with digital content, they are making choices within venues where "all roads lead to Rome." In this case, Rome is the locale where all narratives encountered legitimize public police as a state enterprise that are said to exist to protect and serve the citizenry (Mawby 2002), rather than an entity that contributes towards the material and symbolic reproduction of capitalist relations (Hall et al. 1978).

One of the first displays at the Calgary Police Museum is called the Discovery Wall, which is digital, but also interactive (see *Image 1*). The material is a shorter version of content found elsewhere in the museum, but its interactive touch screens give visitors the impression they are making choices about what they are consuming. The parameters of the choices being made are already predetermined, so the choice is hollow at best.

Image 1

There is no possibility of creating your own frame as a visitor or adding your own story. There is no possibility of exploring ideas related to resisting police. One can only navigate sanitized histories of policing manufactured by police themselves.

There is another display on video surveillance, with the title "You're on Camera" (see *Image 2*). A video feed of the individual shows oneself looking at and being part of the display. The placard beside the screen instructs the visitor on police use of video surveillance. The display normalizes police surveillance and also suggests it has a playful, innocuous dimension. There is no information offered about the extent of the use of video surveillance by police in Canada (see Hier 2016). There is no mention of public street video surveillance in Calgary or assessment of body-worn cameras (St. Louis, Saulnier, and Walby 2019). There is no description of key cases or rulings regarding police video surveillance and egregious privacy violations (e.g., Lett, Hier, and Walby 2012). These missing significations end up simplifying and sanitizing the issue of police video surveillance.

Image 2

Some digital displays operate as mere distraction to the extent they focus on entertainment or offer content that portray aspects of police work in misleading ways. Sonet (2017) theorizes the types and functions of smartphone screens, and this analysis can be extended to museum digital displays. The show screen offers a bit more of an entertaining or alluring image. Doing so is a strategic tactic that museums use to boost levels of satisfaction among visitors (Vom Lehn and Heath 2005). Some of the screens and displays are not unlike those found in casinos. The colourful lights draw the viewer in. The point is to be flashy and command attention. Digital displays move police museums into the attention economy that includes social and digital media. However, for Sonet (2017) the advisory screen is a warning, a caution, and a number of other digital displays appear to be more oriented toward the advisory screen. There are a number of digital displays that position the visitor as someone who police might be interested in. The visitor is invited to think about the negative qualities of persons who are criminalized, reducing them to sheer "criminality."

For example, the display "Taking Meth? Take a Look at Yourself" at the Calgary Police Museum distorts the face of the viewer, and is meant to generate disgust and embarrassment (see *Image 3*). The display makes the use of prohibited drugs generally and meth use in particular to appear to be an individual problem, rather than a

phenomenon arising from social circumstances (Linnemann and Wall 2013). It also fails to mention the socio-economic context in which certain psychoactive substances are regulated by "criminal justice" entities that make drug production, sales, and consumption more dangerous (Carstairs 2006).

Image 3

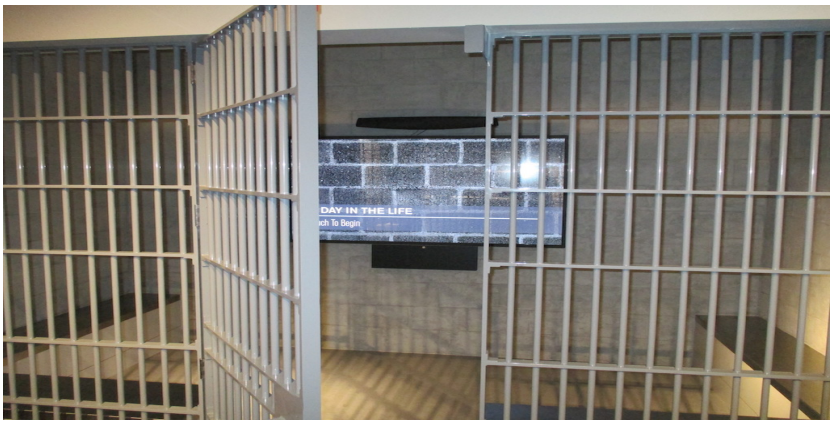
Other displays also obscure the realities of drug use and regulation in ways that vilify the subjects of policing. The display "Is There a Grow Op Next Door?" is meant to generate suspicion and castigation (see *Image 4*). It is out of touch with the movement toward decriminalization and home-growing of cannabis (Bear 2017). The display also encourages suspicion, instead of community. Again, given the lack of context and sociological content, these issues are simplified and sanitized.

The display "Day in the Life of an Imprisoned Person" at the Calgary Police Museum is meant to generate shame for criminalization (see *Image 5*). It follows the criminalized person through a number of scenes that show their life in disarray. It lacks context and humanization, capturing and representing a person on their worst or lowest day and reducing criminalization to a single event. Again, the display renders criminalization as an individual, rather than a social, problem. This digital display is a form of "police media" (Reeves and

Packer 2013: 376) that provides an insight into how reality looks through the police lens.

Image 4

Image 5



All of these digital displays have a "crime" prevention lens that the visitor is invited to adopt, advising against ending up like the proposed subjects who are the characters in these scenes. In so doing, they are not dissimilar to scared-straight programs targeted at kids in a stated effort to deter them from breaking the law (Maahs and Pratt 2017; Petrosino et al. 2000). The displays fail to address the systemic

and structural elements of criminalization, and instead adopt the standpoint of police advising individual viewers to be law-abiding citizens.

Adopting the Police Role

There are also digital displays that position the visitor as a police officer. One example is the police car simulator for kids at the RCMP Museum in Regina. Resembling a video game, kids are invited to position themselves as police officers chasing "bad guys" and enforcing laws (see *Image 6*). This naturalizes criminal law and criminalization, along with the notion that there are "bad guys" to track down and detain.

Image 6

By making the digital display appealing to kids, the RCMP Museum is able to generate an opportunity to try to shape their worldview with messages that encourage children to conform and consider what it would be like to become a police officer in the future.

At the same museum there is an adult size police car simulator (see *Image 7*). Adults get into the car and ride through a number of scenarios. Here there is more focus on the "blue light" or, in other words, the speed and the thrill of policing. These displays are meant to appeal to those who play video games and understand reality through such gaming experiences. This display reinforces stereotypes, this time about policing and the sense of excitement that

it purportedly creates for officers. There is no display on the mundane aspects of policing (Huey and Broll 2015), post-traumatic stress disorder associated with traumatic events when they happen (Henry 2004), the high rates of alcoholism (Violanti et al. 2011), or other negative aspects of the job. There is no display on rates of harassment within the RCMP (McPhail 2017) either.

Image 7

In Calgary, there are digital displays pertaining to the police force's helicopter. The visitor can position themselves as an officer monitoring urban space with military precision (see *Image 8*). In this sense, the museum goer can adopt the police role and vantage point. There is no mention of public controversies regarding police helicopters in Canada, which are viewed as part of a trend toward militarization (see, for example, Roziere and Walby 2018). This is a form of digital escapism (Stobiecka 2018) insofar as the material form of policing and the injustices it can create are eschewed by a digital display that positions the viewer as a police action hero.

There is also a display entitled "Day in the Life of a Police Officer" that invites the viewer to adopt the viewpoint of the officers (see *Image 9*), in this case two white officers carding a racialized person. Adopting the police role, in other words, entails adopting the whiteness of the portrayed officers. The police role is subtly depicted as one of white, settler vigilance. The officers are depicted as having important work, managing neighbourhood rubbish who pose a threat

to social order. The officers are depicted as authoritative and trustworthy. The police appear to be honourable, if not heroic, figures in these representations. These displays attempt to align the viewer with law enforcement and naturalize the standpoint of the police in our daily lives. Neither the role of public police in creating further marginalization in the inner city, nor the use of technology by police to reinforce discriminatory and racialized stereotypes (Sanders & Hannem 2012), is raised for discussion.

Image 8

The Vancouver Police Museum bills itself as the "oldest police museum in North America," but is full of numerous interactive and digital displays inside. One example is a permanent exhibit titled, "Bridging the Gap: Vancouver's Youth and the Law", that educates visitors about the history of youth "crime" trends, legislation, and policing in Vancouver (see Blisett 2016). In addition to text and graffiti artwork, the exhibit features two tablet computers where visitors can play a game called "Caught in the Act" that was produced by a company called A.C.R.O.N.Y.M. Digital, which specializes in children's entertainment. Players are encouraged to commit "crimes" in 1950, 1970, 1990, or 2010, such as causing trouble at a concert or beating up a senior citizen. In the end, they are always caught by police and the consequences are dependent on the judicial sentences of each era. Aimed at youth, the display drills into players the myth that police always "get their man" (Surette 2007).

Image 9

Downplaying Harms of Policing

Another prominent theme in Canadian police museums that feature digital displays is the downplaying of the harms of policing. For example, an exhibit room at the Calgary Police Museum funded by Shaw – a cable and internet provider in Western Canada – features iPads that can be used to instruct dozens of visitors on cyber crime and online safety. Once again, this display is curated from a police point of view. Questions about overbroad use of police powers and breaches of online privacy by police that are often raised by privacy commissioners (e.g., Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada 2010) and scholars (e.g., Huey and Rosenberg 2004) are nowhere to be found. The issue of privacy legislation and section 8 protections against unreasonable search and seizure in the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* are not raised either. Nor does the display comment on the cooperation of private corporations, such as communications companies, with police to facilitate communications surveillance (Lyon 2014). The move toward a surveillance society (Ball et al. 2012) and the role of police in this (Taylor 2016) is not a topic of discussion. The harms and pains of policing are not referenced in the displays communicated to museum goers. Instead, the corporate-state symbiosis between communications companies and police is naturalized.

In these examples, the visitor is asked to adopt a hegemonic subject position that is pre-determined. There is no choice to add to or reject these subject positions other than to not engage with the displays. This is why we have referred to these as hegemonic subject positions, since they are pre-given and transcend age. The audience is recruited not only to be entertained or to gain information, but to be hailed ideologically and spontaneously conform to the subject position proffered by the museum screens and police messaging.

Digital displays in police museums usher this hailing into the 21st century. Digital displays at police museums may be conceived of as forms of mediatisation, whereby institutions are "implicated in activities which constitute and perform the very phenomena they purport to depict" (Taylor 2017: 54). Mediatisation in police museums not only conveys information about police as purveyors of security, but are performative because they position police and their communications as an authority. It is performative not only for the police communication, but also for the viewers who become ideologically hailed by the display.

The Saskatoon Police Museum is located in the front foyer of the Saskatoon Police Headquarters. There is a digital kiosk that is located in the foyer that communicates current and historical information about Saskatoon Police Service in the 12 most commonly spoken languages across Saskatoon. The Saskatoon Police Service has had this current and historical information translated into these languages at great expense. The goal was to communicate with newcomer Canadians especially and provide information to all Saskatoon citizens. Similar to the Discovery Wall at the Calgary Police Museum, the kiosk is interactive. Users can feel like they are in charge and learning something unique about police. However, the content is scripted and incomplete. The treatment of immigrant and migrant persons by police, such as the collaboration of public police with Canada Border Services Agency intelligence officers, is not mentioned (McSorley 2019). The messages are limited to boilerplate material also posted on the police website. Moreover, the digital kiosk is only available intermittently as it is plagued by software problems and poor interoperability.

A digital display at the Vancouver Police Museum is also the platform for a recent exhibit about women in policing (see Joshua et al. forthcoming). Visitors are encouraged to scroll through a computer and read stories related to female police officers. The stories are all pro-police and involve topics such as drug use and police heroism. One story is called "Kung Fu Kitty" and was written by a female officer. In a humorous tone, it tells of the time she and her police dog, PD Hondo, encountered a cat during a call; the cat boldly launched itself at the much larger dog as it entered the feline's territory. Police dogs, she writes, "are motivated, driven, and very intense. They love to work, to do as their handlers bid them, and in the case of my dog, chase small furry creatures." Attacked by the cat, the trained dog went "completely crazy" and was admonished by the officer for "being so foolish" in its instinctive response. The situation causes the officer some laughs and embarrassment. A photo is displayed of the officer posing with the dog, both of whom are gazing off into the distance in front of a lake and dense forest background. The digitization of content, from the first two VPD policewomen in 1912 to the present where they now constitute "26% of sworn officers" in the force (Miceli 2018), doubly conveys the organization's continued march forward and, in so doing, challenges criticism directed toward policing as being stuck in the past (Frois and Machado 2016).

Discussion and Conclusion

Public police organizations are increasingly searching for ways to protect and enhance their image due to constant criticism from across the political spectrum (Schneider 2016). Museums and the digital displays within them are one means of providing this reputational boost. Yet the histories presented at these sites are what Landsberg (2018) calls prosthetic memories. These memories are selectively chosen bits and parts. There is something missing from these memories, notably the harms of policing and the pains of criminalization. The memories have also been commodified, rendered entertaining, and are decidedly pro-police. Many of the digital displays are targeted toward young people to either recruit them into policing or at least recruit them into law-abiding liberal citizenship. Digital displays make it appear that police history in the museum is

up-to-date and trustworthy. Drawing from critical media and information studies (Fuchs 2011) we have argued that these digital displays at police museums are a kind of camouflage designed to (1) deter critiques, (2) distract from major controversies that are unfolding concerning police, as well as (3) boost the perception of police legitimacy and transparency.

In terms of an empirical contribution, we have examined digital displays at police museums in Western Canada to demonstrate how these communications are utilizing new technology to convey old myths about policing and certain stereotypes about those who police come into contact with. In terms of a conceptual contribution, we have likened the implementation of digital displays at police museums as akin to the ideology accompanying social and digital media, one that is often a distraction serving the function of camouflage for powerful institutions with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo of social control. This camouflage takes two different forms. First, it takes the form of representation as mere distraction. Second, it takes the form of interpellative and hegemonic subject positions (officer or "criminal") that the visitor is asked to accept and adopt. Rejection of the subject position is not an option, which reveals the true nature of the digital display. It is a false choice or a non-choice. The digital display provides the illusion or sensation that one gets to make their own choice about what is relevant or significant. Our analysis of interpellative communications at police museums helps to reveal how policing myths are conveyed and how police legitimacy is reinforced. Thinking of police cultural work and communications as camouflage helps to advance critical policing studies and critical communication studies by denaturalizing these representations and destabilizing the meanings contained therein.

Müller (2002: 21) argues digital displays and keeping up with trends in digital culture is one way for museums to maintain their cultural authority. Our point is that these displays and the process of hailing at police museums functions to maintain the position of police as a dominant authority despite profound shifts in our culture. The police museum is a material and aesthetic context where police entities can construct messages that entrench the institution of police, which is traditionally conservative (Reiner 2010), and soften its image that

citizens may have in mind. This requires cultural work — it requires a foray by police into the domain of representation. It is necessary for them to do so to advance their own worldview as a truth, to enrol citizens to agree and obey. Given the capacity of police to shape meanings of law and "justice," the digitization of "criminal justice" messaging is a crucial trend to track and interrogate if one wants to understand how the authority of penal system agencies is communicated.

Digital displays in police museums communicate pre-given subject positions, but they are not pre-destined to do so. It is imperative to consider critical museum practices that could be used to disrupt the promotion of the police status quo happening in these cultural sites. Fuchs (2011) notes it is necessary to use social media to disrupt dominant ideologies. As he explains, "communication technologies tend to advance instrumental, heteronomous, one-dimensional claims about reality … [but] they also support critical modes of thinking and action" (p. 327). Harcourt (2015) uses the term "digital resistance" to refer to the use of social media to counter forms of surveillance, but also communications of powerful social institutions. It is necessary to contest and disrupt these messages, or at least subject them to public debate and scrutiny. This could take the form of critical curation practices to make them less entertainment and more education oriented. Should Canadian policing organizations involved in memorialization work through museums not engage in such work by "taking a look" at themselves, as well as inviting in academics and activists critical of policing to curate alternative representations, the latter need to advocate for and take up this space. Given that ideology is comprised of ideas that can enable more authoritarian modes of governance to become possible (Hunt 1985: 31), these museums should not be abandoned to "criminal justice" knowledge workers and threat entrepreneurs.

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