

**THE EDGELANDS INSTITUTE**

# 2022 REPORT

A pop-up institute to reimagine urban  
social contracts for the digital age

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## THE EDGELANDS INSTITUTE 2022 REPORT

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At the Edgelands Institute we study how digitalization of security is changing urban social contracts. We focus on cities as they are at the epicenter of transformation: both the testbed for digital tools and at the forefront of progress. Cities urgently need new social contracts for the digital age, policies that are co-designed by all local actors. We facilitate and catalyze the creation of these spaces to foster policies and new practices by creating pop-ups (temporary, high-energy events) that allow engagement among diverse stakeholders. Our unique methodology is gaining ever more traction in the different cities that we are exploring. This in turn creates the connective structure for self-sustaining movements within each city that can continue long after our Institute has dissolved.

*In 2022 we undertook a series of explorations and curated discussions, art residencies, hosted stakeholder engagement events, fostered student-led research and strived to become allies to policy makers and community organizations.*

### **Our main milestones are listed below:**

- We continued building over the work done in Medellín and the milestones achieved there. We focused on how to continue the snowball effect we started a year ago in 2021: how to keep the conversation on surveillance and security policy going with different stakeholders, how to support research and design policy, how to showcase the power relations in the city through art

and photography and how to empower citizen groups in creating awareness of the changing social contract in the city. As our temporary residence comes to an end in this first Edgelands City we take many learnings onto the next cities where we popped up in 2022.

- The city of Geneva saw the Edgelands Institute pop-up with all the energy and conversation-starting force that already is one of our characterizing traits. Following our usual city playbook, we started activities in Geneva researching the state of security and surveillance to produce a city diagnostic report. Collaborations with local universities on applied research projects, audio walks, participatory surveys, and a research sprint capped our work in Geneva, with more to come in 2023.

- Our work in Cúcuta started in full swing in the first semester of 2022. In order to set up residence in that city and steadily build a presence and a network, we started the year with our Diagnostic Report. We found that the international border plays a crucial role in city life and security issues are still a priority for local authorities. However, surveillance and digital issues are only starting to enter the public conversation among researchers and city leaders. A MATZA-Edgelands Art residency, a binational academic forum and a series of community workshops were the highlights of our work in Cúcuta in 2022. For 2023, our plans to support student-led research and contribute to policy design will continue in the first semester.

- We have started research and engaging stakeholders in a fourth Edgelands City: Nairobi. In the last trimester of 2022 we landed in the city to kickstart our project, start building our team and establish our temporary residency in the Kenyan capital. The project will continue into 2023 with a full calendar of activities planned, including a diagnostic report and MATZA Edgelands Residency.

- Our Institute continued its explorations and further built its networks in 2022, with a focus on strengthening our in-house research. We launched a research project titled Local AI Ordinances: a Playbook for Governing Surveillance in Cities, which explores and proposes policy roadmaps on AI and surveillance regulation in cities. This project is being carried out in collaboration with the Urban AI think tank and research will focus on cities in the United States, Europe and South America. Moreover, we took part in the Applied Research program of the Graduate Institute of Geneva, resulting in a research report titled "City power in a time of urban digitalized security". Finally, we produced the report Predictive Policing: How predictive policing is transforming our urban social contracts. An overview of police surveillance and algorithmic tactics.

- In 2022 our fellowship program welcomed the first cohort of international fellows to strengthen our Institute

through continued outreach, engagement and mutual feedback. Our communications team also welcomed new members to support our outreach and engagement actions. An Edgelands Art Book is on the works in which our research, workshops and activities will have a creative showcase and a more permanent repository.

This report is divided in 3 sections: [a brief introduction of the Institute and our working premises and philosophy](#), [a report of activities conducted in Medellín, Geneva, Cúcuta and Nairobi, other research initiatives, projects and partnerships](#), [an overview of plans for 2023](#), and [our presence in media](#).

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# EDGE LANDS institute



# INTRODUCTION

We are currently in an era of mass migrations, global connectivity and rapid digital transformation. Faced with grand challenges like climate change, pandemics and wars, trust in institutions and veracity of information are dwindling, brewing further crises. In response to these challenges, governments employ a set of technologies -including digital- for security. But these tools shift the balance of power, reshape the relationship between governments and governed and redraw the border between the public and private leading to the disruption of social contracts. It is in cities more than any other place where the rules that govern how citizens and governments coexist are more rapidly changing. As authorities increase their use of surveillance technologies with little oversight and no consultation with the public, so does the risk of over-policing, discrimination and harm.

The year 2022 was pivotal for the Edgelands Institute. We went from being active in only one city, to being active in 3 and preparing for a fourth one, consolidating our presence and standing in these cities. We continued to establish and support local and international networks of partners.

We also enhanced our substantive research work with the objective of bringing our in-city findings to the broader research and policy community, but also to be in a better position to collaborate with and support our local stakeholders. We did so both in-house and working with our partners from the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University, The Graduate Institute, Urban AI, and a fantastic group of fellows! This report summarizes the Edgelands Institute's activities and milestones of 2022 and presents an overview of the activities planned for 2023. It starts with an intro to our worldview, work and objectives, and then goes to present some key findings resulting from our research and projects in each city.

# ABOUT US

The Edgelands Institute is a multi-disciplinary organization that uses academic research, data, and art to explore how the digitalization of urban security is changing the urban social contract — the often-unseen rules that govern our cities. We create pop-up spaces that bring citizens, policy-makers, academics, and other stakeholders into dialogue about the way that digital tools are being used by city governments and transforming urban social fabric.

The Institute is also a global movement. We set up temporary residence in select cities across the globe that have made innovative strides in their use of digital technologies, particularly in application to security, and we create connections and networks to put the cities in dialogue of their stories and experiences.

Our pop-up model breaks barriers of exclusivity often found in policymaking, where important decisions about security and surveillance are left to the “experts” and not open to all. We employ a variety of creative events that bring together different stakeholders, curating and facilitating open conversations to co-design solutions for security in their cities. Our method and activities produce a snowball effect which extends our work through our networks and partnerships, enabling local organizations ownership of the movement, making it scalable and replicable.

At the Edgelands Institute, we view our role as that of a facilitator: working within spaces that just need the tools or nudges to connect and co-design. We create the connective structure for self-sustaining movements within each city

that can continue long after our Institute has dissolved.

In 2022 we continued our work in Medellín and we set up temporary residences in Cúcuta and Geneva, and started preparing for Nairobi. Following our work cycle, the Edgelands pop-up in each city follows this structure:

**Research:** We conduct research including stakeholder interviews on each city's security landscape. We repeat and refine this process during our academic workshops, where we work with young adults on questions related to digitalization, surveillance, and governance.

**Public Art:** Interventions in physical spaces are just as important as those within the world of ideas. This is particularly true within cities, where sharing of spaces is intrinsic to the environment. We direct creative activities that help citizens re-imagine urban co-existence.

**Participatory Workshops:** The question of surveillance technology and digital governance policies requires the engagement of multiple stakeholders: the public, the government, and the private sector. We create opportunities for representatives from these groups to work together.

While events in each city are locally focused, in 2022 we continued to facilitate and strengthen strategic exchanges between the networks of partners and governments of each city we work in.

# EDGELANDS CITIES

## MEDELLÍN

Research, workshops and art engagements continued in full force in 2022 in our first Edgelands city: Medellín, Colombia. It was a remarkable year of completed milestones. Having popped-up and set up residence there the year before, 2022 was the year where most of our activities in the city took place, and the network of partners consolidated and grew. This allowed us to forge working relations with universities, the mayor's office and cultural/art institutions. We wrapped up work in Medellín in May 2022 and are now planning for our comeback in the city in 2023. You can read our final report and learnings on Medellín [here](#).

Our favorite insight from our work in Medellín has been the emphasis on coexistence - or "convivencia", in Spanish. In Medellín, the city's department of security is called Secretary of Security and Coexistence, and the term emphasizes that coexistence is crucial and central to security. The key question is thus, how do we facilitate coexistence, and what is the role of digital technologies in doing so?

### **Here are other key insights that we found throughout the year:**

- In Medellín, young people are more likely to be involved in dynamics of insecurity - both as perpetrators and as victims.
- Data can be a powerful tool to understand complex problems and enhance decision-making.

- In our work with the city government we found that many non-predictive surveillance tools - like security cameras or urban models to map crime - can work in the short term to reduce crime. We actually didn't find any live- facial recognition or predictive analytics software being deployed by the city government. It is important to highlight, however, that they are less effective (or not at all) to address structural harms. They are also biased in favor of crimes that are easy to observe and report, as opposed to other crimes like extortion.

- Social media seems to have an important impact on security perception and governance. They affect citizen's perceptions of security, are an important source of information for authorities, and they are also an infrastructure used by illegal actors - like combos - to pursue their own surveillance and control activities. Another potential downside is that they may create incentives for politicians to show "immediate action," and less long-term strategies and their real impact.

- To facilitate coexistence, digital tools must allow new and old ways of living together - to recognize diversity, harmonize based on singularities, and facilitate their appropriation by citizens.

These are the activities completed in Medellín in 2022 based on that work:

### **MATZA Edgelands Art residency (January-February 2022)**

Can art uncover solutions to urban insecurity? We partnered with MATZA Production to develop “Common Grounds”, an art residency of co-living and co-creation. During 3 weeks, artists representing Colombia, Geneva, and Kenya lived together and created 11 individual artworks on the theme of security, digital surveillance, technology, and urbanization. Visit our gallery [here](#).

### **Documenting the invisible with Peter Van Agtmael of Magnum Photos and Juan Fernando Ospina of Universo Centro, and workshop at MAMM (Museum of Modern Art Medellín)**

In April of 2022, in collaboration with Magnum Photography, international photographer Peter Van Agtmael spent 10 days in Medellín documenting surveillance in the city, guided by photographer Juan Fernando Ospina. Also, in collaboration with Magnum Learn, a 2-day workshop on visual narrative and documentary photography was held with the participation of 10 national photographers. Read more about the Magnum Edgelands showcase [here](#).

### **Edgelands Maps: Mapping security and surveillance spaces with Editores de Ciudad de Casa de las Estrategias (March-April 2022)**

During a two day workshop, we brought together 25 young people between 16 and 22 years old from different neighborhoods to discuss their perspectives on security and surveillance in urban and digital spaces in concrete scenarios. In this space we grounded conversations that we had had in more academic spaces in the day-to-day life of young people in the city. The workshop's methodology can be replicated in any city and is available for the public [here](#).

### **Social Lab: We're Recording You with Fundación Mi Sangre (March-April 2022)**

In the social laboratory we brought together 30 participants, including public servants from the municipal and departmental level, businessmen, representatives of the metro, members of youth movements and actors from the cultural sector. During these weeks, participants had a multisectoral social dialogue around the digitalization of security and how this phenomenon is transforming security and coexistence in Medellín. With this, we were able to contribute to citizen reflection and influence the public agenda. The social lab produced a series of policy recommendations and calls to action that can be consulted [here](#).





### Data Analysis Workshops Marathon: Decoding Medellín with EAFIT University (April-May 2022)

We organized and co-hosted this data analysis/research programme with EAFIT University. Over a period of nine weeks, we held a series of data workshops for students and early career researchers interested and experienced in data analysis and visualization. The objective of the program was to strengthen participants' skills in analyzing open data collected by the city on its people, and use it to address some of the city's security issues. The program served as an educational space for participants to develop skills on data analysis and policy making. Participants produced project proposals for solutions to real challenges faced by the city of Medellín. A link to read more about the data analysis program and projects can be found [here](#).

The Institute concluded this stage of activities in the city with a conversation among key actors and friends. During

this space we shared lessons from our research and activities. We took stock of the status and future of security and surveillance in the city, and ranked the action items decision makers should prioritize in terms of security, surveillance and technology policy in Medellín.

## GENEVA

Preparations for our work in Geneva started in 2021 with a comprehensive review of policies and reports related to security practices in the city. A study of the literature on social issues and security policy led us to identify the main challenges and opportunities in the city related to security and digitization. Once we built a better picture of the city, Edgelands landed fully in Geneva with a full schedule of planned activities. Close work with local partners and communities helped consolidate our presence in 2022 to deliver the following set of activities, projects and key findings.

### Key findings so far:

- There is a lack of awareness from the general public of the ongoing digitalization of society, and the impacts these might have on their lives. This is problematic because without awareness there can be no meaningful conversations around these topics.
- It is important to avoid framing this conversation on dichotomies (i.e., surveillance is either good or bad). On the contrary, it is key for it to be around informed debates that understand that in certain cases surveillance is necessary and useful to provide security.
- Nobody (not even the City of Geneva authorities) knows exactly how many surveillance cameras there are

in Geneva in total. A lack of knowledge that is symbolic of the difficulty to gather useful facts to start a meaningful conversation on the challenges of digitalization of security.

- 75 % of the people feel digitally insecure. An aggregation of worries that cover a lot of ground both in our dealing with private companies but also public administrations.

- A vast majority of the people worry about misuse of data by private and public organizations

- The use of private or public algorithms, seen as a “black box” to process more and more of our security (at work, health, etc.), creates a lot of mistrust.

- Transparency is essential to restore trust.

- Digital divides and the fear of being left behind by the rapid change are real.

- The addiction to digital technologies is a worrying phenomenon to many.

### Diagnostic Report (June 2022)

Between February and April 2022, the Edgelands Team conducted over 40 interviews and hosted 3 round tables, where we asked different people in Geneva —from members of government, academia, civil society, and regular citizens— “How is the digitization of security transforming the social contract of the city?” The report *GENEVA: A CITY OF PARADOXES AND DUALITIES* is the result of those interviews and round tables. This report has the intention to serve as a diagnostic report of the several trends in urban and digital security within Geneva and the corresponding potential risks associated with security measures, particularly digital surveillance technologies, and it is also meant to be a conversation starter.

The 3 main findings of this report were i) the issue of security and safety is reserved to exclusive expert circles; ii) the digitalization of society is happening rapidly and the public discussion about it is lacking; and iii) private companies play a prominent role in the digitalization of urban life. Read the full report [here](#).

### Edgelands Geneva Launch event (June 22, 2022)

We officially launched the Edgelands conversation in Geneva on June 22 at Maison Rousseau, where we hosted 3 conversations. The day began with a small breakfast with young politicians and members of the public administration of Geneva, it continued with a participatory discussion with young people, and finished with an inter-city conversation with Professor Frédéric Bernard (University of Geneva), Beatriz Botero Arcila (Co-Founder Edgelands Institute), and Juanita Gómez (Fundación Mi Sangre, Colombia). Using the findings of the diagnostic report as a starting point, these conversations sparked reflections around the premise: “in the era of the surveillance society, - where solutions are often imagined at the supra-regional level - what can be done at the Geneva level?”



### AudioWalk “Are you Afraid of the Internet?”, in partnership with Dezentrum

During 2022 we collaborated with the Zurich based think-do-tank “Dezentrum” to design an audio-walk on the findings of the Diagnostic Report, to “walk the talk” and make the findings of the report more tangible. The narration, which lasts little over 60 minutes, takes the listener on a guided tour through five locations in the center of Geneva. Each of these locations has a dedicated episode, where the narrator addresses different aspects of digital (in)security.

An english version of the AudioWalk was launched with Dezentrum in two 45-minute guided tours during the [AIA FESTIVAL](#). The Audio Walk now is available in French and in English and can be found [here](#).

### Participatory Survey in partnership with OPPi (June 22 to November 15 of 2022)

Social media and information flows enable echo chambers and give the sense that opinions are too different and compromise is impossible. With this in mind we launched a participatory survey looking to find out “What Are the Dangers That Threaten Your Safety in Geneva?”. We developed this project in partnership with OPPi, the Singapore based technology and data tool used to find common ground in a population and break polarization. With this survey we wanted to take the pulse and temperature of Geneva inhabitants and find out what people prioritize the most with relation to security and surveillance. The survey of 23 questions from a sample of 414 respondents showed us that people are concerned about “digital insecurity” in Geneva and there is a demand for better protection from the public authorities, among other findings. Find more about this project [here](#).

### Research Sprint (October 13 to December 12, 2022)

Our signature, student-led research sprint “We are recording you” took place from October 13 to December 12. During the 8 weeks of the program, participants engaged in weekly conversations with national and international experts to get a deep dive on the emerging issues, risks and benefits of the digitalization of security.

A second track of independent group research led participants to explore further the main issues and solutions related to technology and surveillance in Geneva. Under the guidance of a mentor, each team produced a research question and produced a podcast episode about the research process, topics and ways forward. Podcast episodes can be found [here](#) and sessions with experts can be found [here](#). Additionally, during the closing event at Maison Rousseau on December 16, both groups shared their projects and findings with the public.



## CÚCUTA

At the start of 2022 we launched our work in Cúcuta, a medium-sized Colombian city on the border with Venezuela. Our research-based work with young people, decision makers, activist groups and artists projects has translated into valuable stakeholder engagement and influence over policy making. Most importantly, through our project milestones and action items we have kick-started conversations among different stakeholders and placed our prioritized thematic areas high on the agenda of city leaders and policy makers. Some challenges in implementing our project in Cúcuta translated into learning opportunities for future engagement with local organizations and trust building when consolidating partnerships and work relationships.

### Key Findings so far:

- Cúcuta follows a different dynamic and unwritten rules vary from other cities in terms of security and people's perception of surveillance and digital technologies:
- On one hand the border with Venezuela is a constant presence in people's lives, even with all the disruptions and tensions the recent closings and openings have brought.
- Border closing disrupts the lives of many Colombians and Venezuelans that live, work, study, and have families on both sides of the border. This disruption of the so called "pendular" population endangered relations and livelihoods, pushing people to attempt illegal crossings through dangerous routes.
- The closing of the border enables illegal/informal crossings but creates vacuums of authority and opportunities for criminal bands to occupy new spaces and exploit other illegal economies.

- As people still have a need to cross the border, criminal bands take control of illegal crossing points, demanding payment to allow persons through, enabling contraband and illegal traffic.
- The illegal economies created by the closed border engender new power relations and unwritten rules that put migrants in a vulnerable position and in danger of human trafficking.
- Despite those disruptions and sources of insecurity, people are accepting of the tacit agreements and unique rules that apply there.
- The social and economic crises of Venezuela caused a large migration of Venezuelans towards Colombia. More than 1.8 million Venezuelans migrated to Colombia in recent years and around 100,000 remained in Cúcuta. This sudden influx has also created tensions among the receiving communities in Cúcuta as jobs and resources are scarce, made worse by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- In Cúcuta, people are generally aware of being surveilled. Even if mistrust in authority and the police is usual, people are welcoming of their presence and their surveillance for their security. On the other hand, people's digital and privacy literacy is not as strong and widespread as in other cities; the issues are not high on the decision makers' agenda, and they prioritize security and other needs over concerns of surveillance and privacy.

### Diagnostic Report (November 8 2022)

As part of our research on the security and surveillance landscape in the city, we began by conducting 25+ interviews with city officials, law enforcement, academics, activist groups and NGOs.



The result was a Cúcuta diagnostic report launched in the first semester of 2022. The resulting research is condensed in a report titled “Cúcuta the borders of the Urban Social Contract”. Key takeaways of our diagnostic report: i) the border is a constant presence in people’s lives even with all the disruptions and tensions the recent closings and openings have brought. Despite those disruptions and sources of insecurity, people are accepting of the tacit agreements and unique rules that apply there. ii) People’s awareness of surveillance and police is widely welcomed and accepted, even if mistrust in authority is usual. On the other hand, people’s digital and privacy literacy is wanting, and they prioritize security and other needs over concerns of surveillance and privacy.

Read the full diagnostic report [here](#).

### **Matza EDGELANDS Art Residency (July 2022)**

In collaboration with our partner art project-manifesto to “MATZA”, a group of 10 international artists, including Colombians and Venezuelans, took up residence in the

city to explore new forms of the social contract in the city. Through a series of workshops, conversations, and site visits, the artists exchanged and explored through creative outputs the security and co-existence issues and situations in the city. Visits to the border and deep dialogue with stakeholders revealed the city context permeated by migrants, refugees, and where the frontier and neighboring Venezuela are ever present. MATZA Edgelands Cúcuta concluded with a public event on July 30th where artists showcased the results of their creative process under the topic of “Blurred Lines” in reference to the nearby Venezuelan border.

### **Cúcuta Edgelands Forum (November 2022)**

In partnership with Universidad Libre, Edgelands hosted a Forum titled “Border, Security and Surveillance Technologies: Challenges and Opportunities for Cúcuta”. The Forum brought together high-level city officials, researchers, Venezuelan professors, members of the Metropolitan Police, students and representatives of civil society organizations to discuss the main security challenges affecting the city. These include implications on governance and bilateral relations after the reopening of the Colombia-Venezuela border, the use of surveillance technologies by the Police and other economic, social and rural issues that directly impact the city. The forum was an event open to the public and brought together close to 90 participants from the university community, researchers, professors, civil society organizations and government officials. Through four panels on different topics around security, surveillance and technology in Cúcuta participants reflected and discussed ways to



think about the city and its challenges. The forum kickstarted a conversation among students and decision makers, catalyzed projects for future collaborations and contributed in opening a channel of communication between city officials and community organizations. The forum showed that different groups of stakeholders have similar interests and goals for the city. Finding common ground and placing the issues on the agenda are ways in which we make inroads in Edgelands to inform policy and build capacity in the city.

Edgelands Maps: Mapping security and surveillance spaces with Editores de Ciudad at Frontera Morada and Derecho a No Obedecer (DANO) - Cycle of Community workshops.

Together with partner organization “Frontera Morada”, we held a workshop on “Mapping our Spaces of Security and Surveillance”, an Edgelands-designed community workshop that explores the tacit agreements and codes of conduct young people must navigate in digital and physical spaces. Through community building exercises and participatory dialogue, young people reflected and

defined key concepts that help identify the elements of the social contract in the city. We held this workshop with approximately 30 young people of the Bitácora Ciudadana (citizens log) program at Frontera Morada in Cúcuta. The young people who participated in the workshop were Colombians and Venezuelans, which allowed us to explore and reflect the implicit and explicit agreements of the city, among locals and immigrants and those governing the formal and informal authority at the border.

We conducted a second “Mapping” workshop with members of Derecho a No Obedecer (DANO), a citizen activist organization that fosters citizen participation in democratic and rights exercises. Together with a group of nearly 20 college-aged people we explored participatory forms and spaces for young people in Cúcuta, reflecting on surveillance, security, the border and other issues faced by people navigating the digital and physical spaces in the city.

## NAIROBI

In October 2022, we started our research in Nairobi, a city in the heart of the East African Region. Research in Nairobi, which acts as the economic, political and geographical capital, has been in the works from the inception of Edgelands Institute. Our Nairobi-based team is mapping out the surveillance landscape and conducted 10 interviews between October 2022 and December 2022. **Here are some of the trends and phenomena we are observing so far:**

- Crime in Nairobi has been on the rise for the past year. The crimes most notable are offenses against the person, such as assault and battery, theft, especially from pedestrians and motorists. Moreover, issues of trust and possible participation by police in crime contributes to the complexity of the security landscape.
- After a series of terrorist attacks in 2010, both the state and the private sector have increased the use of surveillance and surveillance tech in Nairobi. The tech is often easily available at an affordable cost to private actors.
- Surveillance technology is not limited to use by public actors, private companies are also involved in surveillance activities but more evidence is needed..
- Worth noting is a so-called P2P or 'social surveillance' where criminal activity, but also different social interactions, are documented with smart-phones and shared through social media, contributing to citizens' negative perception of security.
- The widespread use of smartphones and mobile technologies has fostered an informal economy dependent on

mobile financial and payment services providers. Pay-day loans are widely available with no government oversight and at high interest rates, M-pesa being the biggest provider of said services. Increasingly the government is aiming at tapping and surveilling these transactions to increase tax revenue, enforce regulations, access data, and have greater control over this area of the economy.

- Perceived tensions across ages and class has ramifications to wider social transformations often in relation to a person's sense of belonging and identity: the use of slang (sheng) to communicate on social media and assign meaning varies in complexity along social/income groups.

The report that results of this process will be our starting point for our activities in the City in 2023 - stay tuned!

# OTHER PROJECTS

## PREDICTIVE POLICING REPORT

What kind of technology are we talking about when we talk about surveillance? How is it used and deployed?

In 2022 we finally finished and published a project that started in 2021 which investigated how predictive policing tactics are transforming our urban social contracts. The report includes a comprehensive overview of police surveillance and algorithmic tactics, the general trends in predictive policing, the growing role of social media in policing, and a useful overview of the arguments for and against predictive policing, as well as guidelines for reforming the current systems.

The report makes a crucial distinction in forms of algorithmic policing: predictive policing and algorithmic surveillance. The first ones have the goal of using data to make predictions about the potential for criminal activity, while the latter ones refer to technologies and programs that collect data and automate surveillance without a built-in predictive element.

While building a very useful catalog of the most common technologies, the report emphasizes the higher risks posed by predictive policing tools and identifies key policy questions for further research and policy analysis: the growing role of social media in surveillance, a theme we will come back to stronger in our 2023 work, and basic data-governance questions such as: how long should data be stored for? How and when is it analyzed? Who decides on these questions? Don't miss out and read the whole report [here](#).

## GRADUATE INSTITUTE APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT

What forms of power do city governments mobilize to influence the deployment of surveillance technologies within their city? This was the question that a group of 4 researchers from the Geneva Graduate Institute worked on during a research project proposed and guided by the Edgelands Institute from March 2022 to December 2022.

The question stems from the observation that the use of digital security technologies in urban spaces, especially surveillance, can be endorsed by some actors (e.g. the municipal government) while being rejected by other actors (e.g. civil society). At the same time, surveillance technology can be regulated/influenced by actors at various levels of government (e.g. national, regional or local) and city governments may have varying degrees of legal authority to participate in these governance frameworks and practices. At Edgelands we have previously observed that the kind of power cities have shapes the ways in which they participate in the governance and deployment of surveillance. The project explores the deployment of a particular surveillance technology in London, Beirut and Singapore - during the timeframe from 2012 to 2022, and by using a framework of vertical v. horizontal autonomy, shows that different cities rely on different forms of power to influence the deployment of surveillance technology within their territory.

The result of this project is an innovative method and list of indicators of cities' power in surveillance and security governance, which will provide a new avenue for the Edgelands Institute and other researchers to study power in urban security governance and find key nodes of intervention. The final project report will be available soon.

### FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Since the fall of 2022 the Edgelands Institute has been joined by a group of talented and accomplished fellows who we invited to strengthen and help us guide our research agenda. The fellows include early-career and advanced-career scholars, artists, and researchers conducting independent research projects that contribute to our explorations on the increasing digitalization of urban security and its impacts on the social fabric of a city. The Fellowship will run until June 2023. Our fellows and their projects include:

#### **Dario Rodighiero**

Project: Mapping city surveillance

#### **Betsy Campbell**

Project: Embodied replies to digital eyes

#### **Samson Faboye**

Project: Tackling urban crime with digital media: cases from Lagos and Johannesburg

#### **Emre Altindag**

Project: The cost of being homeless in the age of smart cities

#### **Sophia Sennett**

Project: Climate Intelligence and Adaptation: Advancement through the lens of "Social Contracts"

#### **Burcu Baykurt**

Project: Gov-tech firms in the data-driven city

#### **Sofia Rinvil**

Project: Digital Credentials: the nexus between urban government and digitization

#### **Diana Paola Rojas**

Project: Tech policy through city planning instruments

#### **Maggie Engler**

Project: Data, privacy and internet security

Learn more about our fellows [here](#).

### RESEARCH SPRINT WITH BKC AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

The Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society, in collaboration with metaLAB (at) Harvard, the Edgelands Institute, and AccessNow, co-hosted a 10-week research sprint exploring the ethical, human rights, and societal impacts of digital identity. The sprint, "Digital Identity in Times of Crisis: Designing for Better Futures," challenged participants to evaluate how digital identity systems can best serve people and how to mitigate the unintended impacts or harms when they fail, how to avoid the misuse of power, and how to envision a future in which people's digital identities are respected and supported. Read more about the project [here](#).

# LOOKING AHEAD: PLANS FOR 2023

In 2023 we will continue our work in Geneva, Cúcuta and Nairobi, and will make a comeback to Medellín right before the local elections with a full schedule of academic and research activities, arts engagements, workshops and public events. In 2023 our work will continue with these lines of action:

## RESEARCH

In 2023 our research initiatives include student-led research sprints in Edgelands selected cities and in partnership with local universities, think tanks and organizations. As part of our research line of action some of our projects are:

- Student-led research sprints with Universidad FP Santander in Cúcuta and student-led research sprint with local university in Nairobi. Our signature research program with local students takes a deep dive into emerging issues resulting in creative solutions for city challenges.
- Edgelands research project on local ordinances to regulate AI: Together with Urban AI and the AI Localism Project, we will complete a research/action project on local surveillance ordinances and tools for algorithmic accountability in the sphere of public safety.

- Research project with the Geneva Graduate Institute titled “Governing and Surveilling: Towards a framework for Algorithmic Accountability in Surveillance Technology” looks to better understand how to develop algorithmic accountability frameworks by practitioners and policy makers in the space of surveillance technology.
- Diagnostic reports; as we immerse ourselves in Nairobi and other select cities, our researchers continue to engage with key informants and stakeholders in qualitative research methods to understand the dynamics, patterns and key issues of each city and initial diagnosis.

## ART EXPLORATIONS

Using the creative power of art to explore social phenomena, visualize universal languages and put cities in dialogue, our art residencies and explorations will continue in 2023 with the following projects:

- Magnum Edgelands Collaboration; where photographer Thomas Dworzak will document the regular daily life of residents in Geneva and their digital imprint. Taking as a starting point the Edgelands's diagnostic report on Geneva, the project uses photography to explore and narrate how digitalization impacts people's (in)security. Read more about the Magnum collaboration [here](#).

- MATZA- Edgelands Nairobi residency; with a 19-day artist immersion and in partnership with Wajukuu Art Project. The project will focus on Mukuru Lunga-Lunga, an informal settlement within Nairobi 's Industrial Area. MATZA-Edgelands Geneva Residency; the fourth version of MATZA Edgelands art residency project. The project includes a 3-week period of workshops and investigation focused on the Pâquis and Charmilles areas in Geneva.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS

In keeping with our mission of creating pop-up spaces that bring citizens, policymakers, academics, and other stakeholders into dialogue about the way that digital tools are being used by city governments and transforming urban social fabric, we will continue hosting the following community spaces:

- Together with Fundación Mi Sangre we will do a Cúcuta version of the very successful Lab Social. This exercise follows a multistage process that makes it possible to abandon prejudices and find common ground.

- Edgelands Mapping Workshops; in Cúcuta, Geneva and Nairobi; the aim of the workshops is to explore from participants' own experience, perceptions and assumptions which spaces and situations of security and insecurity they experience. The workshops lead to reflections on the impact of digital technologies in improving or worsening security in different communities. Learn more about the workshops [here](#).

- Conversation with young politicians of Geneva; we will host conversation spaces with Swiss political parties representatives to discuss and reflect with members of the "Commission numérique".

- Open Innovation Festival; with participants of the festival to photograph, geolocate, and register security cameras in Geneva. The resulting mapping exercise is intended as a repository of cameras with potential uses in research, policy and art.

- Workshops/ roundtable in Nairobi for specific groups, which include the law enforcement and administration both at the county and national government level, the youth and the legal fraternity in Nairobi.

# PRESENCE IN MEDIA

The impact and energy of our work gained recognition by several local and international media outlets. Here we list the news articles and mentions in the media of the Edgeland Institute and our activities in 2022.

## MEDELLÍN

Correo News (5 December 2022)

[Cultura de ilegalidad sigue asediando a jóvenes en Colombia según experta](#)

Sucesos Metropolitanos (3 February 2022)

[MATZA-Edgeland: Experimentando nuevas formas de contrato social en Medellín](#)

El Colombiano (17 February 2022)

[Artistas y Científicos Repensaron el contrato social de Medellín](#)

NYU-Marron Institute (26 January 2022)

[Sara Arango Franco Invited to Medellín, Colombia](#)

Ruta Noticias (6 February 2022)

[El Proyecto Matza Edgeland reflexiona en Medellín sobre el arte](#)

Teleantioquia (31 January 2022)

[Entrevista con Felipe Castelblanco](#)

## GENEVA

HeidiNews (12 September 2022)

[Surveillance numérique: jusqu'où sommes-nous traqués?](#)

HeidiNews (June 2022)

[Aux Genevois de s'exprimer sur leur surveillance numérique](#)

HeidiNews (June 2022)

[Lancement d'une vaste discussion sur la numérisation à Genève](#)

HeidiNews (December 2022)

[Un sondage pointe le profond sentiment d'insécurité numérique des Genevois](#)

Blick (December 2022)

[Plus de 2749 caméras vous surveillent dans les rues de Genève](#)

Le Temps (June 2022)

[A Genève, un premier diagnostic sur la souveraineté numérique](#)

Le Temps (December 2022)

[À Genève et ailleurs, nous devons reconquérir le numérique"](#)

Le Temps (December 2022)

[A Genève, les citoyens sont inquiets d'une perte de maîtrise du numérique](#)

Blick (July 2022)

[La vidéosurveillance, un tabou dans la très «sûre» Genève](#)

Club de la Presse Suisse (January 2022)

[Comment protéger le citoyen des pilleurs de données](#)

AiiA Festival (October 2022)

Edgeland, présentation et Walk intermedia Dezentrum

Geneva Internet Platform (October 2022)

[Cybersecurity: what do we need to know?](#)

## CÚCUTA

ATN Tv Noticiero (July 2022)

[Arte y tecnología analiza comportamientos](#)

RCN Radio (July 2022)

Voz de la Gran Colombia (July 2022)

