

Opponent's Written Statement on Carlo Gatti's Doctoral Dissertation "Theoretical Roots, Rationalisations, and Legal Contradictions of Predictive Policing"

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I have been appointed by the Faculty of Law at the University of Turku to serve as Opponent for the public defence of *Carlo Gatti's* doctoral dissertation, *Theoretical Roots, Rationalisations, and Legal Contradictions of Predictive Policing – Reflections from the Italian Case*. The defence took place on 7 November 2025, and in this piece, I present the written statement submitted to the faculty as part of the Finnish doctoral procedure, reflecting on both the dissertation and Carlo Gatti's performance during the examination.

Being the pre-examiner and the opponent for Carlo Gatti's doctoral dissertation has been an honour and a privilege. His dissertation is a solid, rigorous and original work, which clearly adds to critical criminology and police studies.

This dissertation engages with a topic – predictive policing (PP) – whose social and political relevance has been made explicit by a growing body of academic, political and public discussions. The recent convergence of PP with the latest developments in artificial intelligence has made this relevance even more evident. At the same time, because of its complex nature and the specific nature of its technological workings, PP is a field of significant interest for legal, criminological, social and urban scholarship.

The dissertation is composed of three journal articles and a substantial introductory synopsis that links and broadens the scope of the articles. While portfolios pose significant difficulties in building an internally coherent dissertation, the candidate has managed to fully overcome them both in terms of the logical concatenation of the three articles and of the quality of the introductory synopsis.

In terms of identification of a valid research problem, engagement with and grasp of relevant literature, methodological design, empirical research and analytical work, the dissertation fully corresponds to the needs of a doctoral research. The dissertation brings new and original knowledge to the field of critical criminology and legal studies: empirically, because of the engagement with a scarcely investigated context, Italy; and, conceptually, mostly through the development of reflections that push the critique of PP beyond privacy issues.

The three articles have been published in excellent journals (*Oñati Socio-Legal Series*; *Justice, Power and Resistance*; *Crime, Law and Social Change*), and I can easily imagine a research monograph to be produced from the dissertation – indeed I hope the candidate will engage in this endeavour soon.

The dissertation, and particularly the synopsis, is also very well written – good writing

being, in my opinion, a fundamental, if often not sufficiently considered, skill for social scientists.

The critical approach and the style of argumentation show that the candidate is driven, besides intellectual curiosity, by the will to contribute to topics of deep societal significance at the intersection of policing, criminal law and technological development. The synopsis, in fact, besides introducing and complementing the three articles, also works as a powerful introduction to the field of critical (or radical) criminology, which is as relevant for the scholar as meaningful for the lay person.

The dissertation also shows attention and competence vis-à-vis ethical standards and best practices, including the balancing of the protection of informants with the disclosure of issues of societal relevance.

I consider the main conceptual contributions of this dissertation to be the theoretical overcoming, in the field of criminological and legal analysis, of the separation between space-based and individualised approaches to PP; the arguments for moving beyond a privacy lens (and, more generally, the protection of individualised liberties) when critically assessing PP; and the discussion of the legal implications at the intersection of policing and criminal justice.

It should also be added that the final dissertation has benefitted of significant improvements, in terms of clarification and specification of a number of conceptual and analytical dimensions, from the pre-examination stage – which also shows the capacity of the candidate to accept and build on constructive critique.

During the public examination, having no doubts regarding formal, methodological or argumentative dimensions emerging from the

dissertation, I had the opportunity to engage the candidate “academically”, that is, to discuss with him some theoretical issues that the dissertation opens but – inevitably – does not close. I raised three issues with disciplinary (the potential contribution of the dissertation to academic fields besides criminology and law), theoretical-analytical (on the nature of the link between policing and the criminal justice system, and therefore the power of legal analysis over the field of policing) and normative (on the implications of the critique raised in the dissertation for a horizon of abolition) nature. The candidate responded brilliantly, showing the capacity to both “stand the ground” of his work and navigate its limits when engaged from different ontological, epistemological and normative perspectives.

In summary, the candidate has produced an excellent dissertation; he has demonstrated full capacity to independence and critique in scientific work, and in the production of new knowledge; and has showed he can engage in lively academic and scholarly debate. For these reasons, as I stated verbally at the end of the public examination, with no reservations whatsoever, I propose for the faculty the dissertation to be approved; and hereby congratulate Carlo Gatti for his remarkable academic achievements.