



CSU Fresno  
Dept. of Criminology  
Newsletter LIX

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**Active or Retired Government Employees**

Are you interested in a real degree from the California State University?

If you have already completed or are close to completing two years of college, you can obtain your B.S. degree in Criminology issued by **California State University-Fresno** in the downtown (off campus) degree program. There you will attend classes with other professionals at the Fresno County Sheriff's Office HQ. Class meeting times/dates are flexible, and some of the instruction is on line. Additional optional meeting dates are scheduled for students unable to attend specific on specific dates due to their duty assignment.

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New classes begin in April. Contact Dr. Schweizer [haralds@csufresno.edu](mailto:haralds@csufresno.edu) via email for additional details and review the information at:

<http://zimmer.csufresno.edu/~haralds/downtowndegreeoverview.htm>



Red light and speed cameras are a controversial subject world wide, but motorists whose vehicles are “snapped” by the automated cameras rarely challenge the case in court. A recurring criticism of these automated radar/camera systems is that government entities use them to fill their budget gaps and that “safety” and the prevention of accidents is not the primary motivation.

This newsletter is not an official publication of CSU Fresno or the Department of Criminology. Dr. H.O. Schweizer is the sole author and responsible for its content. You can email him at: [haralds@csufresno.edu](mailto:haralds@csufresno.edu)

## **RED LIGHT CAMERAS IN THE U.S.**

The legality of such systems in the United States depends on the individual states and currently such systems are illegal by statute or judicial ruling in the following states:

Alaska, Arkansas, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin.

Various studies about the influence of redlight and speed cameras on traffic accidents show conflicting results. It is clear, however, that the duration of the amber (yellow) light at intersections has a direct impact on vehicle accidents. Adding additional time to the amber light reduces accidents caused by red light violations, but reducing the duration of the amber light can result in an increase of rear-end collisions when motorists spot the cameras while nearly in the intersection and perform a "panic stop."

These factors would logically call for lengthening the duration of the amber light in order to reduce accidents. This action would, however, reduce the number of red light violations and therefore the revenue generated by the red light cameras. Reducing the duration of the amber light, would in turn increase red light violations and therefore result in increased revenue for the jurisdiction involved.



**National  
Motorists  
Association**

The minimum duration of the amber light is legislatively fixed in some states but not in

others. Such legislation would seem to be able to prevent jurisdictions from increasing their revenue stream simply by reducing the duration of the amber light at intersections. In spite of such legislation, however, The National Motorists Association reports that in 2008, six cities in the United States were found to have illegally reduced the duration of the amber lights for the purpose of increasing revenue. These cities are:

**Chattanooga, Tennessee**

**Dallas, TX**

**Springfield, Missouri**

**Lubbock, Texas**

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Union City, California**

<http://blog.motorists.org/6-cities-that-were-caught-shortening-yellow-light-times-for-profit/>

The above webpage contains links to detailed information about each city's violation, including fine money that had to be paid back to motorists as a result.

A major focus of criticism is the relationship between various jurisdictions and private firms installing and maintaining the red light and speed cameras. In some jurisdictions these companies receive a flat percentage of all fine money generated by their systems, such as 50% in Suffolk County, New York and in Lubbock, Texas.

A table showing "profits" generated with red light cameras in Texas is accessible at:

<http://www.thenewspaper.com/news/29/2988.asp>

In California the questionable arrangement of having a fixed percentage of revenue or fines from red light cameras being paid to the equipment manufacture/provider was addressed by AB 1022 which amended

## **AUTOMATED ENFORCEMENT ...**

Section 1, Section 21455.5 of the Vehicle Code to read:

21455.5. (a) The limit line, the intersection, or a place designated in Section 21455, where a driver is required to stop, may be equipped with an automated enforcement system if the governmental agency utilizing the system meets all of the following requirements:

(g) (1) A contract between a governmental agency and a manufacturer or supplier of automated enforcement equipment may not include provision for the payment or compensation to the manufacturer or supplier based on the number of citations generated, or as a percentage of the revenue generated, as a result of the use of the equipment authorized under this section.

(2) Paragraph (1) does not apply to a contract that was entered into by a governmental agency and a manufacturer or supplier of automated enforcement equipment before January 1, 2004, unless that contract is renewed, extended, or amended on or after January 1, 2004.

The statute contains a loophole for some jurisdiction who already held a contract prior to the passing of the statute, so there may still be jurisdictions in California which pay the manufacturer/supplier of automated enforcement equipment based on the fines generated and paid by violators.

### **Louisiana:**

New Orleans aggressively relies on red light cameras to fill gaps in the city budget and between 2008-2011 revenue from fines generated by the cameras has risen by 419%.

It is unknown if the increase has come from shorter yellow lights.

<http://www.thepelicanpost.org/2011/05/04/red-light-camera-revenue-has-increased-419-percent-since-2008/>



**INDIA**

Last year (2011) Chennai (formerly called Madras) began the installation of red light cameras at 240 intersections with at least three cameras at each intersection. All of the cameras are connected to a central computer and not only monitor red light violations but also check license plates for stolen vehicles. Police is alerted immediately when there is a „hit“ on a license plate and the vehicle can then be tracked/located. To reduce accidents the city is also planning to install “ boom barriers” at the most critical intersections.

These boom barriers are similar barriers at railroad crossings and will block access to the intersection when the light turns red. . It is not known if cows residing in Chennai are trained to heed these barriers or other traffic controls.



**Street scene in Chennai  
Photo taken by Dr. Schweizer**

## RED LIGHT CAMERAS IN INDIA...

The ability to control these boom barriers from a central location can also be used to block entry into intersections or streets when they are being used by police, ambulance or fire during emergency calls.

[http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-05-12/chennai/29535601\\_1\\_red-light-camera-system-red-light-cameras-traffic-signals](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-05-12/chennai/29535601_1_red-light-camera-system-red-light-cameras-traffic-signals)

Bangalore (India's silicon valley) has also started with an experimental use of five digital red light cameras to determine if this type of enforcement has an impact on traffic safety. If the results are positive, they anticipate the installation of 15 additional cameras. During the trial phase, one of the five cameras recorded 8000 violations in a two week period.

<http://www.traffictechnologytoday.com/news.php?NewsID=2767>

## SOUTH AMERICA

Red light cameras or "radares semáforo rojo" are becoming popular in South America, and such systems, including speed cameras, can be found in Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Colombia, and Brazil.



### PARAGUAY

Fines based on red light cameras (**multa radar semáforo**) have been challenged in Paraguay based on a statutory provision that "tickets" be signed by a police officer and the violator. Since the notices sent to violators do not contain the required

signatures, a demand for payment is technically not valid. One blogger in Paraguay additionally posited that 20% of the revenue generated by red light cameras are kept by the municipality, with 80% going to SERTRAN, the manufacturer/provider of the equipment. This practice was nothing other than a "negociado de plata" or money making operation.

<http://motores.com.py/foro/index.php?thread/s/las-multas-de-ypacarai-son-nulas.17427/>



### URUGUAY

Authorities in Uruguay are steadily expanding the automated enforcement equipment for both red light and speed violations and there is an expectation that this will reduce in traffic accidents.

<http://www.elpais.com.uy/08/06/26/pciuda354318.asp>

In conjunction with traffic law enforcement Uruguay has found that their system of different law enforcement agencies only being able to enforce traffic laws within their jurisdictional boundaries is neither efficient nor cost effective. As a result, a new national Traffic Police is being organized this year (2012).

### Gobierno creará una Policía Nacional de Tránsito

<http://www.elpais.com.uy/111227/ultimo-momento/gobierno-creara-una-policia-nacional-de-transito/>



## TRAFFIC CAMERAS-SOUTH AMERICA...



### ARGENTINA

Motorists are concerned about the faulty synchronization of “hidden” cameras and radar systems (radares semáforo rojo) and the location of such cameras in the capital city of Buenos Aires can readily be accessed over the internet.

<http://www.ciraja.com.ar/transito.htm>



### BRAZIL

Brazil is very active in the placement of automated enforcement equipment and, as reported in a 2011 newsletter, all new vehicles must have built in GPS locator equipment. Enterprising Brazilians are posting GPS coordinates for automated cameras on various websites, which can then be programmed into personal/vehicle navigation devices.

<http://www.gps-data-team.com/poi/brazil/safety/SpeedCam-BR.html>

### PERU



In Peru the debate about traffic law enforcement is more basic. Traditionally traffic is controlled by actual police officers

directing vehicles at intersections. While regular traffic lights are in use, motorists have a habit of simply ignoring them, but they comply when an actual uniformed police officer directs/stops traffic. The question there is whether to replace actual police officers with traffic lights or to continue the costly method of using police officers to guide traffic.

### ¿Semáforo o Policía de Tránsito?

<http://radio.capital.com.pe/seguridadvial/2011/01/19/%C2%BFsemaforo-o-policia-de-transito/>



### COLOMBIA

Motorists can access a “ Listado de cámaras del tránsito” (list of transit cameras) which provides details about each camera’s location.

<http://automovilescolombia.com/foros/threads/listado-de-c%C3%A1maras-del-tr%C3%A1nsito-las-que-ponen-comparendos.3430/>

## OTHER NEWS FROM SOUTH AMERICA



### VENEZUELA

#### **The End of the Policía Metropolitana (PM)**

This police agency was responsible for providing general law enforcement services to the greater Caracas metropolitan area. Formed in December 1969, it employed

## Policía Metropolitana (PM)...

10,597 officers and civilian staff in 2008, when the federal government took control of the agency from the capital city government, in part due to a series of public complaints of abuse, extra judicial killings, and brutality. A less publicized reason for its dissolution may have been the P.M.s support for the military coup leaders who had attempted to overthrow the rule of the country's president Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías.



*(The above patch was given to Dr. Schweizer by a PM major during a visit to Caracas.)*

While visiting the Policía Metropolitana, it was clear that the police was confronted with near insurmountable problems of serious crime, and violence was an everyday experience for its police officers. Some of these problems were experienced first hand during an attempted mugging by three locals in Caracas.



In April 2011 the P.M. was dissolved and policing responsibilities were assumed by

the Cuerpo de Policía Nacional Bolivariana (CPNB), which was formed beginning in 2008.

<http://www.policianacional.gob.ve/index.php>

Nearly half of the personnel from the P.M. went on to work in other jurisdictions or retired, and the rest were absorbed into the relatively new CPNB as long as they did not have a criminal record.

<http://www.correodelorinoco.gob.ve/judiciales-seguridad/continua-supresion-y-liquidacion-policia-metropolitana-caracas-fotos/>



## Traffic Camera Countermeasures

It is interesting to note that whenever police employ new technological tools in their efforts to curtail or reduce crime, including traffic violations, some enterprising firm develops countermeasures. This was certainly true with police radar, when a host of firms developed „radar detectors“ and now one firm is advertising a special spray for license plates to defeat traffic cameras. Once applied, the plate number can still be read with the naked eye, but the layer of chemicals from the spray apparently confuses the camera and the plate numbers are unreadable on photos taken by traffic cameras.

<http://www.onemoretickets.com/red-light-camera-ticket.html>

## CRIMINOLOGY DEPT. NEWS

Dr. H. Otto Schweizer and Dr. George Kikuchi attended the recent annual meeting of the American Association of Behavioral and Social Sciences (AABSS) in Las Vegas, NV.



Above: Dr. Schweizer presenting a paper on **“Extension Degree Programs: A Shape Shifting Paradigm”**

Dr. Kikuchi presented a paper on the **“Japanese Organized Criminals and Their Connections with Chinese Criminals.”**

Dr. Schweizer held a second downtown program information session at the Fresno County Sheriff’s Office main jail cafeteria in January 2012.



*Spreading the word*

## INTERESTING PHOTOS

**The new Texas Navy**  
(will be patrolling Falcon lake, a body of water between Mexico and Texas)



**The TEXAS DPS – New 36 ft. Patrol/Gunboat**

The armaments onboard include 5 – static mounted [2 dual & 1 single] FN M240B 7.62×51 mm NATO Light machineguns, 2 – Barrett .50 BMG Sniper Rifles, and other assorted 5.56 rifles, 9mm sub machineguns, and grenade launchers.

*Fotos provided by an enthusiastic newsletter reader.*