

# **Practical criminologies: Sensemaking and proactive policing**

**Annette Vestby**

**Dissertation submitted for the degree of PhD  
Department of Criminology and Sociology of Law  
Faculty of Law  
University of Oslo**

**June 2022**

© **Annette Vestby, 2023**

*Series of dissertations submitted to the  
Faculty of Law, University of Oslo  
No. 192*

ISSN 1890-2375

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without permission.

Cover: UiO.

Print production: Graphic center, University of Oslo.

# Table of contents

Summary.....	iii
Acknowledgments.....	v
<b>PART 1</b>	
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Research aims and questions.....	4
1.2 Work-related crime .....	6
1.3 Public police under reform .....	8
1.4 Thesis at a glance .....	10
<b>2. Theoretical framework.....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 Sensemaking.....	15
2.2 Power, resources and constraints in police sensemaking .....	16
2.3 Co-ordination and coherence in multi-agency crime control.....	19
2.4 Intelligence-led policing and scientification.....	22
<b>3. Data and methods.....</b>	<b>27</b>
3.1 Research design .....	27
3.2 Sampling across sites .....	29
3.3 Interviews .....	35
3.4 Reflexivity.....	36
3.4.1 Positionality .....	36
3.4.2 Transcription.....	38
3.5 Qualitative data analysis .....	41
3.6 Research permits and ethics .....	46
<b>4. Findings.....</b>	<b>49</b>
4.1 Publication 1 .....	49
4.2 Publication 2 .....	50
4.3 Publication 3 .....	51
4.4 Publication 4.....	53
4.5 Publication 5 .....	54
<b>5. Discussion .....</b>	<b>57</b>
4.1 Punitive partnerships and ‘combating crime’ .....	59
4.2 Intelligence-led policing as a sensemaking technology .....	63
4.3 Practical criminologies .....	65
<b>6. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>75</b>

## **PART 2**

<b>1. Cheats, threats and reflexivity: organizational narratives on policing organized and economic crime .....</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>2. ‘It’s about using the full sanction catalogue’: on boundary negotiations in a multi-agency organised crime investigation .....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>3. Policy-making without politics: overstating objectivity in intelligence-led policing .....</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>4. Machine learning and the police: asking the right questions .....</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>5. Preventing prosecution: narratives on proactive policing .....</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>Appendix 1 .....</b>	<b>203</b>
<b>Appendix 2 .....</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>Appendix 3 .....</b>	<b>209</b>

### **List of tables**

Table 1-1: Overview of the publications .....	11
Table 3-1: Interviews by participants’ tasks and employer .....	33
Table 3-2: Interviews by participants’ tasks and work context .....	33
Table 3-3: Publications with methods of analysis .....	42
Table 3-4: Example of SDI category with subsumed codes .....	43
Table 3-5: Comparative view of TA and SDI coding .....	44

### **List of figures**

Figure 1-1: Research questions and publications .....	5
Figure 5-1: Integration of findings .....	58

## Summary

This thesis explores how police make sense of crime, disorder, and crime control in the related contexts of multi-agency partnerships and intelligence-led policing (ILP). These strategies, with their related technologies and rationalities, are treated in this thesis as examples of a proactive paradigm in policing. Herein, assessments about how and where to allocate resources are based on police initiatives. It is the primacy of police initiatives in proactive policing that motivates this thesis' interest in exploring police sensemaking.

'Sensemaking' signifies processes through which officers articulate plausible accounts of crime, disorder and crime control to render their complex environments actionable (cf. Weick et al., 2005). Based on interviews, observations, and documents, this thesis empirically explores sensemaking processes in a complex and ambiguous area of economic and organized crime policing. 'Work-related crime' (WRC) has been conceptualized in policy as an inter-sectorial crime issue that is comprised by, among others, illicit work, forced labour, wage theft, and tax evasion. The study of police agencies' sensemaking vis-à-vis WRC demonstrates the existence of a range of plausible interpretations of similar and overlapping offences, and corresponding responses to them. Further, the thesis discusses how multi-agency and ILP strategies themselves affect police sensemaking, i.e., the impact these methods may have for how police agencies view crimes, as well as how they are made actionable.

Events, objects, and people will often present police with a wide range of possible interpretations – yet some become the basis for action, and others do not. To understand why and how this happens, policing itself must be part of the explanation. Contrary to claims that ILP can produce a 'view from nowhere' from which police can act, this thesis argues that as situated social actors, policing agencies inhabit a 'somewhere' that is consequential in terms of which interpretations of the environment emerge as plausible, and are co-constituted with available courses of action.

The thesis comprises five publications. Taken together, their findings contribute to three overarching claims in response to the research interests outlined above. First, the thesis discusses a logic of co-ordinated crime control that

includes 'punitive partnerships', which is contrasted with David Garland's term 'preventive partnerships' (2001). Second, the thesis argues that it is useful to conceptualise intelligence-led policing (including statistical predictive models used to support decision-making, e.g., in the case of 'predictive policing') as a sensemaking technology, rather than as an objective measurement device that can detach police decision-making from politics. Third, the thesis proposes the term *practical criminologies* to characterize the idiosyncratic knowledge work undertaken by pragmatic and problem-solving agencies to manage their own work acting on the same crime and disorder issues they have a key role in operationalizing.

## **Acknowledgments**

This work has benefited from the generous support of a great number of people, for which I will always be grateful. First, I'd like to express my deepest thanks to my advisors. Professors Helene Oppen Ingebrigtsen Gundhus and Heidi Mork Lomell, you have provided exceptional guidance, support, and always constructive feedback. I recognize my good fortune in having you on my team, and this project would not have been possible without you. Thank you!

My research has been part of the Norwegian Research Council-funded project New Trends in Modern Policing. Thank you to Johanne Yttri Dahl, Nicholas Fyfe, again my advisor Helene, Paul Larsson, Siv Runhovde, and Pernille Erichsen Skjevraak for your inclusivity and expertise. I would also like to pay my special regards to Kira Vrist Rønn for insightful comments and suggestions at my midway assessment, and to Sverre Flaatten for being the observant reader that the extended introduction of this thesis needed. Thank you to Liv Finstad who inspired and helped set me on the police research path more than a decade ago.

My most heartfelt thanks goes out to everyone who either participated in my study, or who facilitated my access to the various sites where I've conducted my research. Your contributions are, naturally, the bedrock of this thesis and I greatly appreciate your willingness to answer my questions and hang around with me.

I have had the pleasure of working, first as a research assistant and later as a doctoral researcher, in the friendly atmosphere of the Norwegian Police University College's Research Department. I would like to pay my special regards to then-manager Haavard Magne Reksten for helping me get a foot in the door, and for always backing my project. Thank you also to the current manager Lene Bomann-Larsen for holding the department together through the pandemic, and for giving me free rein in the final writing stages. Thank you to the participants of the college's peer network of PhD candidates, for always insightful comments and discussions. The network meetings have been competently facilitated by Inger Marie Sunde, Jon Strype, and Brita Bjørkelo. I would also like to recognize the superior assistance provided by the college's library, with special thanks to Camilla Pellegrini Meling. Thank you to the Faculty of Law for facilitating my work as an external candidate in their doctoral program.

The research department's 'reflexivity' group has been an unending source of literature suggestions, truly stimulating discussions, and always good company. Thank you to Synnøve Økland Jahnsen for inviting me into the Young Nordic Police Research Network, Lynn P. Nygaard for including me in the best writing retreats I'll probably ever attend, and Rebecca Lowen for language editing on two papers. Heidi Fischer-Norman, thank you for making the PhD experience truly enjoyable, and for being a dependable, creative, and all-around excellent co-author. Jenny Maria Lundgaard, thank you for your support, academic curiosity, and wit.

I am lucky to have had the enduring support and love of my mother, brother, in-laws, and friends throughout this period. Thank you. Dad, you would have loved to see this.

Jonas, my husband, best friend, and even co-author: you make everything possible. Alfred and Ebba, my hearts.

Annette Vestby  
Skarnes, June 2022



*The language we use is crucial to our understanding, however, and many of the intellectual models used to explain how it is with us human beings are limited, inadequate, or downright obtuse. Categories, borders, distinctions, and metaphors such as ladders, roots, theaters, computers, blueprints, machinery, or locked rooms are both necessary and useful, but they have to be recognized for what they are: convenient images to aid comprehension— which necessarily leave out or misconstrue or distort an ambiguous, shifting reality. It is human to want to pin things down and give them a name. No one really wants to live like Borges's hero, a person so attentive to the shifting plethora of the phenomenal world that the dog seen at three-fourteen deserves a name different from the one seen at three-fifteen. And yet, the story reminds us that all abstraction comes at a cost. Doctors need diagnoses, names for groups of symptoms, and so do patients. At last, I have a sign to hang on my disparate aches and pains or shakes and wobbles. Or do I?*

(Hustvedt, 2010, pp. 185–186)



# Part 1



## 1. Introduction

This thesis explores how police make sense of crime, disorder, and crime control in the related contexts of multi-agency co-ordination and intelligence-led policing (ILP). Both represent the proactive paradigm in policing specifically, and crime control more generally (Egbert & Leese, 2021; Garland, 2001; Maguire, 2000; Weisburd & Braga, 2019). ‘Proactive policing’ is a term for police strategies that aim to prevent and disrupt crime problems rather than rely on post hoc emergency responses and prosecution, and that aim to minimise harm as well as close the gap between police resources and tasks (Innes & Sheptycki, 2004; Rowe & Sogaard, 2019; Tilley, 2008; Weisburd et al., 2019). Assessments about how and where to allocate resources are based on police initiatives, and for this purpose, varieties of ILP are used to deliver knowledge-based, data-driven foundations to support decision-making (Burcher & Whelan, 2018; Fyfe et al., 2018; J. H. Ratcliffe, 2016; Terpstra et al., 2019). Multi-agency co-ordination entails improved access to information to guide decision-making, as well as opportunities to share crime control responsibilities and workloads with state and non-state actors outside the police (Garland, 2001; Jahnsen & Rykkja, 2020; O’Neill & Loftus, 2013).

The primacy of police initiatives in proactive policing motivates this thesis’ interest in exploring police sensemaking processes. Briefly, these are processes wherein members of an organization articulate possible interpretations of events, and where members act based on those considered most plausible (Weick et al., 2005). Here, I take the policing of ‘work-related crime’ (WRC) in Norway as its empirical starting point for exploring sensemaking based on interviews, observations, and document analyses. WRC has been conceptualised politically as an inter-sectorial issue involving a range of offences related to organized and economic crime, and as ‘actions that violate Norwegian laws on pay and working conditions, social security, and taxation’ (Departementene, 2019, p. 5, my translation). Agencies and specialist work units have been required to co-ordinate their expertise and resources across organizational boundaries in response. It also requires that officers find ways to make the complex term actionable in their local site and within their specialist mandate. Officers’ roles in transforming complexity

into actionable tasks have been studied in a variety of contexts and research in this vein has demonstrated how work is shaped in part by officers' pragmatic strategies to make their workload predictable and manageable (Ericson, 1981; Runhovde, 2017). Examples include studies of police control rooms (Lundgaard, 2021), detective work (Ericson, 1981), proactive organized crime investigations (Hestehave, 2021), crime analysis (Fraser & Atkinson, 2014), and prediction (Kaufmann, 2018).

Technology and management systems also provide particular ways of performing tasks and shaping understandings of what these tasks are (Gundhus & Jansen, 2020; Wathne, 2018). ILP is a prominent framework for managing police work which builds on the premise that intelligence analysis can produce an objective basis for decision-making (Ratcliffe, 2016). This is also the case for the national variant of ILP which was rolled out in the Norwegian police force in 2014 (Politidirektoratet, 2014; Vestby, 2018). Here, standardization and centralization of decision-making authority is privileged above officer discretion (Gundhus et al., 2021), and represents a way for police organizations to render a complex world with overwhelming demands manageable in accordance with criteria such as efficiency, accountability, and ideals of science and rationalization (Garland, 2001; Sanders et al., 2015; Vestby, 2018).

## **1.1 Research aims and questions**

There is tension between research findings on how officers reproduce and change their environments as they engage in creative, yet contingent sensemaking on the one hand, and the positivistic epistemology and rationalistic assumptions underlying the use of ILP as a management system for both knowledge and organizations on the other. This thesis does not set out to resolve this tension, but rather, to explore some points of friction. It has two aims, pursued in the included publications and the integrated perspective of the thesis as a whole. First, it empirically explores sensemaking processes in a complex and ambiguous context of policing economic and organized crime, demonstrating the existence of a range of plausible interpretations of similar offences and the responses to them. Second, it conceptualizes and discusses the relationship between police understandings of

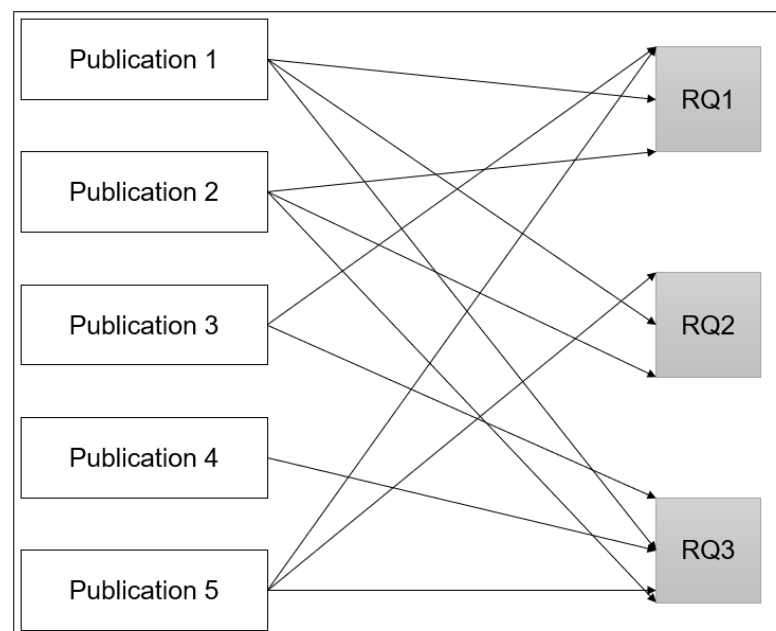
crime and crime control on the one hand, and their mandate to act on crime and disorder on the other, as ‘practical criminologies’. It is a descriptive and analytic term which is intended to name the idiosyncratic knowledge work undertaken by agencies as they connect *plausible* accounts of problems to *available* courses of action.

The research has been guided by the following set of overarching research questions:

1. How do police make sense of ‘work-related crime’, and which crime control measures are considered to be suitable responses?
2. How can an inter-agency context affect police sensemaking?
3. How can intelligence-led policing affect police sensemaking?

These questions are at a higher level of abstraction than those posed in each of the included publications (see Table 1-1, p.11). Each paper addresses part of one or more of the above three questions, and the correspondence between the higher- and lower-order research questions is depicted in Figure 1.1 below.<sup>1</sup>

*Figure 1-1: Research questions and publications*



<sup>1</sup> The tables and figures in Part 1 of this thesis are all based on suggested formats in Nygaard & Solli (2021).

## **1.2 Work-related crime: policing the blurred line between organized and economic crime**

Three of this study's five publications are based on a multi-sited qualitative study with data gathered in the context of a Norwegian national and multi-agency initiative against WRC. WRC has been a topic on the national political stage since 2014 and has been widely debated. It is not a penal clause, but rather, a policy term that can encompass offences such as money laundering, human trafficking, benefit and tax fraud, and illicit work, and is defined in the inter-ministerial strategy as:

[A]ctions that violate Norwegian laws on pay and working conditions, social security, and taxation, often committed in an organised manner, which exploit workers, or which distort fair market competition and undermine the structural underpinnings of society. (Departementene, 2019, p. 5, my translation)

Co-ordination of state agencies and collaboration with the private sector are considered crucial to manage these issues. The police, the Tax Authority, the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority, and the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration are agencies with analytical and punitive capacities (Jahnsen & Rykkja, 2020) that are among the most central to the co-ordination effort (for more on this, see Publication 1). Other preventive measures have been applied outside these agencies, including information campaigns directed at foreign workers, and promoting unionization in vulnerable industries (Departementene, 2019).

Within the police organization, WRC has necessitated co-ordination of work across organizational boundaries between specialist units that police economic crime, organized crime, and immigration. Offences that comprise WRC, for example, illicit work, forced labour, wage theft, tax evasion, and non-compliance with environmental protection standards, tend to occur together, and are frequently interdependent (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017; Neby et al., 2016; NTAES, 2020). Labour exploitation, which alongside tax offences is considered the most prevalent form of WRC (NTAES, 2020), has also been understood to be an integral element of organized crime whereby actors, for example, scale up money laundering activities by establishing apparently licit businesses as fronts (cf.



Europol, 2015). Internationally, there has been a move towards reframing organized crime as illegal economic activity (Hörnqvist, 2015) and having financial policing frameworks set up to target money laundering in relation to both organized crime and terrorism financing (Amicelle & Iafolla, 2018; Levi, 2007)

‘Economic crime’ relates to profit-motivated crimes undertaken in the context of a legal enterprise, typically to increase profits or reduce costs (Clinard & Quinney (1973) in Korsell, 2007). ‘Organized crime’ is used to refer to both specific, criminalized ways of committing offences, and the actors committing them. In the national context of this study, drug crimes, armed robberies, outlaw motorcycle gangs, and alcohol smuggling have been typical targets of specialist organized crime policing units (Gundhus, 2009; Larsson, 2018). Historically, economic crimes have rarely formed the basis for organized crime prosecutions in and of themselves (Politidirektoratet, 2005), with economic crime control efforts tending to play an auxiliary role (Hobbs, 2013; Korsell et al., 2009).

Organized and economic crime are categories that may overlap empirically. The distinction between economic crime<sup>2</sup> and organized crime has been a subject of long-standing debate, wherein a differentiation between the two based on the social status of offenders has been criticized (Croall, 2001). Still, offences tend to be targeted as organized crime ‘when carried out by underworld-type figures’ (Levi, 2007, p. 777), whereas economic crime has been considered to refer to those committed in the context of an otherwise presumptively licit business. However, the techniques and rationalities of law-breaking across the continuum from licit to illicit enterprises are more alike than is often assumed when these terms are used (Ruggiero, 1996; van Duyne & Houtzager, 2005).

Having organized expertise in functional silos, crime control agencies are challenged by phenomena that are poorly captured by the established boundaries

---

<sup>2</sup> Often collectively referred to as ‘white collar crime’, although there is conceptual pluralism and contestation in this field. Some terms, like ‘economic crime’ and ‘white collar crime’, are approximate synonyms, whereas terms like ‘occupational crime’, ‘governmental crime’, ‘elite crime’, and ‘business crime’ differ more as they describe specifics with regard to aspects such as context or offenders’ traits (Friedrichs, 2009). The term ‘economic crime’ is used throughout this thesis to include economic offenses committed in a licit context of economic interaction, in either business or government. It is the comprehensive term used in the field of study as well (Kriminalitetsområder - Økokrim, n.d.).

of their formal organizational structures. Besides being domain specialists, individuals and units also commonly specialize to respond to particular types of offences using specific methods (Dahl et al., 2021). A salient example is the historical connection between intelligence work and narcotics units, which means knowledge about intelligence methods has mainly been found in units that have been specialized to address this particular type of crime (Bacon, 2016; Gundhus, 2009). On the other end, economic crime policing has been based to a greater extent on a prosecutorial mode, based on tips from mandated reporters and others who often discover offences through audits or inspections (Korsell, 2015). As discussed in publication 5 (Vestby, in review), economic crime policing is understood in the national context of this study as being an institutionalised epitome of reactive policing. The economic domain of social life is pluralistic, and is governed by an array of regulatory agencies, each with jurisdiction over a specialist domain. *Some* of these agencies' cases are reported to the police for investigation and, possibly, prosecution (Hawkins, 2002; Korsell, 2015). The aim of the WRC strategy is thus to co-ordinate expertise and resources related to both crime *phenomena*, as well as crime control *methods* across organizational silos, both within the police, and between the police and other agencies and actors in civil society.

WRC subsumes a range of offences, connects them, and introduces a new interpretive framework for offences that are under the jurisdiction of discrete organizational work units. As such, it is well suited to study sensemaking processes, i.e., how WRC is interpreted in local sites in ways that render it actionable and provide plausible justifications for placing specific offences under the label rather than 'just' being isolated instances of offences such as tax evasion or illicit work.

### **1.3 Public police under reform**

Every police specialist unit involved in the anti-WRC strategy is organized as part of the Norwegian public police organization, which is organized as a single service under the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. The Police Directorate's responsibilities include the professional and fiscal management of 12 geographic

police districts and five specialist agencies. This study included participants from police districts and two of the specialist agencies, KRIPOS (the National Criminal Investigation Service) and ØKOKRIM (the National Authority for Investigation and Prosecution of Economic and Environmental Crime), both of which have primary law enforcement tasks and provide specialist resources to operations such as police districts' investigations regarding serious and organized crime, as well as economic and environmental crimes, respectively.

Public policing functions in Norway are carried out under a two-track system where investigations are under the jurisdiction of the higher prosecution authorities and governed by the Criminal Procedure Act, whereas outside of criminal proceedings, policing is under the jurisdiction of the Police Directorate and is legislated in the Police Act (Politi-loven, 1995; Straffeprosessloven, 1981; Myhrer, 2014). Investigations are headed by prosecutors who hold police ranks, whereas investigators conduct the investigative work. Criminal intelligence work can be undertaken under both legal frameworks, depending on whether it relates to an investigation. Although 'intelligence' has managerial connotations in the context of ILP, it remains key when police decide whether to initiate proactive, and sometimes covert, investigations, which illustrates the need for careful consideration of the purpose of collecting information in any given instance (Eidet, 2019; cf. Hestehave, 2021).

This study was conducted during a period of reform of the Norwegian police organization. Following a parliamentary vote in 2015, the police force was structurally centralized through a decrease in police districts, and professionally through what was termed a 'quality reform'. Here, standardization of tools and procedures, as well as knowledge-based practice, were considered key to ensuring that the police organization could efficiently deliver services of high quality (Justis- og beredskapsdepartementet, 2015). The ILP methodology discussed in this thesis represents one such standardized model for intelligence work and is a linchpin in the provision of knowledge-based policing (Politidirektoratet, 2014).

The underlying assumptions of the reform are congruent with those of many other public sector reforms in Norway and internationally over recent decades, wherein streamlining and specialization remain largely unquestioned guiding

principles (Sørli & Larsson, 2018a). New Public Management (NPM) and management by objectives have been influential in the Norwegian police organization and the wider public sector (Christensen, 2018; Wathne, 2018), although the tendency towards centralization is also attributed to 'post-NPM' management theories. Here, centralization is a means to counter the fragmentation that NPM can cause, to achieve stronger co-ordination of work units within the public sector (Christensen, 2018). The inter-ministerial strategy to combat WRC is an example of a whole-of-government, post-NPM approach in which co-ordination counters 'the negative effects of NPM reforms such as structural devolution, performance management, and single-purpose organizations'. (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007, p. 1059).

#### **1.4 Thesis at a glance**

**Part I** of this thesis explains the context and background for the included publications and includes six chapters that present a holistic narrative of the thesis as a whole.

**Chapter 2** introduces the unifying theoretical framework which is based in sensemaking theory and Garland's (2001) concepts of rationalization and responsabilization as adaptive responses to crime.

**Chapter 3** presents and discusses the data and methods used in this dissertation, as well as ethical considerations regarding informed consent in hierarchical organizations, and the representation of participants in published extracts.

**Chapter 4** includes a summary of each publication and its key findings.

**Chapter 5** draws together the findings of the individual articles, discussing how they inter-relate and respond to the overarching research questions. The discussion is organized around three integrated claims about punitive partnerships, ILP as a sensemaking technology, and practical criminologies.

**Chapter 6** concludes with remarks about the findings of this study, considers their potential implications for policy and practice, and points out potential avenues for future research.

**Part II** is comprised of five publications, compiled in a recommended reading order. These are listed with co-authors, publication status and journals in Table 1-1 below. Four (1,2,3,5) of these are based on analyses of empirical data, including interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, and one (4) is a theoretical article. The data collection is based on a multi-sited qualitative research design, including sites and participants involved in multi-agency crime control of organized and economic crime. Participants who work with investigations, prosecution, intelligence, and crime prevention are all represented in the material (see Table 3-1 and ). Sensemaking theory constitutes a theoretical throughline which binds the individual publications of the thesis together, centring on issues related to how organizations reduce complexity as members articulate problems and suitable responses to them.

*Table 1-1: Overview of the publications*

#	Title	Journal	Status	Co-authors
1	Cheats, Threats and Reflexivity: Organizational Narratives on Policing Organized and Economic Crime	<i>British Journal of Criminology</i>	Published	
2	'It's about using the full sanction catalogue': On boundary negotiations in a multi-agency organised crime investigation	<i>Policing and Society</i>	Published	Heidi Fischer-Bjelland
3	Policy making without politics: Overstating objectivity in intelligence-led policing	<i>Moral issues in Intelligence-Led Policing</i> [anthology]	Published	
4	Machine Learning and the Police: Asking the Right Questions	<i>Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice</i>	Published	Jonas Vestby
5	Preventing prosecution: Narratives on proactive policing	<i>Theoretical Criminology</i>	In review	



## 2. Theoretical framework

A key theoretical assumption in this study is that control agencies are pragmatic, problem-solving, and require that they make order and predictability out of complex circumstances. This chapter draws on David Garland's analysis of institutional change as a result of the problem-solving efforts of agents within them (2001), and on sensemaking theory, which perceives the process of organizational action as embedded in ongoing interpretive efforts to consolidate plausible accounts of the environment which agents are required to act on and within (Weick et al., 2005). Both contribute to the perspective that organizations have situated viewpoints on their areas of responsibility and make pragmatic assessments about what it is possible for them to accomplish. The excerpt below captures the essence of the foundational theoretical assumptions which have guided my research:

Socially situated, imperfectly knowledgeable actors stumble upon ways of doing things that seem to work, and seem to fit with their other concerns. Authorities patch together workable solutions to problems that they can see and can get to grips with. Agencies struggle to cope with their workload, please their political masters, and do the best job they can in the circumstances. [...] Every solution is based upon a situated perception of the problem it addresses, of the interests that are at stake and of the values that ought to guide action and distribute consequences. (Garland, 2001, p. 26)

However, as Weick and his theoretical antecedents provide general models to study organizational sensemaking, Garland's treatise sets out specifically to explain change and continuity in crime control policies and practices based on agencies' proximate and pragmatic considerations, as well as macro influences from the economic, cultural, and political spheres. This perspective gives rise to his concepts of rationalization and responsabilization as adaptive responses to crime, which I relate to the empirical phenomena of multi-agency partnerships and ILP studied in this thesis.

Facing high crime rates and waning belief in the criminal justice state as a provider of security, authorities on both sides of the Atlantic responded with economically minded, preventive measures, as well as expressive outpourings of moral outrage and displays of sovereign authority (Garland, 2001). Considering the US and UK contexts, Garland conceptualized the multifaceted crime control landscape at the turn of the millennium as two major strands of *adaptive* and *sovereign state* strategies, respectively. The adaptive strategies included proactive prevention ‘rather than the prosecution and punishment of individuals’ (Garland, 2001, p. 140), whereas the latter represented incapacitating and exclusionary crime control measures, including ‘expressive and intensive modes of policing’ (ibid.). Both represent a break with penal-welfarist theories that offenders could and should be rehabilitated and received back into the social body, and that wide-ranging social welfare reforms could address the criminogenic effects of inequality and deprivation. Garland terms the criminologies underlying these strategies *the new criminologies of everyday life*, and *the criminology of the other*. Both take for granted the pervasiveness of crime in late modern societies, but whereas the former assumes that crime is situationally motivated and contiguous with the rest of social life, the latter builds from a view of the criminal as radically Other, monstrous and incorrigible, and best met with incapacitation.

The adaptive strategies that crystallized as described above were preceded historically by a series of low-visibility and largely administrative adaptive responses to the problem of high crime rates and limited state capacity to do anything about it (Garland, 2001, pp. 113–127). Two such responses, responsabilization and rationalization, form important theoretical entryways to highlight the wider significance of this thesis’s empirical loci of multi-agency crime control and ILP. The first adaptive response, responsabilization, relocates responsibility and agency for crime prevention from the (criminal justice) state to civil society. Here, ‘the community’ is a key term for diverse initiatives, but importantly, it denotes socially responsive policing measures aimed at establishing positive relations between police agencies and particular communities, and designing crime control initiatives based on community resources (Garland, 2001; Weisburd et al., 2019). In addition to community initiatives, the responsabilization



strategy entails ‘the criminal justice state [...] shedding its “sovereign” style of governing by top-down command’:

Redistributing the task of crime control, rendering others responsible, multiplying the number of effective authorities, forming alliances, arranging things so that crime control duties follow crime-generating behaviours – these are the new and institutionally radical goals that are now being pursued. (Garland, 2001, p. 125)

Second, the rationalization of the criminal justice sector came to pass as high crime rates overloaded agencies, including the police. Part of the response to this problem was to rationalize the maintenance of justice and order by means such as tightening the selection of cases to prosecute and improving targeting (and thus resource allocation) based on more systematic information processing, and through the development of new proactive police strategies defined in opposition to post hoc responses to crime and disorder (Garland, 2001; see also Weisburd & Braga, 2019).

The logics of rationalization and responsabilization persist in the Nordic countries in forms such as ILP and a reliance on multi-agency as well as public-private partnerships outside the high-crime contexts of the US and the UK described by Garland (Dahl et al., 2021; Gundhus & Jansen, 2020; Jahnsen & Rykkja, 2020; Nøkleberg, 2016; Rowe & Søgaaard, 2019; Vestby, 2018). How these have been operationalized and understood is covered later in this chapter, and forms the basis for the subsequent discussion in Chapter 5.

## **2.1 Sensemaking**

Sensemaking is a theory of social organization that emphasizes the interrelation between interpretation and action. It proceeds from the assumption that social organization happens when actors explicitly explain their environment in words, and that these explications serve as ‘a springboard into action’ (Weick et al., 2005, p. 409). Sensemaking theory has been influential in interpretive, phenomenological, and discursively oriented organizational studies (Brown et al., 2015; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). It is a process-oriented strain of organizational

sociology established in opposition to functionalist and/or rational actor-based theories of human and organizational behaviour (Brown et al., 2015; Kudesia, 2017; Manning, 1997; Weick, 1995). Rather, sensemaking is considered to be the fundamental 'pattern formation process' that underlies stable and taken-for-granted patterns of group behaviour that make up organizations (Kudesia, 2017, p. 4).

The world is complex and in flux. In order to act, this complexity needs to be reduced. According to the sensemaking perspective, people notice and bracket pieces of information on which they build tentative interpretations, which, when acted upon, change both the environment of the organization and thus the outcome of subsequent interpretations (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). Interpretations can be expressed in forms such as narratives, categories, or concepts (Rantatalo & Karp, 2018; Vestby, 2022), and it has been argued that this produces an actually more ordered environment for the organization (Kudesia, 2017). Now, this does not mean that sensemaking produces valid explanations in a scientific sense, or that the following actions accomplish the intended aims of people in the organization. According to sensemaking theory, plausibility is a necessary condition for interpretations to spur action, whereas accuracy is not (an accurate explanation may of course also be accepted as plausible, but it is its merits as a plausible explanation that takes precedence). Interpretations may satisfy plausibility criteria by providing coherence to disparate observations (Schildt et al., 2020). From an organization's point of view, the complexity of the environment can de facto be meaningfully reduced and ordered based on explanations that fulfil plausibility criteria (Brown et al., 2015), rendering some courses of action feasible, practical, and appropriate.

## **2.2 Power, resources, and constraints in police sensemaking**

Mainstream sensemaking theory outlines a stepwise process whereby interpretation precedes action (Weick, 1995). Action, in turn, changes the environment and requires the initial interpretation to be updated to remain plausible given the altered environment. Crises and violated expectations have been seen as the situations that prompt organizational sensemaking processes.

This model of sensemaking has been criticized for exaggerating the episodic aspects of sensemaking, whilst ignoring immersive forms that take place as actors are engaged in 'action that is habitual, ongoing, and non-deliberate' (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2020, p. 2). Here, they continuously re-enact the environment as events play out as they usually do, and absent any violated expectations.

The existing environment, including features of police cultures, is treated in this thesis as a powerful influence on the processes and outcomes of sensemaking. Many scholars have continued to develop Weick's initial theory to include 'issues of power, knowledge, structure, and past relationships' (Mills et al., 2010, p. 188; Schildt et al., 2020). This means that agents are not free to interpret events spontaneously, given that 'sense is always and already given and made simultaneously' (Introna, 2019, p. 745). To understand why some interpretations become or remain dominant, it is necessary to consider the existence of resources and constraints that pertain to sensemaking processes, and through which power dynamics in a field can be made visible. The policing context immerses its participants 'within a sociomaterial practice world' and 'relational ensembles involving people, objects, and tools – which give meaning to what we do and who we are' (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2020, p. 5) – including cultural aspects such as 'plans, expectations, acceptable justifications, and traditions inherited from predecessors' (Weick et al., 2005, p. 409). Organizational life not only provides resources, but also imposes limits on the range of legitimate and potentially plausible interpretations of events that may be proposed (Ericson, 1981). Sense, then, is made simultaneously as agents act; however, the extra-subjective level also presents agents with pre-made sense. For example, vocabularies reflect 'currently dominant values, concerns, and ideologies, which are already discursively operative in particular institutional fields' (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2020, p. 18), and institutions 'prime people to [...] attend to certain problems' (Weber & Glynn, 2006, p. 1649). Concepts, procedures, and legal rules provided by organizations (Ericson & Shearing, 1986; Mills et al., 2010), as well as shared macro cultural narratives (Tognato, 2015; Vestby, 2022), are other examples. Thus, the existing environment, both within and outside the organization, exerts a powerful influence on shaping the outcomes of sensemaking by introducing restraints and providing resources.

The police possess a wide range of powers of order maintenance and crime control and guard the entryway to the criminal justice process (Dubber & Valverde, 2006; Finstad, 2018). Their power, it has been argued, rests both on access to the legal use of violence and their substantial symbolic definitional power: 'At the heart of the police mandate lies the translation of social conflicts, threats, and problems into events and circumstances that require police intervention. In selecting and putting off to the side, dramatizing and trivializing, police signal their view on what constitutes crime and disorder (Finstad, 2018, p. 25, author's translation; Seigel, 2018). The work of translating events into police work are essentially sensemaking processes that activate cultural and material resources for agents to work within the context of the organization.

Such translation processes into police work have been studied across different contexts. Researching uniformed patrol work, Finstad (2003) identified police typologies of citizen attitudes in police encounters and how police rationalize their responses to the various types, and coined the term 'the police gaze' to refer to the learned and highly contextual ability of police to see anomalies and suspicious traits against what may not stand out as anything more than background to civilians. In the context of ILP, Fraser and Atkinson (2014) studied the role of civilian intelligence workers in processes that end up labelling individuals as members of 'gangs', in contrast with the often presupposed primacy of officer discretion in explanations of targeting and labelling in non-ILP contexts.

Lundgaard's (2021) ethnography of police control rooms studied the processes by which operators, under conditions of uncertainty, limited information, and time restraints, make decisions about which calls are turned into tasks for the patrols and which are turned down. She asks (with reference to Bittner's canonical definition of police tasks as *something that ought not to be happening and about which someone had better do something now!* (Bittner, 2005, p. 162)) 'How does *something* become something that *ought not to be happening*, and how do *police* become those who have to *do something*, and when is *now*?' (Lundgaard, 2021, p. 44 author's translation). In *Making Crime*, Ericson (1981) studied how organizational interests influence what events will be turned into and treated as crime by detectives, who attempt to create order and predictability.

Detectives are analysed as creative agents within a system that constrains but does not define them. Ericson (1981, p. xi) views detectives as ‘workers subject to controlling influences; who work in response to these controls and sometimes find ways around them to accomplish their organizational tasks as they see them; and, who in turn exert considerable control over the process’. Runhovde (2017, p. 90) made similar observations when studying how customs inspectors need to manage their workload factored into their selection of which types of contraband to prioritize (with illegal wildlife products losing out to narcotics seizures, in part owing to the greater difficulty of establishing subjective guilt for the former).

To engage with agents’ categories and what they are used for is a way to engage with sensemaking processes of innovation and reproduction. Classifications serve as interpretive templates on which action can be based and work can be organized. In the context of this study, to engage with categories in this way can also be considered to be a study of parts of ‘official criminology’ – working social categories that are operational in the practice field of criminal justice institutions (Garland, 2001, p. 25). The categories of WRC, prevention, co-ordination, or organized crime, ‘constitute their [...] objects’, and regardless of the validity of these categories in a scientific sense, they are ‘truth-producing categories for real social practices’ (Garland, 2001, p. 25). This perspective resonates with sensemaking theory’s assumption that plausibility is the critical feature on which explanations – in the form of narratives, concepts, and categories – are assessed to evaluate their relevance as ‘springboards into action’ (Weick et al., 2005, p. 409).

### **2.3 Co-ordination and coherence in multi-agency crime control**

Returning to Garland’s adaptive crime control responses, I turn here to consider the responsabilization logic which is manifested in the multiagency strategies studied empirically for the thesis’ publications. These are crime control strategies based on ‘multiplying the number of effective authorities’ and ‘forming alliances’ (Garland, 2001, p. 125). Within the police-centric sections of the anti-WRC initiative that I have studied, are multi-agency varieties of investigation, disruption, and intelligence, as well as the preventive police–business liaison

model through which police are supposed to perform duties such as helping business communities and public administration to exercise their own crime prevention capabilities (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017; Vestby, in review). Rather than being centralized with the police organization, the responsibility for crime control is distributed among state and non-state actors, including citizens. This is often conceptualized in partnership terms (Crawford, 1999; Garland, 2001). However, a heterogeneous mix of strategies exist in this landscape of distributed crime control. The partnership term has egalitarian connotations which are belied, for example, by third party policing — a model in which police persuade or coerce non-offending actors (individuals, businesses) to reduce the opportunities for others' offending (Mazerolle & Ransley, 2006).

Multi-agency partnerships have moved from being associated with crime prevention to emerging in contexts such as organized crime investigations, joint intelligence ventures, and disruptive police strategies (Atkinson, 2019; Bjelland & Vestby, 2017; Dahl et al., 2021). Within the public sector and across the public-private divide, preventive, punitive, and surveillance partnerships are used to pool and redistribute the power and responsibility for crime prevention onto capable control agents and enforcers in the environment (Kammersgaard, 2019; Malik et al., 2022; Nøkleberg, 2021; O'Neill & Loftus, 2013; Stenström, 2020). Furthermore, it has been argued that the meaning of crime prevention itself has changed over time from encompassing non-coercive measures to including disruptive tactics and placing the enforcement of criminal, as well as administrative, law at its core (Ashworth & Zedner, 2014; Hestehave, 2021; Lomell, 2012; Vestby, in review).

Co-ordination has been considered useful for improving access to information from other jurisdictions and facilitating the pragmatic use of legal resources (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017; Mazerolle & Ransley, 2006; O'Neill & McCarthy, 2014). The anti-WRC initiative is based on ideas that coordinating the crime control capabilities of implicated agencies and private actors is key to capturing the totality of a crime issue where offences as well as potential guardians are dispersed across sectors. Co-ordination requires a degree of consensus about what WRC is and how it may be reasonably interpreted in practice. These ideas can be expressed and refined through shared concepts or stories (cf. Weick et al., 2005),

which can make the umbrella concept of WRC applicable in particular sites and instances and undergird co-ordination between sites through adherence to shared understandings about key features or typical manifestations (Annison, 2021; Vestby, 2022).

The WRC concept may provide coherence across organizational boundaries (Giacomantonio, 2015), facilitating the co-ordination of interests and resources of multiple disparate agencies and/or intra-police work units (Jahnsen & Rykkja, 2020). In Article 5 (Vestby, in review), I have characterized 'WRC' as a term with 'high use value' (Christie, 2004, p. 40) to characterize its potential for co-ordination. The term highlights specific, existing acts for control agencies to target, while being sufficiently diffuse to allow consolidation of a variety of stakeholders in the control sphere whose interests are tangential to the phenomenon. Bowker and Star (1999) discuss classifications – products of the work of creating and maintaining categories – as objects that can facilitate cooperation across social worlds. They term these classifications 'boundary objects', which are

[...] those objects that inhabit several communities of practice and satisfy the informational requirements of each of them. [...] they are objects that are able both to travel across borders and maintain some sort of constant identity. They can be tailored to meet the needs of any one community (they are plastic in this sense or customisable). At the same time, they have common identities across settings. This is achieved by allowing the object to be weakly structured in common use, imposing stronger structures in the individual site tailored use. (Bowker & Star, 1999, pp. 15–16)

As will be elaborated in the methods chapter, the multi-sited tracing of the WRC concept has been a search for its qualities as a boundary object in this sense. As such, it may be better to think of it as a 'boundary concept', as boundary objects in research tend to be manifest things (Sanders & Lavoie, 2021), which WRC is not; it is a 'cultural formation' (Marcus, 1995, p. 96).

## 2.4 Intelligence-led policing and scientification

Rationalization (Garland, 2001) forms the other adaptive response that I use here to frame the thesis. The term denotes strategies that respond to the state's inadequacy to counter high crime rates not by expanding the criminal justice system, but rather, by limiting it through strategic reconceptualization of criminal justice organizations' priorities and goals. Proactive policing strategies (of which ILP is one) strive to use evidence-based rather than experience-based practices and are 'centered around and conditioned by knowledge production' about crime and 'police responses' (Hestehave, 2021, p. 55). Proactive police strategies are employed, in part, to respond to calls for efficient and fiscally restrained service provision. Both a targeting logic and the curtailing of officer discretion fit within the ILP paradigm; they are strategies that cater to demands for knowledge-based, cost-efficient policing, and professionalization understood as standardization (Gundhus et al., 2021; James, 2013; Ratcliffe, 2016; Tilley, 2008). Building 'system knowledge' (Ericson & Haggerty, 1997) and embedding this in formal frameworks for organizational decision-making reduces the need for flexible and discretionary decision-making by frontline officers: 'The aim of standardization and ILP is to create efficient work processes and better policing by introducing vertical steering mechanisms and control of the front line to make their performance more accountable.' (Gundhus et al., 2021, p. 12). Accountability in this context is not only the traditional public-interest variety, but also a version of the 'new accountability' [that] has a distinctive discourse and an associated set of technologies in line with a governmental rationality committed to fiscal restraints, efficiency, performance, and the cutting back of the public sector (Chan, 1999, p. 254; Reiner, 2013).

The national Norwegian police force began the implementation of its Police Intelligence Doctrine (PID) (Politidirektoratet, 2014) in 2014 to provide a data-driven business model for policing (Vestby, 2018). Its implementation is part of wider structural and quality reforms of the Norwegian police organization, and the doctrine is an obligatory framework for police intelligence work and training. ILP aims to not only facilitate the cost-effective use of police resources, but also achieve this by applying an intelligence methodology built on (social) scientific principles (Innes et al., 2005; Ratcliffe, 2016; Vestby, 2018). ILP thus marries elements from



complementary, albeit not synonymous, logics of rationalization and scientification. These incorporate an epistemological concept of objectivity that place police organizations in the position of detached experts on crime and disorder, potentially obscuring ‘tacit police criminolog[-ies]’ (Innes et al., 2005, p. 54) that inform the selection and interpretation of the information used to produce ILP’s data-driven decisions (Gill & Phythian, 2012; Innes & Sheptycki, 2004; Scott & Jackson, 2004). Ericson and Shearing (1986, p. 133) argue that just as law legitimizes police action with reference to legality, science and technology legitimize policing through means that produce ‘statements of authoritative certainty’. Therefore, it is necessary to

begin to think of the police not only in the traditional terms of their monopoly on the legitimate use of force, but also in terms of the scientific and legal means at their disposal to monopolize the acquisition and use of information about the objects of knowledge they select on behalf of the state or private interest. (ibid., p. 154)

ILP is intended to identify patterns that enable police to target interventions at either hot spots for crime, or specific prolific and/or dangerous offenders. ‘Pattern recognition’, writes Ratcliffe (2009, p. 2), ‘is therefore the aim of the intelligence process’. In this regard, analogue and digital instantiations of ILP are identical: machine learning (ML) models such as those used in predictive policing<sup>3</sup> software literally identify and reconstruct patterns in (often police) data to produce forecasts on which police agencies can base decisions about how, when, where, for and against whom to allocate their resources (Egbert & Leese, 2021; Kaufmann et al., 2019; Vestby & Vestby, 2021). Pattern prediction serves to render the world more orderly and manageable. However, ML models reproduce correlational patterns in their input data, regardless of whether these patterns represent causal mechanisms or are based on correct assumptions (Zhang et al., 2018). Implicit, human, or

---

<sup>3</sup> Egbert and Leese point out that the term ‘predictive policing’ does not signify a single phenomenon. However, they suggest the term might be defined as ‘the proactive use of algorithmically mediated data analysis for the purpose of finding patterns in datasets, based on which risk estimates are produced for either individuals or locations and are operationalized in the form of targeted prevention measures’ (2021, p. 19).

explicit ML prediction models can *predict* well and provide ‘actionable intelligence’ (Rathmell, 2002) for decision-makers, even absent correlations that have causal merit and deepen understanding or knowledge about how police actions impact the environment as they act on it (cf. Brodeur & Dupont, 2006; Vestby & Vestby, 2021; cf. Weick et al., 2005). On this basis, it has been argued that a participatory approach to model development is necessary to protect fairness, as the technical expertise required to build an ML model that ‘works’, i.e. has predictive power through reproducing patterns, is different from the knowledge necessary to understand relevant features of the domain wherein the model will be deployed (Holstein et al., 2019; Vestby & Vestby, 2021).

Predictive modelling is a logical extension of the same rationalization tendency as ‘old school’ ILP (Fyfe et al., 2018; see e.g., James, 2013; Kleiven, 2007). Some have argued for a more democratically sensitive treatment of value concepts and social diversity in strategic police decision-making, beyond what is captured by attempts to operationalize overall police mandates according to objectivity criteria (Rønn, 2013; Vestby, 2018). Increased scientification aggravates the need for rethinking the relationships between decision-makers, citizens, and technical experts (Jasanoff, 2003). Despite the realization that states are unable to provide complete security to all citizens, the police remain central in the practical and symbolic management of law and order issues (Bowling et al., 2018; Garland, 2001). While new pre-emptive and managerial data-based policing practices facilitate more ‘abstract’ policing (Terpstra et al., 2019), ‘the practice of policing *through* flows of data [reaffirms] traditional ways of knowing and policing’ (Sanders & Condon, 2017, p. 13). Rather than detach police organizational decision-making from previous pathways, ILP is imbued with the risk of effectively amplifying control of ‘usual suspects’ while simultaneously presenting as an objective technocratic tool for crime control and security governance (Gill, 2000; Rowe & Søgaaard, 2019; Sanders & Hannem, 2012; Sanders & Condon, 2017). Questions of how the ‘appliance of science’ (Innes et al., 2005) in analysis or the use of predictive technologies (Egbert & Leese, 2021) bolsters policing organizations’ ‘epistemic power’ (Archer et al., 2020) as experts on crime, risk, and appropriate solutions require sustained attention. ‘Epistemic power’ refers to the extent of an agent’s

twin abilities ‘to influence what people think, believe, and know, and to the extent she is able to enable and disable others from exerting epistemic influence’ (ibid., p. 29). As argued in Publication 3, insofar as police organizations are considered self-sufficient in the production of objective and valid descriptions of the environment for which they design and decide interventions, the harder it is for other (e.g. stakeholder or citizen) parties to supplement or otherwise modify consequential police theories on crime and crime control (cf. Chan et al., 2022; Vestby, 2018). Use of the apparently most rational, objective, and goal-oriented social technologies draw on the legitimacy of science, and although the narrowly defined goals of these models are often not the only outcomes of interest<sup>4</sup> (Vestby & Vestby, 2021), they lend themselves to measurement and are most easily allocated to the jurisdictions of existing agencies and governmental domains. They are presented as detached from politics, obscuring processes of selection, measurement, and representation of risks and their solutions (Bowker & Star, 1999; Douglas, 1992; Garland, 2001; Kaufmann et al., 2019; Manning, 2008).

Through the case of WRC, the connections between interpretation of crimes and the existence of feasible reactions are explored, showing how the different representations privilege some values or purposes over others (e.g., whether potentially exploited workers’ rights versus deportation as a tool to disrupt suspect enterprises) (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017; Vestby, 2022; Vestby, in review). The thesis then discusses why a participatory approach may bolster strategic decision-making in some cases, and proposes some concrete tools to this end (Vestby, 2018; Vestby & Vestby, 2021).

---

<sup>4</sup> For example, is it *good enough* to base drug policing decisions on historic enforcement patterns embedded in police data? (Lum & Isaac, 2016)



### 3. Data and methods

This dissertation is based on an extensive qualitative data set that was collected and analysed in the period 2015–2021. The data comprise interviews, field notes from observations, and publicly available policy documents and threat assessments. This chapter covers the practicality and rationale of the data collection to elucidate how and why this particular set was assembled, as well as ethical considerations. In this chapter, I describe my research design, but also aim to account for pragmatic considerations and serendipitous circumstances that contributed to shape the process and outcomes of this study.

This doctoral project received funding from the Norwegian Research Council as part of the New Trends in Modern Policing project. As such, when I succeeded in my application to take on this particular sub-project, there already existed an empirical focus and theoretical orientation from which I could proceed. The initial working title for this project was ‘Policing the blurred line between organized and economic crime’. It was intended to be a qualitative, empirical exploration of developments in the relationship between pro- and reactive police methods within an empirical context where the specialist silos of organized and economic crime policing were implicated in policing crimes that transcended the boundaries of the same silos. This research began during a period of heightened political and media attention directed at WRC in the spring of 2015, garnered in particular by the investigation of the Lime grocery chain (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017). WRC presented a likely case to explore the theoretical and empirical issues raised in the grant proposal.

#### 3.1 Research design

The project is based on a qualitative, multi-sited research design including participant observation, interviews, and document analysis. The aim of using such a design was to follow and trace the WRC concept in the perceptions of professionals at various sites. This was inspired by multi-sited ethnography in which the researcher ‘[traces] a cultural formation across and within multiple sites of activity’ (Marcus, 1995, p. 3). People, things, metaphors, and conflicts are all examples of things that can be followed in this way (ibid.). The cultural formation

in my case, of course, is WRC. A multi-sited approach is suited to the study of networks, connections, and flows of information and knowledge between sites, and to the exploration of how local contexts relate to their surroundings (Henne, 2017; Horst, 2009). Rather than producing a thick description of any single study site, WRC as a cultural formation and its connection to multiple sites is the object of study (Geertz in Fangen, 2010; Horst, 2009, p. 126; Marcus, 1995).

Originally, the project was designed as an ethnographic study to include participant observation and interviews at three key specialist units in the domestic Norwegian context: two at the national level and one at a metropolitan police district. However, I did not succeed in securing the sort of access required for extensive participant observation. With one exception, the units I wished to include expressed reticence and cited capacity concerns about my project, and offered more limited forms of access in the shape of interviews and participation at particular events, rather than the opportunity for me to ‘hang around’ in the everyday. The planned start of my data collection period coincided with the reform period mentioned in Chapter 1, and which occupied substantial resources (Sørli & Larsson, 2018b). Rather than relying on extensive participant observation, I altered the design to expand the emphasis to semi-structured interviews and the aforementioned document analysis, while taking the opportunities I was presented with to conduct observations in the formal sense, as well as participate in relevant events I had access to as an employee at the police college whenever I could.<sup>5</sup>

In the course of this project, I conducted 40 hours of participant observation in the formal sense, where participants were notified and consented to my presence as a researcher. These were mostly spent at an organized crime intelligence unit in early 2017. I spent approximately 100 hours at events to which I had access based on my employment at the police college, but from which I generated no field notes that have been included in the analysis. These were crucial to locate potential participants and support the purposive sampling strategy of this study, and to improve the relevance of the topic guides I used during interviews. Since 2014, a secondary organizational structure has gradually been established as

---

<sup>5</sup> More on positionality later in this chapter.

part of the national strategy (Jahnsen & Rykkja, 2020), but much enforcement, prevention, and analytic work is undertaken by specialist units with wider mandates, relating to areas such as financial investigation or strategic intelligence analysis. For example, the regional interagency task forces report their uncovered cases to the investigative units in the primary (police district) organizational structure. The access I gained from being a police college employee offered an excellent holistic view of the field I wanted to study and the location of its actors. Examples of events I have attended are intelligence seminars for professional development, a certification class I took to access the police's intelligence software, Indicia, formal and informal meetings with participants in the field, some observation of court proceedings, and miscellaneous other events related to training and further education. Although I did not generate any data for this analysis on these occasions, I gained a greater understanding of how those in the field talked amongst themselves about issues related to ILP and WRC when not prompted. On these occasions, I benefited greatly and obviously from the embedded, insider aspect of my position as a police researcher (Brown, 1996; Hartmann et al., 2018).

### **3.2 Sampling across sites**

A vital objective for my data collection has been to identify various ideas about WRC and corresponding police methods. What *is* WRC, what can be known about it, and how can it be combated or governed? I sampled to recruit participants with relevant expertise and/or experience from geographically and functionally diverse sites to capture as much variety as I could in response to these questions. I did not aim to assemble a representative sample of professionals from which to generalize to the full population, but rather, to recruit using a purposive sampling strategy. There exist several strategies for purposive sampling, but they share the characteristic 'that participants are selected according to predetermined criteria relevant to a particular research objective' (Guest et al., 2006, p. 61). Participants were invited according to the experience/expertise and diversity criteria above and because of their knowledge about the empirical phenomena (WRC, ILP, partnerships) that concern this study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability

strategy that does not allow for later generalization to the full population, but is well suited for studies wherein ‘one needs to study a certain cultural domain with knowledgeable experts within’ (Guest et al., 2006; Tongco, 2007, p. 147). The cultural domain, however, is composed of interconnected groups that occupy distinct localities, and is not synonymous with any particular or clearly bounded group (Hannerz, 2003; Horst, 2009). The sampling strategy was developed to support the project’s purpose to trace the presence of ideas and concepts across connected sites, rather than to map their prevalence in absolute terms.

The sampling strategy was concept-driven sequential (Miles et al., 2014), which allowed for the sample to be assembled progressively and purposively as I traced the WRC concept between sites. The first sample was constructed from a group of investigators and management-level decision-makers involved in the inter-agency investigation of the Lime case (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017). The police district leading the project contacted the police college in autumn 2015, enquiring whether anyone was interested in assisting the district in an evaluation of the investigation. The case was slated for trial the following spring, and the investigation was nearing an end. Co-author Heidi Fischer Bjelland and I had several meetings with the lead investigators of the case and agreed to conduct interviews and write a descriptive report of the key findings. In exchange, we were permitted to invite the individual participants in the evaluation to consent to the use of their interviews in our respective doctoral theses (see Bjelland, 2019). Based on mutual interest and knowledge-sharing, this research design falls within the current paradigm of police scholarship that Davies (2016, p. 158) calls a ‘collaborative stage’, when the boundary between insiders and outsiders in the joint production of knowledge is decentred.

Based on written materials provided by the police district, including a list of names and contact information for the 43 investigators then still working on the case, we invited 23 participants, all of whom gave their informed and voluntary consent, to participate in the academic studies as well. The particulars of this recruitment are described in Publication 2 (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017). Two were interviewed together, making the number of interviews 22. This initial, serendipitous access to what has become a pivotal case in the field of anti-WRC



law enforcement was a gift in itself, as well as for later sampling for the thesis project. First, it provided insight into a set of central work units in the police tasked with anti-WRC work, such as those targeting economic or organized crime, or specialists in intelligence analysis, which helped me greatly in approaching the next sample. Second, my involvement in the evaluation situated me in the field and made the job of explaining my motivation and research interests, much easier.

The final rounds of recruitment for interviews took place in 2017. At this point, following the aforementioned police reform starting in 2016, each police district had established, or was in the process of establishing, a police-business liaison position to facilitate tasks such as WRC crime prevention by the police alone and in collaboration with local businesses, the government, and civil society. I thus contacted all 12 police districts via e-mail with information about my project, asking permission to contact their liaison officers for an interview. Not every position was staffed at that time, and two declined to participate. Nine agreed to interviews, which were conducted in 2017. That same year, I also contacted the Norwegian National Authority for Investigation and Prosecution of Economic and Environmental Crime ('Økokrim') and was put in touch with five specialist investigators and management-level officers involved in law enforcement against crime types within the WRC remit.

The inter-agency strategic intelligence unit NTAES is co-located with Økokrim, and houses 11 seconded professionals from the police, the Tax Authority, Customs, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, and the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority. Established in 2016 as part of the inter-ministerial strategy against WRC, its mandate is to develop 'a knowledge-based foundation for the agencies' own and shared inter-agency priorities. This shall contribute to the development and execution of targeted, effective, powerful opposition to economic crime, including work-related crime' (NTAES, n.d., my translation). I was put in touch with four interested professionals representing the various agencies at the inter-agency unit and conducted interviews with them in the same period as the interviews at Økokrim.

Both the NTAES intelligence centre and the liaison position initiatives were first launched in the initial inter-ministerial strategy against WRC (Arbeids- og

sosialdepartementet, 2015). Together with the massive Lime case investigation and the five financial crime investigators from Økokrim, the participants in my study represent four main groups by function: investigation, intelligence, crime prevention, and management. They are also geographically and organisationally dispersed across the country, although the majority were situated in the central eastern area in and around Oslo.<sup>6</sup>

The following two tables present the distribution of interviews (n=43) along three variables. These are: which agency employs the interviewed participant; what sort of work do they do; and, at the time of the interview, did they work in a single- or multi-agency setting (i.e., having their work embedded in shared, inter-agency work processes and performing most or all of their work in a shared physical location with other agencies)? Investigation, intelligence, and crime prevention are largely self-explanatory. However, it is worth noting the distinction between these and the last category of employee, which is 'management'. This category includes middle and upper-level managers who do not directly oversee the work of subordinate teams. The first three categories include employees with personnel management responsibilities as well, but these are team leaders whose position is closer to the work being done and can be meaningfully categorized with reference to the mandate of their teams.

Whereas Table 3-1 shows the distribution of interviews broken down on which agency employed the participants, Table 3-2 shows how many of the interviews were conducted with participants who had their day-to-day work embedded in a multi- versus single-agency setting. Comparing the two, the first table may give an exaggerated impression of the sampling from police districts, when in fact many of these were sampled from multi-agency collaborative projects (the second table shows a nearly equal distribution of interviews between participants working in a multi- versus a single-agency context).

---

<sup>6</sup> The 22 Lime interviews are the basis for Publication 2, whereas all 43 interviews are used for Publications 1 and 5.

*Table 3-1: Interviews by participants' tasks and employer*

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Police district</b>	<b>Police special agency</b>	<b>Non-police agency</b>	<b>Total</b>
Investigation	9	7	2	18
Intelligence	6	1	2	9
Prevention	8	1		9
Management	3	2	2	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>43</b>

*Table 3-2: Interviews by participants' tasks and work context*

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Single-agency</b>	<b>Multi-agency</b>	<b>Total</b>
Investigation	7	11	18
Intelligence	3	6	9
Prevention	9		9
Management	5	2	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>43</b>

Just as personnel from different specialist units within the police may perceive issues differently (Ingram et al., 2013), so do professionals from different agencies. This research is not a study of systematic differences between these groups, but I am sure of the usefulness of including representatives from close collaborators to include differences and disagreements, as well as existing and emerging agreement on the meaning of crimes and methods, in the data. For example, a police investigator of criminal labour exploitation may well feel professional kinship with someone working for the Labour Inspection Authority, and intra-police collaboration across the organized-economic crime specialist boundary may present its own challenges (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017). To summarize, the point of sampling police and some non-police participants has been to capture ideas in the operational and strategic anti-WRC initiative in which the police are involved as an integral participant, and often in a leading role. This project is police-centric. I would have needed to sample purposively from each agency if my aim were to answer my research question comprehensively for the inter-agency field domain that I studied. It is important to catch the nuance that I primarily studied the police's anti-WRC work, which includes both participation in inter-

agency projects as well as initiatives undertaken solely by the police (for example, an investigation of a serious accident in the workplace).

The study is not based on a representative sample, but I was keen to err on the side of more rather than fewer participants, visiting sufficient sites and speaking to a sufficient number of people to capture as many interpretations of WRC and appropriate police methods as possible. The act of tracing WRC through these sites is based on the theoretical assumption that as a cultural formation, it is 'produced in several different locales' (Marcus, 1995, p. 99), and that investigating it as such is a fruitful way to investigate the overall system rather than 'the conditions of a particular set of subjects that is the object of study' (ibid.). This study asked questions aimed at yielding meta-themes (e.g., the organizational narratives in Article 1 (Vestby, 2022)), which may lead to a point of saturation sooner than if the point of the analysis were to produce more granular analytical outputs (Guest et al., 2006). Analysing their own codebook, Guest, Bune, and Johnson (2006, p. 73) found that

After analyzing all sixty interviews, a total of thirty-six codes were applied with a high frequency to the transcripts. Of these, thirty-four (94%) had already been identified within the first six interviews, and thirty-five (97%) were identified after twelve. In terms of the range of commonly expressed themes, therefore, very little appears to have been missed in the early stages of analysis.

In a follow-up study, researchers reported similar findings (Hagaman & Wutich, 2017). However, the later study also found that when looking for meta-themes in a multi-sited study, 20–40 interviews were required to 'reach data saturation for meta-themes that cut across all sites' (Hagaman & Wutich, 2017, p. 1). These findings give some external support to the subjective sense of saturation I had while concurrently conducting interviews and analyses. Given the research interests of this study, adding more data ceased to introduce new themes into my analysis, so I stopped sampling. Especially when meta-themes are drawn from a homogenous sample (as mine are, compared with samples such as cross-cultural, transnationally recruited ones), it is likely that most have been identified by the

time a small number of interviews have been conducted and processed – estimated to be 16 at the high end (Hagaman & Wutich, 2017). For the level of analysis and for the questions asked in this study, I believe that the number of interviews is sufficient to allow my meta-themes to capture a wide swathe of the ideas, narratives, and interpretations that exist across the sites I studied that pertain to the research questions.

### **3.3 Interviews**

With one exception, all interviews took place at the participants' places of work, usually in their office, an interview room, or a meeting room (one participant elected to meet at the police college). The interviews lasted an average of 1 hour, ranging from 18 to 120 minutes, totalling just over 47 hours of recordings. Each of the 22 interviews concerning the Lime investigation were conducted by my co-author and myself present.<sup>7</sup> The remainder were conducted by me alone. All 43 interviews were semi-structured, based on a topic guide<sup>8</sup> that was adapted to the different groups of participants (i.e., relating questions and topics to the specific reasons for inviting them, such as a particular intelligence report, investigation, or crime prevention collaboration). Interviews were recorded using a dictaphone, and the recordings were deleted as soon as the files were uploaded to a secure location.

Each participant received an invitation and consent form via e-mail, regardless of whether we had already discussed the possibility of an interview in person. I did this to ensure that participants had the opportunity to read the consent form<sup>9</sup> before agreeing to meet. The consent form gives an accessible overview of the research purposes of the project, as well as information about data management, participants' rights not to participate or to withdraw consent at any point, the people responsible for conducting and approving the project, funding, and contact information. At the beginning of every interview, I informed all participants of their right not to participate and gave an 'elevator pitch' version of the project. My experience in this and earlier research projects has been that

---

<sup>7</sup> 22 interviews with 23 participants — two participants were interviewed together. See Appendix 1.

<sup>8</sup> Appendix 2

<sup>9</sup> Appendix 3.

participants often dismiss any concerns they may have when I inform them of these rights in person. To ensure they could make an informed decision before the interview, I found that for my sample of educated, adult professionals, making the information available in writing in advance was appropriate.

### **3.4 Reflexivity**

The research design of this study necessitates reflection on my position as researcher vis-à-vis the field of research. Using these field methods, primarily interviews, I played an active 'role in both the activity of investigation and the narration of results' (Salter, 2013, p. 20). Radical critiques of interviews have posited a 'fundamental scepticism about the capacity of interviews to provide the basis for accurate representation of anything beyond the interview situation itself, stemming from issues such as persuasion, self-representation, performativity, and social conventions about what can be said to whom, when, and where (Hammersley & Gomm, 2008, p. 90). According to Hammersley & Gomm (2008), rather than abandon the use of interviews to gain information about topics beyond the immediate situation, the radical critique should promote greater methodological caution when drawing inferences from data. This includes asking how the interview situation itself affected the outcome. Although my stance is that interview data can represent more than just the interview itself, such data are nevertheless constituted by the social interaction between participants and researcher; if it were not for me and my project, the interview would not have taken place. Below, I share some reflections about the potential effects of positionality in terms of personal traits and institutional affiliation.

#### **3.4.1 Positionality**

Qualitative frameworks for inquiry generally put the researcher in close 'proximity to the research subject', which 'entail[s] an open interaction between researcher and participants' (Tjora, 2019, p. 9). Although I was not a first-order participant, as a consequence of doing this research, in a sense, I became part of the field of study (Tjora, 2017). Brown's (1996) typology of four distinct researcher positions in police studies is useful to discuss which part that may have been. Hers are ideal types that range from *inside insiders* (in-house research conducted by police employees for

the police organization) to *outside outsiders* (e.g., university academics who study police). My position as an academic criminologist employed by the police college, but funded by the Norwegian Research Council and enrolled in a doctoral programme at the University of Oslo, is best captured by the category *inside outsider*: a ‘qualified civilian researcher’ (Davies, 2016, p. 156) ‘with “official” access or rights [...] to be treated as being on the same side as the institution they are researching’ (Westmarland, 2015, p. 165). My professional identity is linked to my discipline, but my position as a police college employee has opened many doors, in particular, regarding access. Thus, although the *inside outsider* position means that I am ‘one of them’ in terms of employment, the meaning of this *inside outsider* position has not been constant. The police college is part of the national police organization, but has no law enforcement tasks. It thus stands out from the rest of the organization, which largely does. However, I have no doubt that being an employee at the college primarily elicits trust, as employees have undergone background checks, are formally employed by the national police organization, and are bound to the same code of confidentiality. It also provides an easy topic for small talk about shared experiences and mutual acquaintances. However, participants employed by other agencies may have perceived my status differently. I was taken aback when a tax agency employee referred to me as one of ‘you guys in the police’ during an interview. I have never, to my knowledge, been taken to be anything other than a civilian by police officers. To non-police employee participants, my police college affiliation likely read more as like *police* than I was aware.

Gender, age, social class, and ethnicity are factors that may impact the power relation between researchers and participants. They reflect the ‘deep structures of society’ (Skinns et al., 2016, p. 187) onto ‘social relationships, including those that develop in research settings’ (Manderson et al., 2006, p. 1317). I consider it likely that, on average, my interviews and observations are as impacted by, for example, age and gender dynamics as other social relationships are, inside and outside research contexts. Nonetheless, I find it challenging to assume specific impacts of my personal and professional traits in the interview setting without making assumptions about the inner lives of specific participants, and I hesitate to assume

specific effects on my material based on my gender. Others have compared their data collected separately from the same field site, and found seemingly little in the way of age and gender effects, and caution against making automatic assumptions that these are always and predictably present (Damsa & Ugelvik, 2017).

Nevertheless, here follows an accounting of some traits and my relational experience with them. Most of my participants were white, majority population Norwegians, as am I. Most were estimated to be in the 30–50-year age range, which to me, as a researcher over the age of 30, appeared to be a very general representation of the adult population for which status traits other than age may be more relevant to power dynamics. A third of my participants were women. Subjectively, I am acutely aware of cues that signal social class. Although I can no longer claim a working-class status (Wakeling, 2010), I am a first-generation higher education graduate. I have flexibility with respect to my class identity, which may indicate an ability to adapt ‘to better understand and perhaps even show sympathy for the perspective of the particular research participant in front of them’ (Skinns et al., 2016, p. 193). I have wondered why I am more sensitized to class than gender, and speculate that my experience as a woman is more similar across contexts than is my experience as an academic with a working-class background. In the academic environment, I move between contexts where colleagues are (mostly) recruited from higher socioeconomic backgrounds than my own and policing contexts, where I encounter more people with backgrounds like mine.

#### 3.4.2 Transcription

My co-author and I divided the transcription of the 22 Lime case interviews between us, and I transcribed the subsequent 21 interviews myself. Transcription can be considered an early – but generative and inspired – step of data analysis (Bird, 2005; Kowal & O’Connell, 2014). I always walk away from an interview with a general sense of its relevance to my project, its uniqueness or similarity compared with previous interviews, or worst of all, a feeling of not having been able to establish decent rapport and dreading the transcription of the awkward thing later. Transcription requires devoting the same the same amount of concentrated, time-consuming effort and attention to each and every interview, regardless of my



memories or feelings of elation or embarrassment attached to it. Perhaps unsurprisingly, transcription usually reveals that my memory of the conversation is unreliable. There is usually much greater breadth and depth in the text than I could spontaneously recall. With very few exceptions, most interviews I remember as socially uncomfortable were simply conversations requiring a few more minutes at the beginning to start the process, both to make sense of the topic and to adjust our expectations for this particular interview, than is usually the case. The transcription process introduces an analytic distancing layer between the interview as a social setting, and the interview as the raw material for analysis.

While I consider transcription to be an important element in my analytic process, I realize that I paid little attention to the shape of my transcriptions much beyond simply aiming to capture every word uttered by the participants and me, and faithfully marking as ‘unintelligible’ whatever sections I could not confidently identify.<sup>10</sup> I have attempted to create documents that are suitable for the purposes of my study (Kowal & O’Connell, 2014), but they are mostly intuitive and based on implicit criteria. The purpose of my interviews was to discover and discuss ideas and expressions of crime and policing responses to it, and to facilitate an analysis that ‘displays [parts of the culture] in a way that is meaningful to readers without great distortion’ (Van Maanen, 2011, p. 13). Thus, I have done my best to produce valid transcriptions of what the participants (and I) said during interviews and attempt here to articulate the largely implicit criteria that guided my written representations.

Transcripts are never ‘completely accurate and comprehensive narrative[s] of the original performance’ (Kowal & O’Connell, 2014, p. 66), and choices are made as to which paralinguistic (laughter, sighs, or snorts) or other nonverbal content (traffic, creaking chairs, or ringing phones) ought to be transcribed (Bucholtz, 2000). The choice of what to include in the transcription relates to transcription as

---

<sup>10</sup> I have undoubtedly misheard and made errors in transcription, even when I have been certain that I heard everything clearly. A quick Google search of ‘misheard song lyrics’ ought to instil at least this much humility in any transcriber. I mean, ‘Sweet dreams are made of cheese’? (NME, 2016) Transcribing whole interviews provides ample context clues and many opportunities to discover interpretive errors, and I have no reason to believe that there are systematic errors in the transcripts.

an interpretive process. However, to transcribe is also to engage in processes of representation: when one knows what to transcribe, *how* is it to be transcribed? (Bucholtz, 2000; Tolgensbakk, 2020). While I really only intended to transcribe words by which to analyse ideas, I have in fact included many other paralinguistic and nonverbal features. First, I consistently marked laughter and long silences. I have noted nonverbal content that I have experienced as influencing the content or tone of the interview or the clarity of the recording. In one interview, we had to change rooms mid-conversation, which would have given the appearance of a disjointed interview with an unexplained break in the middle if I had not noted this occurrence. At other times, a participant went to fetch us a drink, or a colleague popped in the door to ask the participant a question, and I noted these for the same reason as the first example. Similarly, a participant may have paused for a long time (meaning several seconds – the type of silence that I as an interviewer know it is advisable not to fill, but still desperately want to), which may be useful to know if what follows is a carefully rephrased near-repetition of what was first said, or the topic changes. An off-the-cuff comment may read as rude or unprofessional if the adjoining laughter is not noted.<sup>11</sup> The purpose of these annotations was to make the flow of the interview legible without the need to return to the recording whenever the conversation otherwise would seem to change direction or tone.

The first big representational choice I made was to transcribe every interview using *bokmål*, one of two standard forms of written Norwegian, despite the participants speaking in several distinct dialects. This is termed ‘naturalized’ transcription, whereby the conventions of written language take precedence over ‘oral discourse features’ (Bucholtz, 2000, p. 1461). Additionally, compared with excerpts in other published qualitative research, my transcriptions appear to align with what I consider the implicit standard model of prose paragraphs, the reasoning behind which is not often discussed except when transcription is foregrounded in its own right (see e.g., Tolgensbakk (2020)). Naturalized

---

<sup>11</sup> A statement made in jest may still of course be entirely inappropriate. However, I have not evaluated propriety in this project. I aimed to record in the written representation any contextual clues to phenomena such as self-conscious satire directed at someone or something.

transcription – turning speech into legible text that corresponds with the conventions of written communication – may disguise the conversion of speech to text. ‘Denaturalized’ transcription, however, aims to represent oral language faithfully (e.g., phonetic transcription, colloquial spelling), but may render ‘speech itself alien’ on the page, and the speaker exotic or odd (Bucholtz, 2000, p. 1461). I have sometimes edited sentences for legibility when quoting participants in my articles, for example, removing a false start or reconstructing syntax. Few speak in continuous and grammatically correct prose, myself included. Nonetheless, we tend to understand conversation to an adequate standard. As long as the syntax itself is not the purpose of the research, I find it almost unethical to represent my participants as stuttering and ungrammatical, as a direct transcription of these interviews could sometimes make them appear. However, excerpts used in manuscripts intended for publication have been translated into English, which is obviously obligatory for an international audience. Nevertheless, it introduces another significant representational act on my part, whereby I aimed both to preserve the meaning and tone of the already transcribed Norwegian and to use words and phrases that effectively communicate meaning to international academic readers.

The point of discussing transcription thoroughly is not to conclude that the data are primarily generated by me as a situated researcher. I believe there to be some *there* there: that the interviews have ‘measured’ in a meaningful way, aspects of participants’ understandings of their work and social context. Transcription is the pivotal step where hard-to-access and hard-to-manage sound recordings are turned into text that can be searched, indexed, coded, aggregated, and subjected to analysis for existing concepts and the generation of new ones.

### **3.5 Qualitative data analysis**

The first two empirical articles written for this thesis, articles 2 and 3 here (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017; Vestby, 2018), report findings based on two thematic analyses (TA). For the last two empirical articles, 1 and 5 (Vestby, 2022; Vestby, in review), I used the stepwise deductive induction (SDI) strategy. The details of those particular analyses are presented in the articles. In this section, I turn briefly to a comparative

reflection on the two approaches. The table below provides an overview of the publications and the analytic approach used for each.

*Table 3-3: Publications with methods of analysis*

<b>Article</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
1 Cheats, threats, and reflexivity: organizational narratives on policing organized and economic crime	SDI
2 'It's about using the full sanction catalogue': on boundary negotiations in a multi-agency organized crime investigation	TA
3 Policy-making without politics: overstating objectivity in intelligence-led policing	TA
4 Machine learning and the police: asking the right questions	N/A
5 Preventing prosecution: narratives on proactive policing	SDI

As quintessentially qualitative procedures, TA and SDI are both appropriate tools for 'thematizing meanings' (Holloway & Todres, 2005, p. 92). Both proceed from an initial coding process to the identification of themes, categorization, or conceptualization. Although the difference between them should not be exaggerated, they have different emphases. First, TA is a general procedure for qualitative data analysis which is widely used, in part, because of its practical and epistemological flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Its aim is to identify patterns of meaning (themes) through an initial familiarization of reading and annotation, gradually proceeding to the development of a code book, which is then applied to the entire body of data. Themes are reviewed in relation to coded extracts and then named, after which, a report of the findings is written, including 'vivid, compelling extract examples' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). SDI, on the other hand, prescribes an inductive starting point of data analysis and outlines a structured model for backward coupling checks between steps in the analytic process, the purpose of which is to ensure an inductively based analysis (Tjora, 2017, 2019). Coding is supposed to remain empirically close and reflect what participants *say* (when coding interview data), not what they talk *about*. Once coding is complete, TA yields grouped content sorted by topic, whereas the SDI coding reflects the content of the coded statements. These set-ups work quite differently in the next step of analysis, which entails recontextualizing and categorizing the material (SDI)

and/or searching for and reviewing themes (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Tjora, 2019). Table 3-5 (next page) shows how four excerpts were coded differently based on a TA and an SDI coding strategy, respectively.

I found that using TA, it was challenging to find a middle ground between retaining a link between categories and the material, while being overly aware of the nuance and narrative of each excerpt sorted under codes such as ‘blurred line’. Opening the TA code in NVivo produces a lengthy document of coded excerpts, which is the material for further analysis. However, the SDI codes retain and convey the content of what was actually said. It was a revelation for me to read the hundreds of codes after completing the first round of coding and finding that I could use them to see what was actually said in the interview without having to read full excerpts. I then sorted these codes into aggregated categories.<sup>12</sup> Table 3-4 below shows an example of an SDI category with (some of) the codes that were subsumed under it. Each code is a summary of a statement made in the interview, which then provide the material for later theorizing or conceptualization

*Table 3-4: Example of SDI category with subsumed codes*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Codes subsumed under the category</b>
Intersection	Wrapping crime in franchises
	Multicriminals commit organized and systematic economic crime
	Observed trend that organized crime attaches to businesses
	Traditionally, Norwegian organized crime has not managed to launder significant sums
	Human trafficking and grocery business new to organized crime work unit
	OC that disrupts ordinary businesses and workers
	Artificial separation between organized and economic crime
	Criminals interested in business logistics
	Collective crimes interwoven with licit business

<sup>12</sup> Many of these were similar to some of the codes from the TA, which is not surprising. I used two different analytic set-ups to pursue the same research interest, e.g. how WRC is made sense of, or how agencies pool resources in practice (cf. Renan, 2015), as well as overlapping material.

Table 3-5: Comparative view of TA and SDI coding

<p><b>Excerpt</b></p>	<p><b>TA code</b> What is being talked about?</p>	<p><b>SDI code</b> What is said?</p>
<p>The challenge is that many of these are multicriminal, operating both in what we categorize as organized crime, but also — not refined or complex economic crime, but thorough and systematic exploitation of the entire society.</p>	<p><b>Blurred line</b></p>	<p><b>Multicriminals commit organized crime and systematic economic crime</b></p>
<p>I find that many [in other agencies] think it's kind of cool to work with the police, actually. We are in a position to administer a machinery of power, including sanctions. I think we provide credibility and backing to those we collaborate with, confirming that this work that we're doing is important.</p>	<p><b>Incentives to collaborate</b></p>	<p><b>Working with the police is cool</b></p> <p><b>'Machinery of power'</b></p> <p><b>Police lend credibility to collaborations</b></p>
<p>The Tax Authority has other authorizations. There are other ways to get the money; the standard of proof is different. There are loads of interesting angles, and we've tried to keep that in mind at all times. We'll lean on the Tax Authority, and eventually on the Labour and Welfare Administration as well.</p>	<p><b>Admin &amp; criminal law</b></p>	<p><b>Tax has a lower threshold of proof</b></p> <p><b>Wish to rely on other agencies</b></p>
<p>We [the Tax Authority] just decided to go in and see what legal basis we'd claim once we got there. *laughs* Customs went with us as well. I went in first, and then Customs. They took what they needed within their jurisdiction, and when they finished, a police officer showed up, so we went straight on and continued using the police's legal powers.</p>	<p><b>Admin &amp; criminal law</b></p>	<p><b>See which legal basis is needed when you get there</b></p> <p><b>Successive use of agencies' legal powers on site</b></p>

Looking at Table 3-5, the TA code ‘blurred line’ is broader, but thematically similar to the SDI category of ‘intersection’. Ninety-six excerpts were coded ‘blurred line’, which, when exported, produced 9,000 words list of excerpts.<sup>13</sup> In comparison, the SDI ‘intersection’ category contains 34 codes, which, when listed, provide the content of the coded material and read as a list of 34 statements, making up around 400 words. Table 3-4 gives several examples of SDI codes subsumed under the ‘intersection’ category.

Unlike TA and ‘much other qualitative research’, ‘[t]he SDI model has a stronger theoretical motivation’ (Tjora, 2019, p. 5). The model challenges qualitative researchers to rely less on anecdotes and to aim for theoretical innovation and the development of concepts. It thus provides a strategy to decrease the use of ‘extended text’ (i.e., wordy excerpts) in the presentation of research, which critics claim ‘overloads our information-processing capabilities and preys on our tendencies to find simplifying patterns’ and hides the ‘weighting and selection criteria’ used by the researcher (Miles et al., 2014, p. 13).

Compared with TA, the SDI coding practice mandated that I ‘stave off’ my nascent interpretations and consolidate those in a later step, rather than, as I did for Publication 2 (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017) in particular, have more theoretically derived and aggregated codes or suggested themes in play already during the first cycle of coding. Both analyses were performed using NVivo. The SDI coding resulted in a much larger number of initial codes, around 600, compared with 40 for the TA analysis. Subjectively, it was uncomfortable being at the SDI initial coding stage. Staying close to the data for so long and looking at the number of codes growing into the hundreds, I worried what I had got myself into – this did not feel like data reduction – and I spent months working on this analysis that I could only trust would yield something interesting. Additionally, the SDI approach was suited to ‘force’ a change in my reading of the 22 interviews used for Article 2

---

<sup>13</sup> TA does not necessarily produce this outcome. I could, for example, have coded shorter excerpts which in turn would have generated a list of excerpts containing fewer words. I would still have had to go from the code and back into the excerpts to see what had actually been *said* in the interview, as the code itself would show only what had been talked *about* — the theme.

to include them in the data set for articles 1 and 5, which have other emphases, and where I aimed to pursue conceptualization with greater ambition.

### **3.6 Research permits and ethics**

Three applications and/or notices were required before beginning the data collection. The first was an application to the National Police Directorate asking for the participating police officers' confidentiality to be waived for the purposes of data collection. Any research project that involves information protected by police professional secrecy requires an application to the Police Directorate. The Directorate, after being advised by their Council of Confidentiality and Research, approved my application. This way, participants could discuss their experiences with reference to topics such as the use of police methods during interviews, without the requirement to remove materials referencing ongoing operations and similar matters from any room I entered. The following interview excerpt represents a typical exchange about this:

**Annette:** I'm not familiar with the [name of business] case. What sort of-?  
**Participant:** Well, what happened there was that we followed a money trail linked to this Vietnamese guy who – I'm allowed to use names here, right?  
**Annette:** Yes, it's my responsibility to not -  
**Participant:** Yeah, whose name was [name].  
*Interview ID: 48*

Although my research does not centre on third parties, such as suspects or victims of crime, it is difficult to imagine moving 'backstage' with police officers without overhearing or seeing information that they would otherwise be required to keep from me. Similarly, it is an advantage in interviews for participants to be able to provide illustrative examples of their work. While participants were freed from the responsibility of maintaining confidentiality, it was my responsibility to maintain confidentiality in data management and writing the thesis. Third parties, such as 'the Vietnamese guy' in the excerpt above, have not consented for their names to be revealed to me, and it is *their* interests that are fundamentally protected by police confidentiality in this case. However, in the interview setting, the issue is usually reduced to what the participant is allowed to tell me and whose



responsibility it is to preserve confidentiality. In the interview situation, these guiding principles need to be explained as the situation is governed by a different ethical and rule-based framework from that in the participant's regular work. A second application, based on the same rationale, was sent to the Director General of Public Prosecution who determines access to information included in criminal investigations and prosecutions. This application was also granted. Lastly, NSD – the Norwegian Centre for Research Data found that my proposed treatment of personal data and routines for securing informed and voluntary consent were satisfactory, and granted pre-approval.

Informed, voluntary, and unequivocal consent to participate in research is the normative standard (NESH, 2021, p. 17). Top-level decision-makers in special agencies and police districts in each site were the first to grant access for me to recruit participants and observe. This is typical of police research, where the rank and file may be expected to participate as a matter of course once access is granted (Skinns et al., 2016). This means that a 'hierarchy of consent' (Miles et al., 2014, p. 59) is present, wherein it is difficult for the researcher to ensure that consent is given entirely voluntarily. I have attempted to mitigate this by explicitly telling those invited that they were free not to participate despite my permission from their superiors to contact them, or even to withdraw consent mid-interview if they wanted. Five declined or did not respond to my interview requests. The observation setting produced few incidents as it was only maintained for 40 hours, but I took care to not pursue officers who seemed to me to avoid me while I was there.

The same hierarchy of consent was present in the case of those recruited from the inter-agency Lime investigation. We were given access to the investigative team plus supervisors because we were tasked with contributing to an evaluation report. Because these people were diligently completing their work before the case went to trial a few weeks later, I doubt that we would have been given access if we had made a request solely for the sake of our academic research. We selected and invited participants from a list of project members, but I am aware that everyone had been informed that we would be coming and that senior officers had requested

those invited to accommodate us. Although we introduced the two purposes of the interview at the beginning, this is a caveat to claims that consent was entirely voluntary. That said, we experienced no hostility or reticence when we interviewed those who consented to it, and information about the projects and participants' rights were e-mailed to them before the interview as described earlier. My impression was that regardless of whether they were satisfied to have worked on the project, participants appreciated the police district's effort to produce a written record of their experiences, and that others could potentially learn from their experiences.

Studies based on interviews raise ethical issues 'concerned with the presentation of data', including anonymity (Tjora, 2019, p. 107). As per the consent form, my participants were promised that their information would be anonymized so they would not be identifiable in the publications. Details that make them directly identifiable, such as name, place of work, and position, are quite easily concealed. Although I have maintained confidentiality between participants, by not referring to statements by others or disclosing in other ways who I have spoken to, many will know which of their colleagues have been interviewed. For example, the police-business liaisons are located around the country, but they are few, and it was impossible to explain why I approached them for an interview without also saying that I was interested in that position more generally. Sometimes in such situations, my principled commitment to non-disclosure like a 'theatre of confidentiality', which I hope was at least reassuring to the participants — that I would not break my obligation even if every participant knew the identity of all the others, and knew that I knew.

## 4. Findings

### Publication 1

Vestby, A. (2022). Cheats, threats and reflexivity: Organizational narratives on policing organized and economic crime. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 62(1), 200–217. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azab054>

How do agents in the police and collaborating agencies render the policy concept of WRC meaningful and actionable? This question is aimed at elucidating the underlying theories of WRC that exist in my material, and the article contributes a systematic analysis of three distinct WRC narratives across the study sites. Based on a theoretical framework of narrative criminology and sensemaking theory, the paper is intended to improve understanding of the localization processes undergone by the WRC concept. It goes from being articulated by a ‘political “discourse coalition”’ (Hajer in Annison, 2021, p. 5), into local institutional contexts wherein practitioners must render it meaningful in light of the local site’s mandate and resources, as well shared meta-narratives in mainstream culture. The analysis is based on the complete set of 43 interviews, observations, and documents, as described in chapter 3.

Three ‘organizational narratives’ (Vaara et al., 2016, p. 496) constitute the findings of the article. The first which is a narrative which makes sense of WRC as a product of watershed changes in criminogenic conditions, most notably globalization and a perceived increase in the threat from transnational organized crime. The second is a narrative of stability in which WRC is made sense of as a new term for traditional and well-known economic crimes that takes advantage of the opportunities for ‘cheating’ in the regular economy, in particular the labour market, as well as the tax and benefits systems. A third, reflexive narrative attributes primary explanatory power for how WRC comes to exist, to how it is enacted by crime control agencies. These findings demonstrate the presence of diverse, conflicting, and complementary theories about the constitution of WRC within the police-centric part of the anti-WRC initiative.

## Publication 2

Bjelland, H. F., & Vestby, A. (2017). 'It's about using the full sanction catalogue':

On boundary negotiations in a multi-agency organized crime investigation. *Policing and Society*, 27(6), 1–16.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2017.1341510>

This publication was published as part of a special issue of *Policing & Society: Policing across organisational boundaries*, guest edited by Benoît Dupont, Peter K. Manning, and Chad Whelan. The article was co-authored by Heidi Fischer Bjelland<sup>14</sup>. We contributed equally to the study design, development of the theoretical framework and analysis, as well as drafts and article revisions, and share first authorship.

The WRC concept was broadcast to a national mainstream audience through a signal case (Innes, 2014) referred to as 'the Lime case'. Spearheaded as an organized crime investigation, a multi-agency group was assembled to conduct the investigation and pool the resources that their legal rules, sanctions, information, and diverse areas of expertise represented. The case revolved around a gallery of suspects running a grocery chain through which they committed a range of offences, including benefit and credit fraud, migration offences, and forced labour. This article turns its attention to the experiences and practices of co-ordination across organizational boundaries, asking how organisational boundaries shaped the internal operations of the Lime investigation. This second publication of the thesis is based on 22<sup>15</sup> interviews with investigators and management-level personnel.

The project took a flexible approach to using administrative and criminal law effectively and efficiently to bring the network's activities to a halt. The article uses Giacomantonio's (2014, 2015) typology of police organizational boundaries and strategies for how these are negotiated as its primary theoretical foundation. Boundaries run between work units, 'teams of people organized for particular work

---

<sup>14</sup> Now Fischer-Norman.

<sup>15</sup> There is an error in the article where it states that there were 23 interviews when in fact there were 22 interviews with a total of 23 participants (two of whom were interviewed together).

tasks [...]’ (Giacomantonio, 2015, p. 18), and boundaries between these are where negotiations take place during efforts to co-ordinate work. In this article, the act of bridging, connecting, and working across organizational boundaries is treated as ‘co-ordination work’.

The negotiations over which jurisdiction to apply against which offences and how to negotiate the agencies’ different authority to share information were the most consequential. The first occurred over the proximity boundary between criminal and administrative law. As many offences in the case could be targeted using either rule set, pragmatic decisions were negotiated as to which agency would pursue which offence using which set of rules. The aim was to ‘jump the fence where it is lowest’, reflecting an approach to legal rules which is reminiscent of Sklansky’s term ‘ad hoc instrumentalism’ (2012, p. 161): ‘a manner of thinking about law and legal institutions that downplays concerns about consistency and places little stock in formal legal categories, but instead sees legal rules and legal procedures simply as a set of interchangeable tools.’ The systemic boundary of professional secrecy and access for other agencies into police databases represents the other pivotal boundary across which participants were required to actively negotiate co-ordination.

Despite participating in the joint project, the participants – most importantly from the police, the Tax Authority, and the Labour and Welfare Administration – still represented formally separated public agencies with goals, interests, and juridical frameworks separate from the joint Lime project. Thus, the article includes a normative discussion of the challenges to accountability and transparency that may result from a pragmatic emphasis on efficiency in the powerful state assemblages that this project represents, and that the demands of inter-agency projects may put a strain agencies’ primary obligations (Grimen, 2008; O’Neill & Loftus, 2013).

### **Publication 3**

Vestby, A. (2018). Policy-making without politics: Overstating objectivity in intelligence-led policing. In H. I. Gundhus, K. V. Rønn, & N. Fyfe (Eds.), *Moral issues in intelligence-led policing* (pp. 265–282). Routledge.

The third article turns its attention to the epistemological foundations of the Police Intelligence Doctrine (PID) (Politidirektoratet, 2014), the document that underpins the implementation of ILP in Norway. It prescribes best practices, provides a unified vocabulary for the intelligence process, and is key to the management of this subset of policing tasks (Gundhus et al., 2021). Its methodology and epistemology are largely congruent with a ‘standard model’ of intelligence (Phythian, 2012), in which a basic assumption is that intelligence can provide objective assessments (Ratcliffe, 2016). However, strategic intelligence is about making long-term decisions and helping police organizations ‘describe risks, threats, and opportunities in a way that helps determine programs and policies’ (McDowell, 2008, p. 5). Here, the reality that intelligence analysis engages with issues that tangent politics, and value-based concepts (e.g., ‘harm’ (Rønn, 2013)) becomes clearly visible. This motivates the third article to ask: Insofar as intelligence analysis is an interpretive endeavour, is objectivity a useful concept for assessing its quality?

To explore the idiosyncrasies of the PID, I performed a comparative thematic analysis of it and a strategic intelligence report based on a very different methodology. Strategic analysts in the Oslo police district (OPD) published a report in 2015 (Oslo politidistrikt, 2015), which besides describing potential future developments and threats that could impact the district, contained an extensive discussion of a critical realist method for strategic intelligence. Unlike the PID, the authors attempted by this method to include cultural, structural, and political variables in the analysis, rather than keeping them implicitly constant, as they claimed police strategic analyses had traditionally done. The importance of these variables, they wrote, was that the analyses should ‘identify and describe changes in what will be considered serious crime, and probably call for police attention in the future’ (Oslo politidistrikt, 2015, p. 22, my translation).

The publication draws an important distinction between the analysed documents’ positions on perspective-dependent and perspective-independent knowledge (Reiss & Sprenger, 2016). Per the doctrine, objectivity is achievable in a perspective-independent sense insofar as subjective influences, principally from

analysts, are controlled for by adhering to the correct intelligence methodology. However, the OPD argues that police not only inhabit a particular perspective, but also require perspective-dependent knowledge to anticipate developments in their environment, e.g., changes in citizens' norms regarding the threshold for reporting different kinds of victimization to the police. A possible implication of the PID's epistemological assumptions is that is that technocratic versions of knowledge-based and intelligence-led policing based on police expertise may come to exclude other stakeholder and citizen perspectives on strategic police decision-making.

#### **Publication 4**

Vestby, A., & Vestby, J. (2021). Machine learning and the police: Asking the right questions. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 15(1), 44–58.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/police/pazo35>

This article was co-authored by Jonas Vestby. We share first authorship as we contributed equally to the study design, idea and concept, as well as drafts and article revisions. However, the article is interdisciplinary, with my contributions based on my policing and criminology scholarship, and my co-author's contributions based on his expertise in machine learning and statistics.

New technologies represent and facilitate the proactive turn in policing. Machine learning (ML) models underlie many of the name-brand 'predictive policing' software packages available on the market. Their claimed utility often relies on the ideals of general ILP, in particular, improved accuracy in targeting, and cost-efficiency (Egbert & Leese, 2021; Ratcliffe, 2019). However, it has been feared that the application of ML tools exacerbates the opacity surrounding police decision-making. When humans are left unable to account for the reasoning and knowledge basis for a decision, responsibility is fragmented and existing accountability structures are rendered inadequate (Bennett Moses & Chan, 2016; Egbert & Leese, 2021; Lum & Isaac, 2016; Mittelstadt et al., 2016). How can we secure an accessible and open democratic debate about police use of predictive analytics when the technology itself is a specialized area of expertise? This fourth publication responds to this question by proposing a 'toolbox' of questions that can be asked by non-ML experts to scrutinize a decision model.

This article attempts to provide a constructive and useful route to empowering non-ML experts, stakeholders, police who procure software, or any engaged citizen in debates over highly specialized tools. In addition to being opaque in the sense that few people speak ‘machine language’, these are shrouded by commercial secrecy. However, broad participation is necessary to both improve the validity of models applied in socially consequential circumstances, and to achieve democratic legitimacy (Cath, 2018; Holstein et al., 2019; cf. Rønn, 2013).

The article is premised on the assumption that fairness and validity are both relevant to the decision whether a given ML model is appropriate. To determine fairness, it may be asked whether the model produces good outcomes given democratic norms about the ends and means of policing – an explicitly normative and political undertaking. To review a model for validity entails questions such as ‘does the learning model reflect actual performance?’ given the applied performance metric. In plain English, the toolbox of questions is designed to address both fairness and validity with reference to three key aspects of the model: data, learning, and constructivist effects. For example, are the input data representative of the domain in which the model is being used (validity)? Do the data capture features that we believe should not enter into the decision (fairness)? What is the specific rule used to determine whether the model is learning (validity), and will optimizing towards this goal actively work against other goals for policing (fairness)? Finally, does the model rely on correlations that are likely to improve performance owing to historical practices (validity), and are these practices morally contested (fairness)?

### **Publication 5**

Vestby, A. Preventing prosecution: Narratives on proactive policing. In review with *Theoretical Criminology*.

The last publication asks: how are proactive policing strategies made sense of in relation to reactive policing, and how are they co-constituted with victims and offenders? Having established some salient narratives on WRC in the first publication, this article investigates police classification work by studying the narrative matching of victims and offenders in the context of WRC with a set of



proactive policing methods that are largely made sense of as ‘preventive’. Crime prevention was recently described as the primary strategy for the police in a policy statement from the National Police Directorate (Politidirektoratet, 2020), but ‘prevention’, is not unequivocal; it can refer to both ‘soft’ and coercive methods.

This article is based on the same data and the same SDI analysis (Tjora, 2019) as the first publication (Vestby, 2022), but it reports and discusses another set of findings collected in the context of the anti-WRC initiative described above. This initiative prescribes flexible crime control based on interorganizational coordination, and advocates for agencies to find and develop means other than investigation and prosecution to combat crime.

The article draws on a police power literature to discuss the autonomous, discretionary, and risk-managing mode of governance that is *police* (Dubber, 2005; Dubber & Valverde, 2006). This mode of governance aims to protect the present and future welfare of the community, whereas law as mode of governance seeks redress for past harms and injustices. Classifying objects and people as either resources or threats and acting on them accordingly is fundamental to police (Dubber, 2005). In the present Norwegian context, the proactive paradigm (Hestehave, 2021) is frequently articulated in crime prevention terms, and the result of this classification work is the allocation of people to programmes based on a varied set of ideas about crime prevention. In the article and overall thesis, I treat this as sensemaking whereby participants in the field articulate their target populations — morally good and bad businesses— and connect them to what are considered appropriate and feasible courses of action.

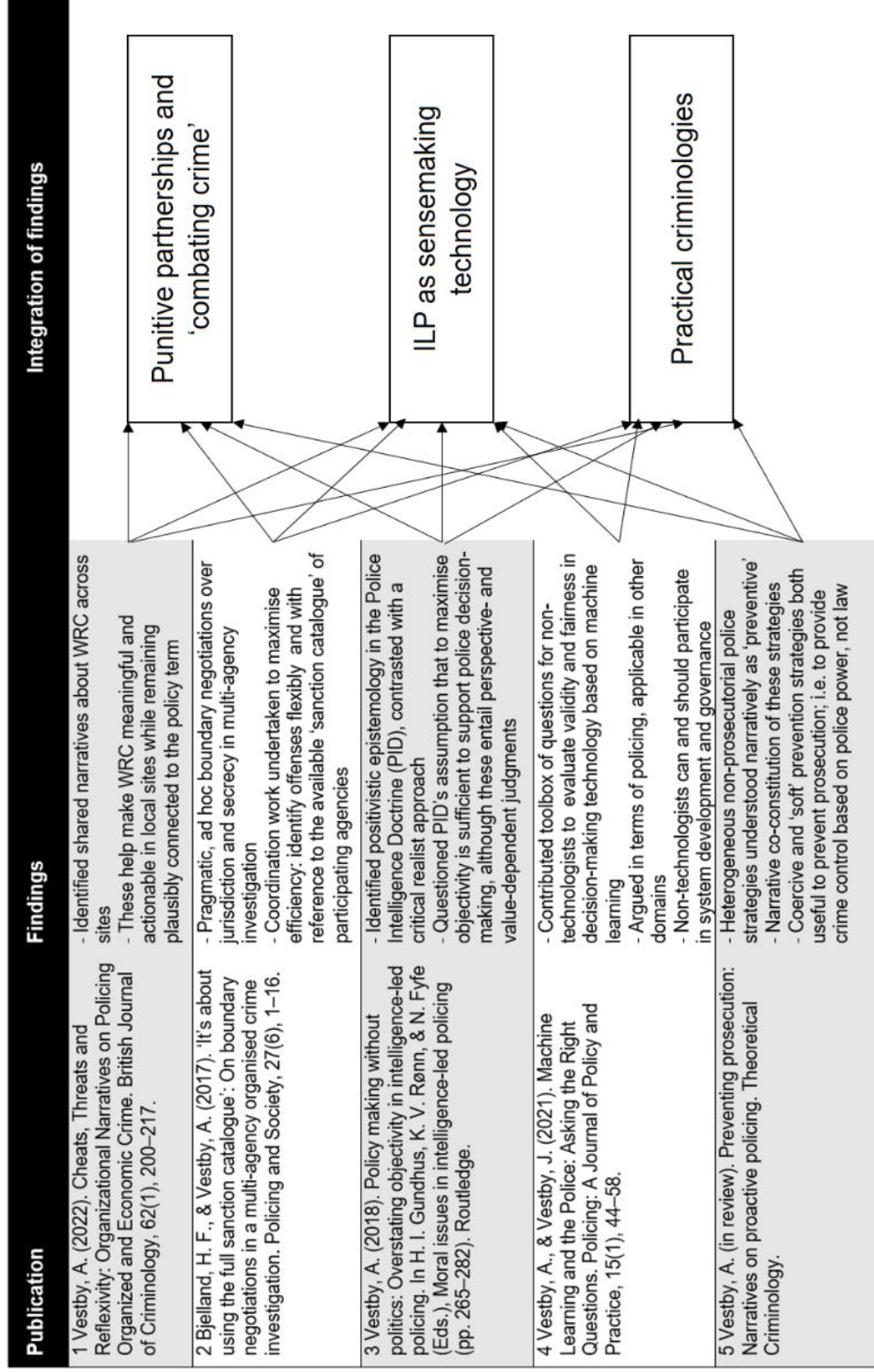
The article finds that the field under study operates with a comprehensive negative definition of prevention: police strategies or methods that do not involve investigation and are not aimed at prosecution can be termed ‘preventive’. Two different strategies are described. One is a police–business liaison model whereby each police district designates an officer to build crime preventive partnerships with the business community and other stakeholders, based on a non-coercive crime prevention partnership model. The other is ‘the organized crime policing concept’, a term denoting disruptive policing using strategies such as seizures of

work equipment to dissuade an assumed illicit business from carrying on. The second and overarching finding is that these modes both operate with a practical aim of *preventing prosecution*. This does not preclude a wish to prevent harm, but an important concern and justification in these organizational narratives is that reactive crime control is untenable in light of the material resources of policing.

## 5. Discussion

How do police make sense of work-related crime, and which crime control measures are considered to be suitable responses? How can an inter-agency context affect police sensemaking? How can intelligence-led policing affect police sensemaking? This chapter returns to these overarching research questions. Whereas the previous chapter presented summaries with findings from each individual publication, this chapter draws together these findings and discusses their significance. It is organized by three key claims that separately and together respond to one or more of the research questions. Each contributes to an overall perspective on the interwoven relationship between police understandings of crime and disorder, and the availability of particular ways of making those issues actionable in their organizational context. Focusing on multi-agency and intelligence-led policing as two instantiations of proactive policing strategies, this chapter argues that as police are increasingly expected to self-initiate crime control, the relationship between sensemaking and action needs to be better understood. Figure 5-1 on the next page illustrates the relationship between the publications and these claims. The view of organization's as problem-solving and pragmatic continues to provide a red thread. Crime control agencies and individuals within them have to make continuous and actionable sense of their environments, while being enabled and constrained by material and cultural resources, including technology (Garland, 2001; Weick et al., 2005).

Figure 5-1: Integration of findings



## 5.1 Punitive partnerships and ‘combating crime’

The term ‘WRC’ refers collectively to offences in not only the penal code, but also a range of other specialist legislation on issues such as worker protection and taxation. From its policy definition<sup>16</sup>, it is clear that the issue requires effort by several agencies. Elsewhere, WRC has been characterized as a ‘wicked problem’ owing to its sector-spanning traits that challenge existing organizational structures (Jahnsen & Rykkja, 2020). Various co-ordinated partnership initiatives, some of which have been described in this thesis, have been formed to address the issue (Jahnsen & Rykkja, 2020; Læg Reid & Rykkja, 2015). The applied partnership models, however, range from the punitive and prosecutorial (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017) to the disruptive, as well as to the responsabilizing and facilitating police–business liaison model (Vestby, in review). Partnership models are part of the repertoire of proactive policing (Hestehave, 2021; Weisburd et al., 2019), and resonate with its efficiency concerns. Partnerships can involve delegating crime control tasks to other agencies or to actors entirely outside the public sector, and can facilitate sharing of information, expertise, and sanctions from across the partners in a shared ‘sanction catalogue’ (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017; Vestby, in review).

In the case of the police–business liaisons (Vestby, in review), the partnership model is based on an idea that police are supposed to provide crime prevention consultation services to businesses as well as to hold the business community responsible for protecting its own interests (as the liaison model is intended to improve businesses’ capacity to actually do so). However, there has been a move from a close association between partnership models and traditional crime prevention in preventive partnerships (Crawford, 1999; Garland, 2001), to what could be called ‘punitive partnerships’. The Lime investigation stands at one end as an undoubtedly punitive partnership, aimed at prosecution and

---

<sup>16</sup> ‘Work-related crime consists of actions that violate Norwegian laws on pay and working conditions, social security, and taxation, often committed in an organized manner, which exploits workers, or which distorts fair market competition and undermines the structural underpinnings of society.’ (Departementene, 2019, p. 5, my translation). See also Chapter 1.

convictions.<sup>17</sup> At the other end of the spectrum is a preventive partnership based on ideas of risk communication, responsabilization, and compliance between the police and business community. Somewhere in the middle are the disruptive police measures undertaken to interfere with suspect businesses that are not necessarily intended to lead to prosecution or other sanctions, or to enter into the dialogical model of the police–business liaison. Within the policing context of this study, there co-exists a multitude of strategies that are all termed ‘preventive’, despite a seeming lack of a unified theoretical basis of criteria to judge this. In my studied cases, these seem not to make sense as ‘crime prevention’ owing to an internal theoretical coherence between the different instances where the term is applied. Rather, the term is available as a catch-all category for non-prosecutorial modes of crime control (cf. Innes & Sheptycki, 2004). These strategies are articulated in part in relation to assumptions about offenders’ motivations and opportunities for offending, as well as about how victims do, and ought to, conduct themselves (Vestby, in review).

The utility of disruption as presented in publication 5 is argued narratively in my material with reference to crime prevention – that throwing a spanner in the works of an illicit enterprise will reduce the ‘criminal output’ of the same enterprise (cf. Mazerolle & Ransley, 2006). However, disruptive logics may also be expressive and imbued with a degree of ‘doing justice’ (Feldman, 2019, p. 41; Garland, 2001, p. 140), allowing police to make life a little harder for the usual suspects that they ‘know’ deserve it, but do not have the incentive or opportunity to pursue with investigative or prosecutorial means.

Partnership models of crime control can be argued with reference to either punitive or preventive aims. However, as noted elsewhere in this thesis (Vestby, in review), ‘crime prevention’ is itself a term that can denote coercive crime control methods based on the enforcement of criminal codes and other specialist legislation (e.g., tax or immigration law) (Ashworth & Zedner, 2014; Hestehave,

---

<sup>17</sup> Although the Lime *project* included several ‘satellite’ cases besides the central criminal case involving human trafficking. These ‘satellites’ included, for example, administrative benefit fraud cases.

2021). Distinctions between the principles behind preventive and punitive methods, as well as administrative and criminal law, are de-emphasized to the benefit of a pragmatic and creative attitude to *combating crime* (Brandariz, 2021; also discussed in Dahl et al., 2021), which is a common turn of phrase in my material and the wider Norwegian policing context. This tendency is consistent with terms such as ‘rule with law’ (Bowling & Sheptycki, 2015) and ‘ad hoc instrumentalism’ (Sklansky, 2012), which highlight the actual rather than normative relationship between police and the law, and the pragmatic and creative use of available legal tools by officials, respectively.

Using multi-agency partnerships to resolve co-ordination issues across sectors (Lægreid & Rykkja, 2015) not only provides a set of available responses to sector-spanning issues, but also institutionalizes particular ways for the state to view and articulate its problems. Publication 2 (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017) demonstrates how this co-ordination work may result in powerful state power assemblages and how an inter-agency context may shape sensemaking. Having pooled the powers (cf. Renan, 2015) of participating agencies, offences in the Lime case complex could be categorized in more ways than if police had been the only agency involved, and more actions were made available.

Within a ‘whole-of-government’ co-ordinated approach to WRC, researchers have discussed the likelihood that the introduction of ILP has ‘increased the push for establishing joint understandings [...]’ (Jahnsen & Rykkja, 2020, p. 15) of offences within the WRC framework. In addition to ILP, there is a question of whether the policy narrative of WRC exerts a centripetal force on how WRC is operationalized by practitioners, for example through its emphasis on organized crime. In the political discourse, WRC has been framed as a cluster of offences that share family resemblances pertaining to overarching societal values: the integrity of the labour market, tax system, and ultimately the welfare state (Departementene, 2021; Vestby, 2022). This undergirds its aptitude as a boundary object or boundary concept: despite its heterogeneity, it has a sufficiently constant identity to mobilize agencies in an effort to co-ordinate resources to target particular instances that are understood to fit, ‘facilitat[ing] collective action by

providing a shared language and classification system that cuts across multiple intersecting lines of work' (Bowker & Star, 1999; Sanders & Lavoie, 2021, p. 970).

Policy narratives can create coherence across the boundaries of discrete formal organizations, articulating both the issue at hand as well as suitable co-ordinated responses (Annison, 2021). However, insofar as the policy term centralizes sensemaking of the underlying offences, this could conflict with the primary interests of diverse state agencies (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017; O'Neill & Loftus, 2013). In particular, the framing of WRC as *crime*, when comparatively few of the underlying offences are prohibited in the penal code, but rather, in specialist legislation under the jurisdiction of ministries other than the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, is notable in this sense. For example, based on studies from elsewhere in Europe, the attachment of labour exploitation to legal and conceptual frameworks of serious and organized crime has been criticized on the basis that this risks losing sight of the routine nature of forms of labour exploitation embedded in the licit economy (Malik et al., 2022). This includes non-criminal (as in, not prohibited in the penal code) but unethical and/or illegal forms of exploitation (Davies, 2019), around which there is more substantive political disagreement<sup>18</sup> than is the case for labour trafficking in the context of serious and organized crime.

Co-ordination across organizational boundaries thus makes more resources available in targeting crime and disorder, and shared narratives and concepts facilitate the practical and ideological processes of linking together formally discrete domains – within government, and across the public-private divide in the case of the police-business liaison. This section has briefly touched on the role of ILP in sustaining coherent representations of WRC, both in inter-agency and police-specific intelligence contexts, and the next section turns to discuss the ILP-related findings of the thesis more in-depth.

---

<sup>18</sup> A recurring debate on labour politics in Norway revolves around employers' access to hire based on fixed-term, rather than permanent, contracts (Øistad et al., 2019).



## **5.2 Intelligence-led policing as a sensemaking technology**

The second finding discussed here is that intelligence-led policing (including applied machine learning models (cf. Fyfe et al., 2018) can be usefully understood as a sensemaking technology, rather than as an objective instrument for measurement to aid decision-making. Sensemaking processes aim to make the world orderly, predictable, and actionable. None of these require that interpretations are valid representations of the empirical world, 'only' that they appear plausible and bring coherence to disparate observations (Schildt et al., 2020; Weick et al., 2005). ILP functions under a similar dynamic. In light of a sensemaking perspective, prediction and plausibility are seen as fundamental to how humans orientate themselves in their environment. Calling ILP a sensemaking technology is an attempt to articulate another conceptual understanding of the framework, and one which opposes the normative commitment to perspective-independent objectivity as sufficient to fill police knowledge needs (if it is even attainable) (cf. Chan et al., 2022; Vestby, 2018). However, the point of highlighting ILP as a sensemaking technology is not to disavow policing's turn to analysis and evidence for decision-making. Rather, the issue is that an adherence to an overstated ideal of objectivity is unhelpful in many contexts where police are required to understand their environment, which includes social dynamics and differences which ILP may be poorly equipped to capture. Technology can help improve decision-making, but has not freed the police from situatedness, and is thus hard pressed to provide a strictly objective basis for the organization's own decisions as to how they should intervene.

Considering these decision-making frameworks as sensemaking technologies, however, highlights how they serve to render the environment predictable and actionable without necessarily depending on valid assumptions such as those about causal relationships or that predicted outcomes can be 'conduct-related' (Garland, 2003, p. 54), i.e. how past decisions have shaped the historical data used to make new predictions (Vestby & Vestby, 2021). This is not an argument against pursuing validity through stringent analyses or a claim that police organizations are unable to achieve this.

From my view of ILP as sensemaking technologies, I articulate two interrelated critiques that tie together strands from different parts of the thesis. First, claiming objectivity disallows understandings of the practices and institutions of policing as inherently political (Bowling et al., 2018). This includes the production of analyses of value-based concepts such as ‘harm’ (Rønn, 2013) or realist analyses that ‘[work] to exclude consciousness of the institutional choices being made’ when measuring threats in ways that reference agency success criteria (Sheptycki, 2013, p. 106). Second, an insistence that objectivity – in a perspective-independent sense (Vestby, 2018) – is achievable in expert analysts suggests that policing can be appropriately and sufficiently governed by technocratic means. This idea discourages forms of participatory stakeholder involvement that may improve policing according to validity as well as fairness criteria (Holstein et al., 2019; Jasanoff, 2003; Rønn, 2013; Vestby, 2018; Vestby & Vestby, 2021). In suggesting the sensemaking perspective on decision-making frameworks, I am not recommending a relativization of truth claims or a detachment of police knowledge work from validity criteria (Brodeur & Dupont, 2006). According to Garland, risk remains a socio-technical problem that is simultaneously ‘[g]overned by scientific protocols as well as the needs of the organization in which they are employed’ (2003, p. 59). To acknowledge that police are situated, and thus both limited and enabled in particular ways by their position and purpose, could – and perhaps should – be conducive to thoughts about how participatory frameworks could be applied to improve the validity of police knowledge-building and sensitivity to challenges to fairness.

In the public discourse on crime and disorder, police occupy a privileged space as symbolic protectors of the social order, risk communicators, and ‘sense-givers’ about the allocation of ‘risk and blame’ (Douglas, 1992; Ericson & Haggerty, 1997; Finstad, 2018). Police organizations thus possess substantial epistemic power, i.e., influence over what others believe to be true, and have some gatekeeping capacity as to who else can make competitive claims within their domains (Archer et al., 2020). In addition to the law, science represents a source of legitimacy for police organizations (Ericson & Shearing, 1986). Cutting-edge predictive

technologies based on statistical and ML expertise can ‘manufacture legitimacy’ beyond what the technologies can actually provide in terms of valid truth claims (Elish & boyd, 2017, p. 2). Scientification can serve to amplify police epistemic power. A position of strong epistemic power facilitates tendencies towards police organizations that are more introverted, self-sufficient, or defensive (cf. Chan et al., 2022; Finstad, 2018; Garland, 2001) than is warranted from a vantage point of police as ‘imperfectly knowledgeable’ and situated problem-solving agents (Garland, 2001, p. 26).

ILP models have been implemented to make decisions more accountable, data-driven, and rational (James, 2013; Ratcliffe, 2016; Tilley, 2008), and thus serve as a technology for sensemaking within the organization. Different epistemological foundations of applied intelligence methodologies will determine, for example, whether and how perspectives other than those of the police or attributes of police data collection and categorization are systematically reflected in the knowledge base on which decision-making is based. WRC provides an obvious example, where the interpretation of the position of workers in semi-licit or downright criminal enterprises is crucial for enforcement and protection. This issue also arises with many potential interpretations, depending on factors such as the mandate of the relevant organization. They can be seen as either victims or perpetrators of WRC (Vestby, 2022). If they are considered victims, their victimization can be seen as exceptional and explained with reference to a serious organized crime paradigm or explained as an expected by-product of the embeddedness of various forms of labour exploitation within the normal operations of the licit market economy (Davies, 2019; Malik et al., 2022). These issues are consequential for the kinds of enforcement and prevention methods that are considered suitable (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017; Vestby, in review), while at the same time, neither explanation alone is sufficient to represent victims of labour exploitation generally.

### **5.3 Practical criminologies**

Based on sensemaking theory, this study of WRC has examined specifically how complexity is reduced and re-articulated in organizational narratives that correspond to police jurisdictions, which enable routine and creative decision-

making on what, if anything, could be done and by whom. The issue is thus the idiosyncratic reduction of complexity so police may act with the tools they have and develop alongside partner agencies. The rationalizing technologies of ILP as well as responsabilizing multi-agency and partnership models (cf. Garland, 2001) conjoin and co-exist: rationalization strategies include ILP as a way of knowing to act in targeted and efficient ways, whereas responsabilization strategies – here partnership models – provide not only a set of enforcement options<sup>19</sup>, but also a supply of information and knowledge that feeds informally into the police through inter-agency collegial relationships and formally via ILP IT systems.

This study has focused on police as '[s]ocially situated, imperfectly knowledgeable actors' (Garland, 2001, p. 26) tasked with acting on crime and disorder under conditions of uncertainty, both alone, and co-ordinated with others. I propose the term 'practical criminologies' to account for the situated and embedded nature of police theories of crime, disorder, and crime control. It is intended to name the idiosyncratic knowledge work undertaken by police so the organization can manage its work acting on crime and disorder, which is central in proactive, police-initiated crime control. Building on sensemaking theory, I propose it not as a claim about the substantive content of police theories on crime (i.e., an ontology), but rather, to point to the relationship between the understandings, theories, and knowledge practices of policing agents, and their mandates to act.

The notion of practical criminologies draws on findings from each of the publications mentioned in this thesis. First, WRC forms the 'keyhole issue' (Hochschild, 2018, p. 11) through which this thesis has explored specific sensemaking efforts, including the interwoven, immersive relationship between interpretation and action (Bjelland and Vestby, 2017; Vestby, 2022; Vestby, in review). In this thesis, the organizational narratives from Article 1 provide empirical key examples to explore the localization of the WRC term into the situated realities of participants' work units and jurisdictions, with publications 2 and 5 providing discussions of not only how the operationalization is contingent

---

<sup>19</sup> An enhanced 'sanction catalogue' (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017).

on what offences are dealt with, but also the opposite: that the availability of particular actions factors into which offences are selected and prioritized. These narratives can be considered criminologies or parts of criminologies. They are not only tacit theories of crime, but also explicit narratives through which the complexity of policing the borderlands of organized and economic crime, citizens and foreign nationals, bona fide and fly-by-night enterprises, criminal or simply unethical exploitation of workers, and welfare and tax fraud – is made actionable by operationalizing WRC as offences that are relevant to the formal remit of participants' work units, as well as being practically possible to address.

Police officers' knowledge work and management is increasingly rooted in the ILP model for knowing and decision-making. Concerns have been raised that ILP programmes are susceptible to an over-emphasis on 'what is easily knowable' and actionable (Eidet, 2019; Gill, 2000; Innes & Sheptycki, 2004, p. 20). Insofar as tools such as ILP, including predictive policing, are perceived as objective and impartial (Barocas & Selbst, 2016; Bennett Moses & Chan, 2016; Egbert & Leese, 2021), they provide an additional and complementary legitimacy resource to policing besides law (Ericson & Shearing, 1986). Such decision-making frameworks thus produce and deliver organizationally and technologically legitimized knowledge that reflects organizational practice (Vestby & Vestby, 2021).

As is shown by the reflexive narrative, 'Policing as a prime mover', in publication 1 (Vestby, 2022), there is no shortage of critical reflection among officers about the constructivist impact that law enforcement and intelligence have on how crime phenomena become articulated and reproduced through the organizational practices of crime control agencies. The PID builds on a positivistic epistemology, which, to the extent that it accounts for police perspectives or embeddedness, problematizes this as subjective biases that are introduced by analysts (Vestby, 2018). However, police situatedness is not problematized in the PID, in relation to aspects such as how police data reflect historical policing practices (Lum & Isaac, 2016) or how intelligence information provided by police officers is systematically assessed as more credible than that from other sources (Eidet, 2019; cf. Innes, 2006).

Using this term, I aim to provide an appreciative, analytic characterization of some fundamental dynamics in the development and reproduction of police theories of crime and crime control. This characterization can be used, and I use it here, as a concept that integrates aspects of how *actual* police sensemaking occurs in situated contexts, rather than what I read as a normative and a priori assumption in the Police Intelligence Doctrine (Politidirektoratet, 2014) that police can dis-embed from perspective and circumstance to produce perspective-independent understandings of themselves and the environment by adhering to the standards of ILP (cf. Vestby, 2018). There is a need for a concept to succinctly articulate the basis for the data and assessments produced by ILP – and police decision-making more generally – that take into account that these are fundamentally marked by the organizational and professional contexts where these have formed, without relativizing away the issue of validity as we engage with concrete sensemaking processes (Brodeur and Dupont, 2006). Practical criminologies can be functional, effective, and provide meaning and coherence without actually identifying any causal relationships (they could, but do not rely on it). This brings us closer to an understanding of the risks we face when police theories have their situatedness ‘tech-washed’ away (Brayne, 2020), resulting in legitimized and socially consequential knowledges that presents as a ‘view from nowhere’, despite being constituted by specific ‘somewheres’ (cf. Jasanoff in Chan et al., 2022).

Police agencies are embedded in contexts that provide particular interpretive frameworks, as well as constraints on and resources for, sensemaking. Their enacted classifications catch hold of some aspects of reality yet ignore or misrepresent others. My claim here is not that police are less able to obtain a ‘view from nowhere’ than other social actors. However, the empirical exploration of WRC provides a case in point to discuss that situatedness produces systematic, idiosyncratic effects on interpretation. Police interpretations of crimes and suitable responses do not emerge spontaneously or randomly as naturally given responses to objective facts about naturally given crimes and disorders. In theory, ‘crime’ (as one among many possible classifications for unwanted acts) is an infinitely renewable resource (Christie, 2004). Criminal law creates a categorical equivalence

between disparate actions, and in the present case, work-related *crime* is used to collectively refer to actions that are banned in the criminal code, as well as many others, for example in administrative tax and welfare benefit statutes. This is unlike, for example, the many other names given to the economic shady practises of the middle classes in the contemporary market, often understood as ‘cheating’ rather than ‘crime’ (Farrall & Karstedt, 2020) (see also the ‘cheats’ in Publication 1). Not only our legislative bodies, but our systems of crime control play a pivotal role in whether actions become criminalized in practice, or not (cf. Hulsman, 1986). How persons and events are classified is not wholly determined by<sup>20</sup>, but is systematically related to, the operations of crime control agencies themselves, i.e., their practical criminologies.

---

<sup>20</sup> Because banned actions actually do take place, and outside the context of downright miscarriages of justice or corruption, criminal justice systems place boundaries on what can pass as a plausible classification of events (Eriscon, 1981).





## 6. Conclusion

‘Categories [...]’, writes Siri Hustvedt (2010, pp. 185–186) in the excerpt on page vii, ‘are both necessary and useful, but they have to be recognized for what they are: convenient images to aid comprehension — which necessarily leave out or misconstrue or distort an ambiguous, shifting reality’. This thesis takes various inroads to explore the relationship between policing agencies’ classifications, and their environments. The research is framed in light of the current proactive paradigm, in which police are charged with initiating crime control to limit and prevent harms, rather than rely on emergency responses post hoc. Events, objects, and people will often present police with a wide range of possible interpretations – yet some become the basis for action, and others do not. To understand why and how this happens, policing itself must be part of the explanation. Contrary to claims that ILP can produce a scientifically valid ‘view from nowhere’ from which to act, this thesis argues that as situated social actors, policing agencies inhabit a ‘somewhere’ that is consequential in terms of which interpretations of the environment emerge as plausible, and is co-constituted with available courses of action (Chan et al., 2022; Vestby, 2018, in review). For example, the availability of an extended ‘sanction catalogue’ in the multi-agency Lime case made available administrative sanctioning of offences that would otherwise have had to reach a higher threshold of proof in the criminal case to be penalized, a riskier and costlier route to imposing sanctions (Bjelland & Vestby, 2017). Another example is the understanding among participants that issues that have already been documented in the intelligence system are more likely to receive continued attention (Vestby, 2022).

These findings have implications for how we could think about how to improve knowledge-based police decision-making both in terms of the validity of e.g., intelligence products, and democratic sensitivity (and how we could be motivated engage with these issues). Both have something to gain from thinking about how and when to include stakeholder perspectives. For example, citizen perceptions of the police could be monitored and be taken systematically into consideration (Lum & Nagin, 2017), forms of community intelligence could be

elevated besides traditionally privileged police criminal intelligence (cf. Eidet, 2019; Gundhus, 2009; Innes, 2006), and value concepts and uncertainty could be more reliably and accountably managed with a participatory approach to strategic decision-making (cf. Holstein et al., 2019; Rønn, 2013). Participatory and stakeholder approaches de-privilege the police point of view on especially value judgments, but do not a priori exclude members of police agencies. As I hope is demonstrated in this thesis, perhaps most clearly in Publication 1, the policing domain under study is populated with thoughtful officers who are well aware of the reflexive and iterative relationship between police knowledge, and action. This is not a dynamic which is reflected in the PID that prescribes methods for knowledge production and decision-making (Politidirektoratet, 2014), which does not make it unique in the context of ILP more generally (Ratcliffe, 2016; Vestby, 2018).

In one way, the multi-agency definition of WRC can be seen as a case of attempting to view problems more holistically and providing policing that is more responsive to diverse issues facing the agencies that hold jurisdiction over the various linked domains of the economy. However, the question remains whether the result is an integrated analytical perspective that accounts for conflicting values and commitments between agencies and the recipients of their services (as the joint inter-agency strategic intelligence unit NTAES is perhaps best positioned to achieve), or if in sum the multi-agency approach mostly provides more tools to apply ad hoc, e.g. in focused deterrence practices on the ground.<sup>21</sup>

Nearing the end of this thesis, this work motivates further research into several related lines of inquiry. First, in the national context of this study, more public agencies are picking up terminology and practices that are similar to those of ILP. Whether and how intelligence practice is renegotiated in a non-military, non-police context, or whether the rationalities from these traditional domains for intelligence practice transfer over into new areas of the public sector, would be an

---

<sup>21</sup> 'Focused deterrence strategies aim to increase the risks faced by potential offenders, while finding new and creative ways of deploying traditional and non-traditional law enforcement tools to communicate incentives and disincentives to targeted offenders' (Rowe & Søgård, 2019, p. 1)

important continuation of the inquiry in this study. Further, an analysis of intelligence data (for example on WRC) should be done to continue producing nuanced and well-founded findings and discussions on the bedrock for police decision-making in an ILP era. Lastly, the toolbox in Publication 4, ought to be tested and developed in practice in a collaborative research project with both academic researchers, analysts and decision-makers. The toolbox can, I suspect, be transferable to discuss intelligence practices and decision-making practices outside the specialized machine learning context for which it was first assembled.

The ongoing development and sustenance of frameworks for valid and democratically sensitive knowledge production and decision-making remains of utmost importance, particularly as technological developments continue to obscure how traditional sociological factors in organizational life continue to exert their influence on police practice. This thesis has touched on aspects of these factors, e.g., in the form of formal mandates, legal resources, macro- and occupational cultures, opportunities for multi-agency partnerships, and how systems for data-driven, knowledge-based decision-making are understood and applied. These affect the outcomes of sensemaking processes in which judgments about plausibility, coherence, and feasibility of various courses of action are made. Demonstrating the existence of an organizational pull on interpretation and action, this thesis has contributed to ideas about how we as researchers and engaged citizens *can* contribute to improvements on established practices and patterns in policing, and why we *ought* to do so.



## References

- Amicelle, A., & Iafolla, V. (2018). Suspicion-in-the-making: Surveillance and denunciation in financial policing. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 58(4), 845–863. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azx051>
- Annison, H. (2021). The role of storylines in penal policy change. *Punishment & Society*, 0(0), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474521989533>
- Archer, A., Cawston, A., Matheson, B., & Geuskens, M. (2020). Celebrity, democracy, and epistemic power. *Perspectives on Politics*, 18(1), 27–42. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592719002615>
- Ashworth, A., & Zedner, L. (2014). *Preventive justice*. Oxford University Press.
- Atkinson, C. (2019). Where were you while we were getting high policing? The consequences of co-location for broader partnership working in tackling organised crime and terrorism. *Policing and Society*, 29(8), 922–935. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2018.1465058>
- Bacon, M. (2016). *Taking care of business: Police detectives, drug law enforcement and proactive investigation*. Oxford University Press.
- Barocas, S., & Selbst, A. D. (2016). Big data's disparate impact. *California Law Review*, 104, 671–732.
- Bennett Moses, L., & Chan, J. (2016). Algorithmic prediction in policing: Assumptions, evaluation, and accountability. *Policing and Society*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2016.1253695>
- Bird, C. M. (2005). How I stopped dreading and learned to love transcription. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(2), 226–248.
- Bittner, E. (2005). Florence Nightingale in pursuit of Willie Sutton: A theory of the police. In T. Newburn (Ed.), *Policing: key readings* (pp. 150–172). Willan Cullompton.
- Bjelland, H. F. (2019). *Facing complexity: Police officers' reasoning and response to human trafficking*. University of Oslo.
- Bjelland, H. F., & Vestby, A. (2017). 'It's about using the full sanction catalogue': On boundary negotiations in a multi-agency organised crime investigation. *Policing and Society*, 27(6), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2017.1341510>
- Bowker, G. C., & Star, S. L. (1999). *Sorting things out*. MIT Press.
- Bowling, B., Reiner, R., & Sheptycki, J. (2018). *The politics of the police* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Bowling, B., & Sheptycki, J. (2015). Global policing and transnational rule with law. *Transnational Legal Theory*, 6(1), 141–173. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20414005.2015.1042235>
- Brandariz, J. A. (2021). Criminalization or instrumentalism? New trends in the field of border criminology. *Theoretical Criminology*, 136248062110091. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13624806211009158>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Brayne, S. (2020). *Predict and surveil: Data, discretion, and the future of policing*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Brodeur, J.-P., & Dupont, B. (2006). Knowledge workers or “knowledge” workers? *Policing and Society*, 16(1), 7–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439460500399304>

- Brown, A. D., Colville, I., & Pye, A. (2015). Making sense of sensemaking in organization studies. *Organization Studies*, 36(2), 265–277. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840614559259>
- Brown, J. (1996). Police research: Some critical issues. In F. Leishman, B. Loveday, & S. P. Savage (Eds.), *Core issues in policing* (pp. 178–190). Longman House.
- Bucholtz, M. (2000). The politics of transcription. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 32(10), 1439–1465. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166\(99\)00094-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(99)00094-6)
- Burcher, M., & Whelan, C. (2018). Intelligence-led policing in practice: Reflections from intelligence analysts. *Police Quarterly*, 109861118796890. <https://doi.org/10.1177/109861118796890>
- Cath, C. (2018). Governing artificial intelligence: Ethical, legal and technical opportunities and challenges. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences*, 376(2133), 20180080. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsta.2018.0080>
- Chan, J. B. (1999). Governing police practice: Limits of the new accountability. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 50(2), 251–270.
- Chan, J., Sanders, C., Bennett Moses, L., & Blackmore, H. (2022). Datafication and the practice of intelligence production. *Big Data & Society*, 9(1), 20539517221089310. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517221089310>
- Christensen, T. (2018). Komparative reformtrender og norsk politireform— Strukturelle trekk og kulturelle brudd? [Comparative reform trends and the Norwegian police reform — Structural traits and cultural ruptures?] In V. L. Sørli & P. Larsson (Eds.), *Politireformer: Idealer, realiteter, retorikk og praksis [Police reforms: ideals, realities, rhetoric and practice]* (pp. 57–71). Cappelen Damm Akademisk.
- Christensen, T., & Læg Reid, P. (2007). The whole-of-government approach to public sector reform. *Public Administration Review*, 67(6), 1059–1066.
- Christie, N. (2004). *A suitable amount of crime*. Routledge.
- Crawford, A. (1999). *The local governance of crime: Appeals to community and partnerships*. Oxford University Press.
- Croall, H. (2001). *Understanding white collar crime*. Open University Press.
- Dahl, J. Y., Fyfe, N. R., Gundhus, H. O. I., Larsson, P., Skjevraak, P. E., Runhovde, S. R., & Vestby, A. (2021). Old, new, borrowed and blue – shifts in modern policing. *The British Journal of Criminology*, azabo85. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azabo85>
- Damsa, D., & Ugelvik, T. (2017). A difference that makes a difference? Reflexivity and researcher effects in an all-foreign prison. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 160940691771313. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917713132>
- Davies, J. (2019). From severe to routine labour exploitation: The case of migrant workers in the UK food industry. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 19(3), 294–310. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748895818762264>
- Davies, M. (2016). To what extent can we trust police research? Examining trends in research ‘on’, ‘with’, ‘by’ and ‘for’ the Police. *Nordisk Politiforskning*, 3(02), 154–164.

- Departementene. (2019). *Strategi mot arbeidslivskriminalitet. Revidert 5. februar 2019. [Strategy against work-related crime. Revised on 5 February 2019]* <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/7f4788717a724ef79921004f211350b5/no/pdfs/strategi-mot-arbedslivskriminalitet-2019.pdf>
- Departementene. (2021). *Strategi mot arbeidslivskriminalitet [Strategy against work-related crime. Revised 8 February 2021]* <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/17f35b6ba95f4da2a7ac4682boao52af/no/pdfs/revidert-strategi-mot-arbeidslivskriminalitet-2021.pdf>
- Douglas, M. (1992). *Risk and blame: Essays in cultural theory*. Routledge.
- Dubber, M. D. (2005). *The police power*. Columbia University Press.
- Dubber, M. D., & Valverde, M. (2006). Perspectives on the power and science of police. In M. D. Dubber & M. Valverde (Eds.), *The new police science: The police power in domestic and international governance* (pp. 1–16). Stanford University Press.
- Egbert, S., & Leese, M. (2021). *Criminal futures: Predictive policing and everyday police work*. Taylor & Francis.
- Eidet, T. (2019). *Politiets etterretningsregister Indicia: En upålitelig ryktebørs eller en troverdig kilde til det kunnskapsbaserte politiarbeidet? [The police criminal intelligence database Indicia: Unreliable hearsay or a reliable source for knowledge-based policing?]* [Master]. Politihøgskolen.
- Elish, M. C., & boyd, danah. (2017). Situating methods in the magic of Big Data and AI. *Communication Monographs*, 85(1), 57–80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2017.1375130>
- Ericson, R. V. (1981). *Making crime: A study of detective work*. Butterworths Toronto.
- Ericson, R. V., & Haggerty, K. D. (1997). *Policing the risk society*. University of Toronto Press.
- Ericson, R. V., & Shearing, C. D. (1986). The scientification of police work. In G. Böhme & N. Stehr (Eds.), *The knowledge society* (pp. 129–159). Springer Netherlands.
- Europol. (2015). *Exploring tomorrow's organised crime*. Europol. [https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Europol\\_OrgCrimeReport\\_web-final.pdf](https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Europol_OrgCrimeReport_web-final.pdf)
- Fangen, K. (2010). *Deltagende observasjon [Participant observation]*. Fagbokforlaget.
- Farrall, S., & Karstedt, S. (2020). *Respectable Citizens-Shady Practices: The Economic Morality of the Middle Classes*. Oxford University Press.
- Feldman, G. (2019). *The gray zone: Sovereignty, human smuggling, and undercover police investigation in Europe*. Stanford University Press.
- Finstad, L. (2003). *Politiblikket*. Pax.
- Finstad, L. (2018). *Hva er politi*. Universitetsforlaget.
- Fraser, A., & Atkinson, C. (2014). Making up gangs: Looping, labelling and the new politics of intelligence-led policing. *Youth Justice*, 14(2), 154–170. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473225414529047>
- Friedrichs, D. O. (2009). *Trusted criminals: White collar crime in contemporary society*. Cengage Learning.
- Fyfe, N., Gundhus, H. O. I., & Rønn, K. V. (Eds.). (2018). *Moral issues in intelligence-led policing*. Routledge.

- Garland, D. (2001). *The culture of control. Crime and social order in contemporary society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Garland, D. (2003). The rise of risk. In R. V. Ericson & A. Doyle (Eds.), *Risk and morality* (48–86). University of Toronto Press.
- Giacomantonio, C. (2014). A typology of police organizational boundaries. *Policing and Society*, 24(5), 545–565. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2013.784302>
- Giacomantonio, C. (2015). *Policing integration: The sociology of police coordination work*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gill, P. (2000). *Rounding up the usual suspects? Developments in contemporary law enforcement intelligence*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate.
- Gill, P., & Phythian, M. (2012). *Intelligence in an insecure world*. Polity Press.
- Grimen, H. (2008). Profesjon og profesjonsmoral [Professions and morality]. In A. Molander & L. I. Terum (Eds.), *Profesjonsstudier [Studies of professions]*. Universitetsforlaget.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59–82.
- Gundhus, H.O.I. (2009). *For sikkerhets skyld: IKT, yrkeskulturer og kunnskapsarbeid i politiet [On the safe side: ICT, occupational cultures and knowledge work in policing]*. Unipub.
- Gundhus, H.O.I., & Jansen, P. T. (2020). Pre-crime and policing of migrants: Anticipatory action meets management of concerns. *Theoretical Criminology*, 24(1), 90–109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480619873347>
- Gundhus, H.O.I., Talberg, N., & Wathne, C. T. (2021). From discretion to standardization: Digitalization of the police organization. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14613557211036554>
- Hagaman, A. K., & Wutich, A. (2017). How many interviews are enough to identify metathemes in multisited and cross-cultural research? Another perspective on Guest, Bunce, and Johnson's (2006) landmark study. *Field Methods*, 29(1), 23–41. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X16640447>
- Hammersley, M., & Gomm, R. (2008). Assessing the radical critique of interviews. In *Questioning qualitative inquiry: Critical essays* (pp. 89–100). Sage.
- Hannerz, U. (2003). Being there... And there... And there! Reflections on multi-site ethnography. *Ethnography*, 4(2), 201–216.
- Hartmann, M. R. K., Hestehave, N. K., Høgh, L., & Rønn, K. V. (2018). Knowing from within: Making the case for embedded police research. *Nordisk Politiforskning*, 5(01), 7–27. <https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.1894-8693-2018-01-03>
- Hawkins, K. (2002). *Law as last resort: Prosecution decision-making in a regulatory agency*. Oxford University Press.
- Henne, K. (2017). Multi-sited fieldwork in regulatory studies. In P. Drahos (Ed.), *Regulatory theory: Foundations and applications* (pp. 97–114). ANU Press.
- Hestehave, N. K. (2021). *Coppers chasing usual suspects. An embedded search for a proactive police performance and the detective métier* [PhD Thesis]. Aalborg University.
- Hobbs, D. (2013). *Lush life: Constructing organized crime in the UK*. Oxford University Press.



- Holloway, I., & Todres, L. (2005). The status of method: Flexibility, consistency and coherence. In I. Holloway (Ed.), *Qualitative research in health care* (pp. 90–103). Open University Press.
- Holstein, K., Vaughan, J. W., Daumé III, H., Dudík, M., & Wallach, H. (2019). Improving fairness in machine learning systems: What do industry practitioners need? *ArXiv:1812.05239 [Cs]*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1145/3290605.3300830>
- Hörnqvist, M. (2015). Regulating business or policing crime? Tracing the policy convergence between taxation and crime control at the local level. *Regulation & Governance*, 9(4), 352–366. <https://doi.org/10.1111/rego.12071>
- Horst, C. (2009). Expanding sites: The question of ‘depth’ explored. In M.-A. Falzon (Ed.), *Multi-sited ethnography. Theory, praxis and locality in contemporary research* (pp. 133–148). Ashgate.
- Hustvedt, S. (2010). *The Shaking Woman or A History of My Nerves*. Picador.
- Ingram, J. R., Paoline, E. A., & Terrill, W. (2013). A multilevel framework for understanding police culture: The role of the workgroup. *Criminology*, 51(2), 365–397. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9125.12009>
- Innes, M. (2006). Policing Uncertainty: Countering Terror through Community Intelligence and Democratic Policing. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 605(1), 222–241.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716206287118>
- Innes, M. (2014). *Signal crimes: Reactions to crime, disorder and control*. Oxford University Press.
- Innes, M., Fielding, N., & Cope, N. (2005). ‘The appliance of science?’ The theory and practice of crime intelligence analysis. *British Journal of Criminology*, 45(1), 39–57.
- Innes, M., & Sheptycki, J. W. (2004). From detection to disruption: Intelligence and the changing logic of police crime control in the United Kingdom. *International Criminal Justice Review*, 14(1), 1–24.
- Introna, L. D. (2019). On the making of sense in sensemaking: Decentred sensemaking in the meshwork of life. *Organization Studies*, 40(5), 745–764.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840618765579>
- Jahnsen, S. Ø., & Rykkja, L. H. (2020). Coordinating against work-related crime in Norway. *International Public Management Review*, 20(1), 3–22.
- James, A. (2013). *Examining intelligence-led policing: Developments in research, policy and practice*. Palgrave.
- Jasanoff, S. (2003). Technologies of humility: Citizen participation in governing science. *Minerva*, 41(3), 223–244.
- Justis- og beredskapsdepartementet. (2015). *Prop. 61 LS (2014-2015). Proposisjon til Stortinget (forslag til lovvedtak og stortingsvedtak). Endringer i politiloven mv. (Trygghet i hverdagen – nærpolitireformen) [The proximity police reform]*. regjeringen.no. <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/prop.-61-s-2014-2015/id2398784/>
- Kammersgaard, T. (2019). Private security guards policing public space: Using soft power in place of legal authority. *Policing and Society*, 31, 117–130.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2019.1688811>

- Kaufmann, M. (2018). The co-construction of crime predictions. Dynamics between digital data, software and human beings. In N. R. Fyfe, H. O. I. Gundhus, & K. Vrist Rønn (Eds.), *Moral issues in intelligence-led policing* (pp. 143-160). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315231259>
- Kaufmann, M., Egbert, S., & Leese, M. (2019). Predictive policing and the politics of patterns. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 59(3), 674-692. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azy060>
- Kleiven, M. E. (2007). Where's the intelligence in the National Intelligence Model? *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 9(3), 257-273.
- Korsell, L. (2007). Korruption, en fråga om ekonomisk och organiserad brottslighet? [*Corruption, an issue of organized and economic crime?*] *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Kriminalvidenskab*, 94(3).
- Korsell, L. (2015). On the difficulty of measuring economic crime. In J. van Erp, W. Huisman, & G. Vande Walle (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of white-collar and corporate crime in Europe* (pp. 111-127). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315858432-13>
- Korsell, L., Skinnari, J., & Vesterhav, D. (2009). *Organiserad brottslighet i Sverige [Organized crime in Sweden]*. Liber.
- Kowal, S., & O'Connell, D. C. (2014). Transcription as a crucial step of data analysis. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative data analysis*. Sage.
- Kriminalitetsområder—Økokrim* (n.d.). [*Crime types - the Norwegian National Authority for Investigation and Prosecution of Economic and Environmental Crime*] <https://www.okokrim.no/kriminalitetsomraader.547992.no.html>
- Kudesia, R. S. (2017). Organizational sensemaking. In R. S. Kudesia, *Oxford research encyclopedia of psychology*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190236557.013.78>
- Larsson, P. (2018). *Organiserad kriminalitet [Organized crime]*. Pax.
- Levi, M. (2007). Organized crime and terrorism. In M. Maguire, R. Morgan, & R. Reiner (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of criminology* (pp. 771-809). Oxford University Press.
- Lomell, H. M. (2012). Punishing the uncommitted crime: Prevention, pre-emption, precaution and the transformation of criminal law. In *Justice and security in the 21st century* (pp. 99-116). Routledge.
- Lov om politiet (politiloven) [The police act]* (1995). <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1995-08-04-53>
- Lov om rettergangsmåten i straffesaker (Straffeprosessloven) [Criminal procedure act]* (1981). <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1981-05-22-25>
- Lum, C., & Nagin, D. S. (2017). Reinventing American Policing. *Crime and Justice*, 46(1), 339-394.
- Lum, K., & Isaac, W. (2016). To predict and serve? *Significance*, 13(5), 14-19.
- Lundgaard, J. M. (2021). *Nød og neppe: Fra anrop til beslutning ved politiets operasjonssentral [From calls to decisions in the emergency control rooms of the police]*. Universitetsforlaget. <https://doi.org/10.18261/9788215040974-2021>
- Lægred, P., & Rykkja, L. H. (2015). Organizing for “wicked problems” – analyzing coordination arrangements in two policy areas: Internal security and the

- welfare administration. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 28(6), 475–93.
- Maguire, M. (2000). Policing by risks and targets: Some dimensions and implications of intelligence-led crime control. *Policing and Society*, 9(4), 315–336. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2000.9964821>
- Maitlis, S., & Christianson, M. (2014). Sensemaking in organizations: Taking stock and moving forward. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 8(1), 57–125. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19416520.2014.873177>
- Malik, H. M., Vanto, J., Lähteenmäki, L., Vajus-Anttila, J., & Davies, J. (2022). A critical perspective on the administrative approach to crime prevention: The case of labour trafficking. *European Journal of Criminology*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14773708221092330>
- Manderson, L., Bennett, E., & Andajani-Sutjahjo, S. (2006). The social dynamics of the interview: Age, class, and gender. *Qualitative Health Research*, 16(10), 1317–1334. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732306294512>
- Manning, P. K. (1997). Organizations as sense-making contexts. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 14(2), 139–150. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026327697014002012>
- Manning, P. K. (2008). *The technology of policing: Crime mapping, information technology, and the rationality of crime control*. New York University Press.
- Manning, P. K. (2010). *Democratic policing in a changing world*. Paradigm Publishers.
- Marcus, G. E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the world system: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 95–117.
- Mazerolle, L., & Ransley, J. (2006). *Third party policing*. Cambridge University Press.
- McDowell, D. (2008). *Strategic intelligence: A handbook for practitioners, managers, and users*. Scarecrow Press.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, M. A., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Sage.
- Mills, J. H., Thurlow, A., & Mills, A. J. (2010). Making sense of sensemaking: The critical sensemaking approach. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 5(2), 182–195.
- Mittelstadt, B. D., Allo, P., Taddeo, M., Wachter, S., & Floridi, L. (2016). The ethics of algorithms: Mapping the debate. *Big Data & Society*, 3(2), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951716679679>
- Myhrer, T. G. (2014). Politiretten – samfunnsbeskyttelse og rettssikkerhet. I Larsson, P. Gundhus, HOI & Granér, R. (Red.) *Innføring i Politivitenskap*. Oslo: Cappelen Damm.
- Neby, S., Nesheim, T., Ryssevik, J., Rubecksen, K., Dahle, M., & Nordhagen, I. (2016). *Innsats mot arbeidslivskriminalitet. Kartlegging og evaluering av hvordan det tverretatlige statlige samarbeidet fungerer [The anti-WRC effort. MApping and evaluation og how the inter-agency governmental partnership works]* (No. 7–2016; Rapport). Uni Research Rokkansenteret.
- NESH. (2021). *Forskningsetiske retningslinjer for samfunnsvitenskap og humaniora [Guidelines for research ethics in the social sciences and the humanities]*. De nasjonale forskningsetiske komiteene. <https://www.forskningsetikk.no/globalassets/dokumenter/4-publikasjoner->

- som-pdf/forskningsetiske-retningslinjer-for-samfunnsvitenskap-og-humaniora.pdf
- NME. (2016, June 16). 'We built this city on sausage rolls' and more of the most commonly misheard song lyrics. *NME*. <https://www.nme.com/blogs/nme-blogs/misheard-song-lyrics-6787>
- NTAES. (n.d.). Retrieved 3 March 2022, from <https://www.ntaes.no/formal.html>
- NTAES. (2020). *Arbeidslivskriminalitet. Situasjonsbeskrivelse 2020 [Work-related crime. Current status 2020]*. Nasjonalt tverretatlig analyse – og etterretningssenter.
- Nygaard, L. P., & Solli, K. (2021). *Strategies for writing a thesis by publication in the social sciences and humanities*. Routledge.
- Nøkleberg, M. (2021). Expecting the exceptional in the everyday: Policing global transportation hubs. *Security Dialogue*, 09670106211007066. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09670106211007066>
- O'Neill, M., & Loftus, B. (2013). Policing and the surveillance of the marginal: Everyday contexts of social control. *Theoretical Criminology*, 17(4), 437–454.
- O'Neill, M., & McCarthy, D. J. (2014). (Re) negotiating police culture through partnership working: Trust, compromise and the 'new' pragmatism. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 14(2), 143–159.
- Oslo politidistrikt. (2015). *Trender i kriminalitet 2016–2017. Utfordringer i den globale byen [Crime trends 2016-2017. Challenges in a global city]*. Strategisk stab, Oslo politidistrikt. [https://www.politi.no/vedlegg/lokale\\_vedlegg/oslo/Vedlegg\\_3454.pdf](https://www.politi.no/vedlegg/lokale_vedlegg/oslo/Vedlegg_3454.pdf)
- Phythian, M. (2012). Policing uncertainty: Intelligence, security and risk. *Intelligence and National Security*, 27(2), 187–205. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2012.661642>
- Politidirektoratet. (2005). *Prosjekt organisert kriminalitet [Project organized crime]* (No. 6/2005). Politidirektoratet, Seksjon for etterretning og analyse.
- Politidirektoratet. (2014). *Etterretningsdoktrine for politiet . Versjon 1.0 [Police intelligence doctrine Version 1.0]* (POD Publikasjon No. 2014/11).
- Politidirektoratet. (2020). *I forkant av kriminaliteten. Forebygging som politiets hovedstrategi (2021-2025) [One step ahead of crime. Prevention as the police's main strategy]* (No. 2020/10; POD Publikasjon). Politidirektoratet. <https://www.politiet.no/globalassets/05-om-oss/03-strategier-og-planer/i-forkant-av-kriminaliteten.pdf>
- Rantatalo, O., & Karp, S. (2018). Stories of policing: The role of storytelling in police students' sensemaking of early work-based experiences. *Vocations and Learning*, 11(1), 161–177. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12186-017-9184-9>
- Ratcliffe, J. (2019). Advocate: Predictive policing. In D. Weisburd & A. Braga (Eds.), *Police innovation. Contrasting perspectives* (pp. 347–365). Cambridge University Press.
- Ratcliffe, J. (2009). *Strategic thinking in criminal intelligence*. Federation Press.
- Ratcliffe, J. (2016). *Intelligence-led policing*. Routledge.
- Rathmell, A. (2002). Towards postmodern intelligence. *Intelligence and National Security*, 17(3), 87–104.

- Reiner, R. (2013). Who governs? Democracy, plutocracy, science and prophecy in policing. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 13(2), 161–180.
- Reiss, J., & Sprenger, J. (2016). Scientific objectivity. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy* (Summer 2016). Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University.  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2016/entries/scientific-objectivity/>
- Renan, D. (2015). Pooling powers. *Columbia Law Review*, 115(2), 211–291.
- Rowe, M., & Sjøgaard, T. F. (2019). ‘Playing the man, not the ball’: Targeting organised criminals, intelligence and the problems with pulling levers. *Policing and Society*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2019.1603226>
- Ruggiero, V. (1996). *Organized and corporate crime in Europe: Offers that can't be refused*. Dartmouth.
- Rønn, K. V. (2013). Democratizing strategic intelligence?: On the feasibility of an objective, decision-making framework when assessing threats and harms of organized crime. *Policing*, 7(1), 53–62. <https://doi.org/10.1093/police/pas056>
- Runhovde, S. (2017). *Policing the illegal trade in wildlife* [PhD thesis]. Universitetet i Oslo.
- Salter, M. B. (2013). Introduction. In M. B. Salter & C. E. Mutlu (Eds.), *Research methods in critical security studies: An introduction* (15–24). Routledge.
- Sandberg, J., & Tsoukas, H. (2020). Sensemaking reconsidered: Towards a broader understanding through phenomenology. *Organization Theory*, 1(1), 2631787719879937. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2631787719879937>
- Sanders, C. B., & Lavoie, J. (2021). Boundary objects and technological frames: Officers’ perceptions and experiences using mental health screeners on the frontline. *Policing and Society*, 31(8), 967–981.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2020.1813140>
- Sanders, C., & Condon, C. (2017). Crime analysis and cognitive effects: The practice of policing through flows of data. *Global Crime*, 1–19.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17440572.2017.1323637>
- Schildt, H., Mantere, S., & Cornelissen, J. (2020). Power in sensemaking processes. *Organization Studies*, 41(2), 241–265. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840619847718>
- Scott, L., & Jackson, P. (2004). The study of intelligence in theory and practice. *Intelligence and National Security*, 19(2), 139–169.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0268452042000302930>
- Seigel, M. (2018). *Violence work: State power and the limits of police*. Duke University Press.
- Sheptycki, J. (2013). To go beyond the cycle of intelligence-led policing. In M. Phythian (Ed.), *Understanding the intelligence cycle* (pp. 21–42). Routledge.
- Skinns, L., Wooff, A., & Sprawson, A. (2016). The ethics of researching the police. In M. Brunger, S. Tong, & D. Martin (Eds.), *Introduction to policing research* (pp. 185–201). Routledge.
- Sklansky, D. A. (2012). Crime, immigration, and ad hoc instrumentalism. *New Criminal Law Review: An International and Interdisciplinary Journal*, 15(2), 157–223.

- Stenström, A. (2020). *The plural policing of fraud. Power and the investigation of insurance and welfare fraud in Sweden* [Doctoral thesis]. Stockholm University.
- Sørli, V. L., & Larsson, P. (2018a). *Politireformer: Idealer, realiteter, retorikk og praksis. [Police reforms: ideals, realities, rhetoric and practice]* Cappelen Damm Akademisk.
- Sørli, V. L., & Larsson, P. (2018b). Reformer i politiet [Police reforms]. In V. L. Sørli & P. Larsson (Eds.), *Politireformer: Idealer, realiteter, retorikk og praksis Police reforms: ideals, realities, rhetoric and practice* (pp. 15–34). Cappelen Damm Akademisk.
- Terpstra, J., Fyfe, N. R., & Salet, R. (2019). The Abstract Police: A conceptual exploration of unintended changes of police organisations. *The Police Journal*, 0032258X18817999. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032258X18817999>
- Tilley, N. (2008). Modern approaches to policing: Community, problem-oriented and intelligence-led. In T. Newburn (Ed.), *Handbook of policing* (pp. 373–403). Willan Publishing.
- Tjora, A. (2017). *Kvalitative forskningsmetoder i praksis [Qualitative research methods in practice]*. Gyldendal akademisk.
- Tjora, A. (2019). *Qualitative research as stepwise-deductive induction*. Routledge.
- Tognato, C. (2015). Narratives of tax evasion: The cultural legitimacy of harmful behaviour. In L. Presser & S. Sandberg (Eds.), *Narrative criminology. Understanding stories of crime* (pp. 260–286). New York University Press.
- Tolgensbakk, I. (2020). Disclosing the interviewer: Ethnopoetics and the researcher's place in transcribed interviews. *Ethnologia Europaea*, 50(2), 125–136. <https://doi.org/10.16995/ee.1785>
- Tongco, Ma. D. C. (2007). Purposive sampling as a tool for informant selection. *Ethnobotany Research and Applications*, 5, 147. <https://doi.org/10.17348/era.5.0.147-158>
- Vaara, E., Sonenshein, S., & Boje, D. (2016). Narratives as sources of stability and change in organizations: Approaches and directions for future research. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 10(1), 495–560.
- van Duyne, P. C., & Houtzager, M. J. (2005). Criminal sub-contracting in the Netherlands: The Dutch 'koppelbaas' as crime-entrepreneur. In P. Duyne, K. von Lampe, M. Dijck, & J. Newell (Eds.), *The Organised Crime Economy: Managing crime markets in Europe* (pp. 163–188).
- Van Maanen, J. (2011). *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography*. University of Chicago Press.
- Vestby, A. (2018). Policy making without politics: Overstating objectivity in intelligence-led policing. In H. I. Gundhus, K. V. Rønn, & N. Fyfe (Eds.), *Moral issues in intelligence-led policing* (pp. 265–282). Routledge.
- Vestby, A. (2022). Cheats, threats and reflexivity: Organizational narratives on policing organized and economic crime. *British Journal of Criminology*, 62(1), 200–217. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azabo54>
- Vestby, A. (in review). Preventing prosecution: Narratives on proactive policing. *Theoretical Criminology*.

- Vestby, A., & Vestby, J. (2021). Machine learning and the police: Asking the right questions. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 15(1), 44–58.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/police/pazo35>
- Wakeling, P. (2010). Is there such a thing as a working-class academic? In Y. Taylor (Ed.), *Classed Intersections. Spaces, selves, knowledges* (pp. 49-66). Routledge.
- Wathne, C. T. (2018). *Målstyring i politiet: i teori og praksis [Performance management in the police: theory and practice]*. Cappelen Damm akademisk.
- Weber, K., & Glynn, M. A. (2006). Making sense with institutions: Context, thought and action in Karl Weick's theory. *Organization Studies*, 27(11), 1639–1660.
- Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. Sage.
- Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. M., & Obstfeld, D. (2005). Organizing and the process of sensemaking. *Organization Science*, 16(4), 409–421.  
<https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1050.0133>
- Weisburd, D., & Braga, A. (Eds.). (2019). *Police innovation. Contrasting perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.
- Weisburd, D., Majmundar, M. K., Aden, H., Braga, A., Bueermann, J., Cook, P. J., Goff, P. A., Harmon, R. A., Haviland, A., Lum, C., Manski, C., Mastrofski, S., Meares, T., Nagin, D., Owens, E., Raphael, S., Ratcliffe, J., & Tyler, T. (2019). Proactive policing: A summary of the report of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. *Asian Journal of Criminology*, 14(2), 145–177. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11417-019-09284-1>
- Westmarland, L. (2015). Outsiders inside. In M. Brunger, S. Tong, & D. Martin (Eds.), *Introduction to policing research: Taking lessons from practice* (pp. 163–183). Routledge.
- Zhang, B. H., Lemoine, B., & Mitchell, M. (2018). Mitigating unwanted biases with adversarial learning. *Proceedings of the 2018 AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society*, 335–340.
- Øistad, B. S., Svalund, J., Dølvik, J. E., & Jesnes, K. (2019). Liberalisering av reglene for midlertidige ansettelser: Hvorfor har virkningene uteblitt? [*The liberalization of the fixed-term employment legislation: why are there no effects?*] *Søkelys på arbeidslivet*, 36(3), 120–138.  
<https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.1504-7989-2019-03-02>





# Part 2



# Cheats, Threats and Reflexivity: Organizational Narratives on Policing Organized and Economic Crime

Annette Vestby\* 

\*Research Department, Annette Vestby, Norwegian Police University College, PO Box 2109, Vika 0125 Oslo, Norway; Department of Criminology and Sociology of Law, University of Oslo, PO Box 6706, St. Olavs plass, 0130 Oslo, Norway; [anneve@phs.no](mailto:anneve@phs.no).

Drawing on narrative criminology and sensemaking theory, this paper explores interpretive patterns in an interagency policing collaboration that targets ‘work-related crime’ (WRC). WRC is a policy term denoting organized crime and economic offences (i.e. tax evasion, benefits fraud, labour exploitation and immigration law offences) and is framed as a threat to the viability of the welfare state. While the concept signals an intent to coordinate across agencies, policing takes place within local and institutional contexts. How do agents in the police and collaborating agencies render the policy concept ‘work-related crime’ meaningful and actionable? The study articulates three organizational narratives explaining WRC as fundamental criminogenic change, as stability and as a reflexive product of the control apparatus.

**Key Words:** narrative criminology, sensemaking, plural policing, economic crime, organized crime, crimmigration

## INTRODUCTION

Telling stories helps us to create order, and to give meaning to our experiences. Narratives simplify, condense and provide coherence at individual and aggregate scales (Presser 2009; Presser and Sandberg 2015; Kurtz and Upton 2017). The right story can bind diverse participants together and enable coordinated action (Annison 2021). This article examines three organizational narratives told by policing agents involved in a Norwegian multi-agency collaboration against ‘work-related crime’ (WRC), posited in policy as a profit-motivated type of crime that threatens the foundation of the welfare state. The narratives are discussed as sensemaking devices that reduce complexity, making WRC actionable in local sites while remaining a meaningful concept across organizational boundaries and at a policy level.

Making sense of the world enables us to act, whether as offenders or as agents of crime control (Weick 1995; Presser 2016; Sandberg and Ugelvik 2016; Ugelvik 2016; Fleetwood *et al.* 2019). While the narratives of individual offenders have been a mainstay of narrative criminology, some prior research on organizational narratives—i.e. shared interpretive patterns (Vaara *et al.* 2016)—exists. Examining the role of shared stories in the public sphere, Keeton (2015) found that religious narratives were used by policymakers to rouse support for the 1830 Georgia Indian Removal Act in the United States, while Tognato (2015) explored narrative representations of tax evasion in Italy and how these supported or undermined condemnatory responses to it. Exploring the narratives of actors within the organizations of the penal system, others have and found that storyline may be key in aligning participants in policy reform (Annison 2021), that prosecutors self-consciously constructed coherent trial narratives to persuade the jury (Offit 2019) and that the legitimacy of immigration detention officers, as well as particulars of police cultures, can be talked into existence (Ugelvik 2016; Kurtz and Upton 2017). These works on organizational narratives within criminology explore sensemaking both at an aggregate scale in shared public stories and at the scale of individual professionals within organizations.

The analysis herein is built on 43 interviews with investigators, crime prevention officers and intelligence analysts within the aforementioned multi-agency effort against ‘work-related crime’ (WRC). WRC describes a category of profit-motivated offences against criminal and administrative laws, e.g. tax evasion, labour exploitation and violations of immigration law. WRC has emerged in government policy as a complex, organized threat i.e. apt to undermine the welfare state, and which requires a coordinated response from several control agencies (Office of the Prime Minister 2017a; 2017b; Norwegian Ministries 2019; Jahnsen and Rykkja 2020).

Pluralization is a salient trait of contemporary policing (Johnston and Shearing 2003; Boels and Verhage 2016), and the domain of WRC crime control provides a clear example. To coordinate expertise and resources related to policing economic crime, organized crime and migration, is considered key to combating WRC (Norwegian Ministries 2019). To achieve a more holistic approach, connections have been formed between specialist silos within the police organization, and since 2015, inter-organizational links between the police and collaborating agencies have gradually been formalized.

The WRC category subsumes a multitude of discrete offences, and the organizational structure that has formed around it is complex. This study treats it as a concept with ‘high use-value’ (Christie 2004: 40): While it signifies existing, unwanted acts, it is also imprecise enough to allow broad coordination and consolidation among agents in the control sphere. The underlying complexity of the term—and the intention to coordinate control through its institutionalization—make it imperative to explore how the concept is made sense of within local and institutional contexts, in which interlinked agents perform their everyday work. Thus, this study asks: how do professionals task with anti-WRC enforcement render the category meaningful and actionable? By exploring interpretive patterns (Vaara *et al.* 2016), I have identified three main sensemaking organizational narratives about WRC: first, a narrative of change that makes sense of WRC as a transnational organized crime and migration problem; second, a narrative of stability that makes sense of WRC as familiar forms of economic or white-collar crime; and third, a reflexive narrative in which the practices, knowledge and structure of the control apparatus are given primary explanatory power.

### An anti-WRC collaboration

The term WRC came into use within Norwegian justice and fiscal policy around 2014. The Government launched an inter-ministerial national strategy in 2015, with updated iterations in 2017, 2019 and 2021. The term was given a capacious definition that seeks to capture an issue spanning jurisdictions and departmental silos, and comprises a variety of offences against criminal and administrative law:

Work-related crime comprises actions that violate Norwegian laws on pay and working conditions, social security, and taxation, often committed in an organised manner, which exploits workers, or which distorts fair market competition and undermines the structural underpinnings of society. (Departementene 2019: 5, author's translation)

This definition includes money laundering, labour exploitation (including human trafficking for forced labour), financial infidelity, tax evasion, benefits fraud and violations of the immigration code by employing workers without a residence and/or work permit (NTAES 2017; Departementene 2019). As of 2019, labour exploitation and tax evasion were considered the most common expressions of WRC (NTAES 2020).

Managing WRC problems thus implicates a variety of jurisdictions and areas of expertise. The Government stated early that 'to combat work-related crime and promote orderly working conditions' requires a 'comprehensive collaboration between public agencies and the parties of the labour market about prevention, knowledge sharing and enforcement' (Arbeids- og sosialdepartementet 2015: 1, author's translation). This and the later iterations of the anti-WRC strategy (Departementene 2017, 2019, 2021) specify the police, the Tax Authority, The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority and the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration as essential agencies in this collaboration. Bespoke organizational structures have been developed to facilitate increased coordination between them, including a national strategic intelligence unit (NTAES) and seven regional teams engaging in i.e. joint operations against suspected offenders (Jahnsen and Rykkja 2020), as well as temporary projects such as larger-scale criminal investigations (e.g. see Bjelland and Vestby 2017).

### Narrative sensemaking in policing

Sensemaking refers to social processes of ordering and organization in which actors turn 'circumstances into a situation i.e. comprehended explicitly in words and that serve as a springboard into action' (Weick *et al.* 2005: 409). From a theoretical perspective, sensemaking has been influential within phenomenological and interpretive organizational studies (Brown *et al.* 2015). It is viewed as a fundamental process for organizing and creating order, which happens as actors in a social context 'engage ongoing circumstances from which they extract cues and make plausible sense retrospectively' (Weick *et al.* 2005: 409). That sensemaking attempts to provide meaning retrospectively means that 'whatever is occurring at the moment will influence what is discovered when people glance backward' (Weick 1995: 26). 'Plausibility' is a key term within the theory, and it is privileged over accuracy in sensemaking processes (Weick 1995: 56). The theory thus rejects perceptions of people and organizations as rational actors who behave based on perfect information, instead of viewing them as actors embedded in ongoing attempts to make sufficient and plausible good sense of their surroundings to act. Sensemaking studies tend to consider the filters that agents apply so they can separate signal from noise, and to explore which cues and reference points become connected to more general assumptions and theories (Weick 1995).

The introduction of the anti-WRC initiative did not cause a seismic shift in tasks or a catastrophic watershed within policing agencies; rather, this was a new label and frame of reference for generally familiar offences. While sensemaking processes are most visible when there are disruptions to a regular flow of events (Weick 1995; Chan 2007), sensemaking 'is the result of active and joint reflection on what was known all the time' (Manning 1997: 142) and may take either the known or unknown as its point of departure.

Narratives form a way to introduce officers' interpretations of events into the world, contributing to the reproduction of culture (Weick *et al.* 2005; Kurtz and Upton 2017). Stories are resources within the occupational culture that can provide members with cues and labels to help create order (i.e. make sense) of a situation (Chan 2007). Weick's emphasis on plausibility over accuracy resonates in Shearing and Ericson's (1991) seminal work on storytelling in policing, highlighting the role of narrative in the reproduction of culture: 'In their street talk police officers use stories to represent to each other the way things are, not as statements of fact but as cognitive devices used to gain practical insights into how to do the job of policing' (Shearing and Ericson 1991: 491–2).

While some have considered stories as ephemeral phenomena (Waddington 1999), others consider them constitutive of policing practices (van Hulst 2013). Police occupational cultures comprise norms, values and mores that effect police–public relations (Loftus 2009) and discretionary decisions (e.g. which events will be processed as crimes) (Ericson 1981), and which are transmitted via socialization processes throughout the occupation (Shearing and Ericson 1991; Bacon 2013). Thus, following the sensemaking perspective, this study treats stories, along with the connected discursive phenomena 'differentiating, fixing, naming, labelling, classifying and relating' (Chia 2000: 514), as expressions of the occupational culture and shared vocabularies that permit coordinated action. In this way, 'situations, organizations and environments are talked into existence' (Weick *et al.* 2005: 409). To study narrative is thus also a way to study occupational cultures (Ugelvik 2016; Kurtz and Upton 2017).

Within studies of policing, sensemaking perspectives have been used to study, e.g. how officers make sense of police reform (Chan 2007), and the community policing movement (Maguire and Katz 2002). Herein, 'work-related crime' is the phenomenon, about which the actors are required to make sense as part of their work preventing, investigating, or providing intelligence analyses. It is a policy term and not a penal clause, and the offences subsumed by it can be found spread across administrative and criminal law. This makes WRC a fruitful phenomenon through which to explore narrative sensemaking in policing as control agents must wrestle with what it means vis-à-vis their respective domains, both to make sense of how to make it actionable in their particular site of enforcement, as well as to facilitate coordination between sites (cf. Annison 2021).

The sensemaking perspective as articulated by Weick (1995) has been criticized for building on overly democratic assumptions about how interpretations of events emerge as plausible and become dominant. One charge has been that sensemaking studies may neglect to engage with the formative contexts within which sensemaking occurs (Weber and Glynn 2006; Mills *et al.* 2010). I incorporate this insight from critical studies of sensemaking (Marshall and Rollinson 2004; Maitlis and Christianson 2014: 98–9) by emphasizing aspects of the material and social environment (e.g. how specialist resources are organized, intelligence-led policing methodology and resource availability), and by relating the organizational narratives to certain apparent background cultural resources (Tognato 2015) which they draw on.

### Collaborative sensemaking

The orthodox account of police culture, argued Loftus (2009: 8–15), posits that certain characteristics of police occupational cultures are both persistent and near-universal. However, police

culture is not monolithic and working cultures vary, e.g. by the methods and remit of the unit under study (Ingram *et al.* 2013; Loftus *et al.* 2015). Nor is policing carried out solely by *the* police (Crawford and L’Hoiry 2017; Atkinson 2019; Kammersgaard 2019). However, successful coordinated action may be facilitated with a minimum adherence to a shared purpose (Annison 2021). Which narratives, concepts and theories resonate across organizational boundaries when actors seek to make sense of and coordinate against, ‘work-related crime?’

Similar events may carry different meanings for different groups within an organization (Ingram *et al.* 2013; Loftus *et al.* 2015). Individuals involved in collective anti-WRC efforts may well see different cues from which to make plausible sense of events depending on the point in time and their position within the organization (Weick *et al.* 2005; Chan 2007; Mills *et al.* 2010). This, I argue, is an important material and organizational basis for why there exists a variety of sensemaking narratives about WRC.

It has been argued that by considering the nuances of the occupational subcultures of connected policing actors, we can improve our understanding of how composite policing arrangements cohere and work both generally (Bowling and Sheptycki 2015; Whelan 2015) and specifically (i.e. as I have done here, to explore interpretive patterns in this particular context). Herein, I focus on a core set of national, state-based actors which includes several agencies engaged in the policing of organized crime, economic crime and migration. In these areas, *the* police is a pivotal, but not singular, agent involved in policing.

## DATA AND METHODS

This project aimed to map salient interpretive WRC patterns and to construct analytic representations of these as organizational narratives. I traced the concept by exploring how it is made sense of by professionals working within various sites of enforcement implicated in the anti-WRC effort, comprising both police and police-adjacent agencies. The work is inspired by multi-sited ethnography, in which the researcher ‘[traces] a cultural formation across and within multiple sites of activity’ (Marcus 1995: 3). The tracing included three steps during 2015–2020. First, I reviewed relevant policy documents and publicly available strategic analyses, which served as reference points for the multi-situated operationalizations of the concept. Second, I interviewed 43<sup>1</sup> professionals working in intelligence, investigation and crime prevention who were tasked with anti-WRC enforcement. Thirty-six of these individuals were employed by the national Norwegian Police, while the other seven worked in similar functions, and close collaboration with police, but another public agency.<sup>2</sup> Third, 140 hours of participant observation at an organized crime unit, national criminal intelligence seminars and WRC-related court proceedings informs the analysis but is not the primary data analyzed for this paper.

The multi-sited approach is well suited to studying connections and flows of information and knowledge between sites, as well as exploring how local contexts relate to their surroundings (Horst 2009; Henne 2017). Rather than generating a thick description of any single included unit or agency, my goal was to study how the WRC concept is made actionable in local sites and how a key set of actors may align around narratives that provide a ‘[...] simplified and *compelling* path for actors through the messy thickets of complexity, delay, diverse views and political contestation.’ (Annison 2021: 5)

I sampled participants based on two criteria: First, that they had the first-hand experience of WRC enforcement and/or a designated responsibility in the anti-WRC initiative. Second,

1 I interviewed 23 of these together with the co-author of another study (see Bjelland and Vestby 2017).

2 The Norwegian Tax Administration, The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, or The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority.

that they contributed to a geographically and organizationally diverse sample that represented differing ideas about the crime problem, how it can be understood, and how it should be governed. The purpose of this study was to trace the presence of ideas and concepts, not to map their prevalence. The sampling strategy was thus purposive rather than random, and best described as ‘conceptually driven sequential sampling’ (Miles *et al.* 2014: 31). An earlier study of a relevant WRC and organized crime investigation (Bjelland and Vestby 2017) provided an opportunity to identify relevant units and sites of enforcement from which I was able to sample further. These have included specialist investigative units against economic crime, crime prevention liaisons and intelligence analysts at both strategic and tactical levels, including management-level personnel.

Before contacting participants, I applied to the Norwegian Police Directorate for permission to carry out this research and, based on the recommendation of their ethics review board, was granted permission to do so. I then reached out via e-mail to the top-level management of the special units or police districts where I wished to recruit participants, who were in turn also contacted via e-mail and informed of the study purpose and their rights, both in writing and at the beginning of the interview. The handling of personal study data was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

Analyses were conducted based on the principles of the stepwise-deductive inductive (SDI) method (Tjora 2018). It aims to inspire creativity and theoretical ambition and emphasizes inductively sensitive data coding to ensure that the development of theoretical constructs remains grounded in data. This occurs through an iterative process in which the researcher checks in with the data as she progresses upward in abstraction. After inductively coding all the study material, I performed deductive checks against the material as I worked out the concepts of the three organizational narratives presented in the findings section, below.

In asking what WRC stories are told by the empirical material, this analysis was not primarily a study of narratives from the sense of temporally ordered storytelling (Presser 2016: 138). Rather, the three narrative categories I constructed from the empirical materials should be regarded as organizational narratives as defined by Vaara *et al.* (2016: 496): ‘temporal, discursive constructions that provide a means for individual, social and organizational sensemaking and sensegiving’. While many participants leaned more towards one narrative than the others, many drew on elements from more than one. As such, the narratives can be considered more as ideal types that highlight current meaning structures than as stories corresponding one-to-one with individuals’ explanations. These are composite narratives, analytic constructs that represent interpretive patterns that may be articulated in fragments as part of an ongoing organizational discourse (Vaara *et al.* 2016).

An example of such fragments is shared ‘tropes’. The answers to my guiding analytic question above were comprised of concepts, categories, theories and stories about cases, offenders and other enforcers. They often relied on shared tropes in the field: ‘single words or short phrases that only hint at familiar stories’ (Sandberg 2016: 13). According to Barthes (in Sandberg 2016: 13), the concise form of the trope ‘can serve as a signifier to a concept filled with a very rich history’. For example, and as will be explored further in the findings section below, the concept of organized crime may function in part as a trope that draws on a wider set of shared assumptions.

## FINDINGS

In this section, I describe and discuss the three organizational narratives: first, a narrative of change; second, a narrative of stability; and third, a reflexive organizational narrative which assigns the perceptions and structures of the control apparatus a key role in how WRC is made sense of. The first two narratives of change and stability are ontological, providing a taxonomy



of WRC as having to do with either migration and transnational organized crime, or as quintessentially familiar and predictable forms of economic crime, respectively. The last narrative, the reflexive, provides a more epistemological exposition of WRC, emphasizing that the perceptions and actions of the control agencies play a key co-constitutive part in shaping it as an object for crime control.

### Imported threats: an organizational narrative of change

In his opening address at a national law enforcement seminar in 2015, a then-State Secretary of the Norwegian Justice Department stated that: ‘The threat from organized crime increases ever more quickly year by year’ (field notes, March 2015). His words strike a suitable chord for introducing the organizational narrative of change, which makes sense of WRC as a product of crucially altered global criminogenic conditions. Key among these is an unprecedented influx of transnational organized crime networks into Norway, and a cascade of migration-related challenges that reverberate in crime, welfare and labour market policy. This section will cover those who pose such threats—the perpetrators in the narrative of change—and which values are under threat from WRC.

The narrative of change explains the rise of acts that can be plausibly classified as WRC by way of changed criminogenic conditions external to the police and other control agencies. It proceeds from a thesis of transformation ‘out there’, illustrated here by two quotes:

What we’ve seen through all our cases, travelling around and talking to the financial crime units around the country, we see that what can be labelled WRC is dramatically increasing. (Investigation, 48<sup>3</sup>)

I’ve said before that what we see is a form of ‘multi-criminality’, more and more. We saw it three or four years back, but I suspected that I exaggerated when I called it organised back then. No, it is professional. It is multi-criminal. There’s mobility. And it operates across borders. (Investigation, 3)

The integrity of the Norwegian state and well-functioning free markets are the central values at stake in the organizational narrative of change. It focuses on deviance and WRC as an aberration to both how crime typically manifests in Norway and how the welfare system, the labour market and businesses should and do operate. It mobilizes criminals, and specifically transnational organized crime, as powerful profit-motivated adversaries who threaten the state and markets:

(...) [P]ublic and private enterprises are exploited by hardcore criminals who systematically target our systems. Which undermines and jeopardises the whole foundation of our welfare state, really. (Prevention, 28)

When we’re talking about preventing and combating economic crime, including WRC, and other serious organised crime, I think a country like Norway can’t afford, and the agencies can’t afford, to abstain from combating those types of crime. Because it undermines the whole welfare state and will cause the bedrock of the Norwegian state to disintegrate. (Investigation, 52)

The threat is described in existential terms. By fraudulently receiving welfare system benefits on the one hand, and by not paying taxes on the other, WRC suffocates the financial viability of the state and thereby threatens the nation’s way of life. Individual instances that may be categorized as WRC are not necessarily spectacular, nor do they involve large sums of money. However,

3 There were more study participants than those interviewed; thus, their identifying numbers are larger than the total number of interviewees ( $n = 43$ ).

the harm caused by WRC is in the aggregate, where its insidiousness is also found: It is difficult to discover a systematic mode of criminality when individual offences do not always rise to a significant level of concern. By institutionalizing the term WRC, the aggregate phenomenon is reified as something that can be targeted:

I think it is important that we have named it because it is a thing. It is not individual cases, it's a sort of phenomenon. (Investigation, 48)

[E]ach case is kind of small. But as a phenomenon, it is a big social ill. (Prevention, 36)

Foreign and organized crime networks are powerful, overlapping symbolic figures in the narrative of change. Moreover, they appear as part of a wider cultural repertoire beyond the scope of policing cultures. Transnational organized crime has long been cast as a security threat (Loader 2002; Zedner 2009; Franko 2020a), and the very concept of organized crime has a rich history of cultural association with immigrant conspiracies (Woodiwiss and Hobbs 2009).

Theories of organized crime as alien conspiracies relieve host societies of responsibility for its existence, casting it as an external threat (Kleemans 2014), and white-collar crimes (as at least a portion of WRC might be termed) raise more concerns when related to established 'folk devils' in organized crime and minority ethnic groups (Levi 2009). The foreigner or immigrant is thus already othered (ibid), succinctly captured in Franko's (2020b) argument that the 'crimmigrant other' has emerged both as a powerful discursive figure and a new form of the penal subject.

The theories of organized crime as alien conspiracies function as tropes (Sandberg 2016); shorthand versions of common cultural theories of the link between organized crime and immigration. The narrative connects these theories to sites where actors must decide what is an appropriate course of action (Smith in Keeton 2015). In the narrative of change, WRC is a threat primarily posed by outsiders and Norway takes on a role as an insufficiently guarded wellspring of exploitable goods:

WRC is different because there's a clear ethnic component. All of the cases are like that. They are committed by ethnic groups that are not Norwegian. It's not that Norwegians haven't worked without paying taxes, but the systematic organisation to do it, that's something we've never seen in a large, Norwegian group. (Investigation, 48)

The presence of foreign workers takes on multiple complex and conflicting meanings within this narrative, for which there are several plausible sensemaking approaches. These individuals may be seen as perpetrators of immigration or illicit work offences, or as victims of exploitation. This narrative emphasizes the dangers to state and market over working conditions and workers' rights:

It is a big problem for society. Workers' rights and that is one thing, but it's also the ways they can get money out of the coffer by abusing benefits and the welfare system, and then not paying any taxes. Of course, this isn't sustainable for society. (Investigation/management, 3)

In addition to a guilty/innocent dichotomy, workers in this narrative also carry an instrumental significance. Regardless of whether workers themselves can be reasonably perceived as members of an organized crime network, they are also the instruments that employers use to commit WRC (e.g. by underpayment and distorting competition in the sector in question). Deporting workers may thus work to disrupt a suspect enterprise (NTAES 2017: 42). This logic is like that of situational disruption strategies (Kirby and Snow 2016), including forfeiture of material resources necessary to carry out work:

Forfeiture, for example. We tried it against a car repair shop recently. How will he keep doing business if we seize the car lift? (Prevention, 35)

We need to focus on lasting change, but we [the police] are too concerned with punishment. Punishment doesn't necessarily generate lasting change. Deportation might be more effective sometimes. We need to be less traditional in how we combat and prevent crime than what we've typically been. (Investigation/management, 1)

The changing narrative mobilizes serious businesses as victims, not perpetrators, of WRC. First, serious businesses can be victimized in outright scams. Second, these licit businesses struggle to be competitive against businesses that drop their prices (e.g. by underpaying workers, committing tax fraud, or outright human trafficking). Fair and undistorted market competition is among the key values to be protected by the anti-WRC initiative.

As shown, the change narrative emphasizes that WRC is largely committed by outsiders: foreigners, ethnic networks/groups and organized criminal networks. These pose a threat to free and fair markets, orderly labour relations, and the integrity of the state and its welfare institutions. However, there is tension and debate in the empirical material over what role regular licit businesses play in the WRC problem complex. This is explored further in the next narrative.

### Competitive cheats: an organizational narrative of stability

The second organizational narrative is termed the narrative of stability. It makes sense of WRC as familiar, unlawful acts related to the economy and labour market, with which the police and their counterparts in other agencies have dealt for years. The fundamental assumption in this narrative is that these types of economic offences have always existed. While the anti-WRC initiative may bring warranted attention to sometimes underestimated crimes such as fraud, other—and perhaps more serious—crimes are being committed that fall beyond this scope. Corruption in the public sector and financial crimes and frauds perpetrated by well-renowned businesses are such examples.

This narrative differs from the change narrative in that it does not claim that the world has changed in ways that fully explain the increased attention to WRC. This increased attention is not what the narrative of stability seeks to explain; rather, it makes sense of WRC as congruent with phenomena that already fall under the purview of those who deal with economic offences that are understood to be essentially constitutive of WRC:

I think we're proficient at dealing with the actual crimes. We're good at dealing with economic crime, income tax evasion, VAT evasion, money laundering, investigation of illicit gains. We're good at investigating financial leads. And we're good at investigating environmental crimes. (Investigation, 51)

The thing about WRC and the construction industry and fake invoicing—[...] it is criminal of course to send a fake invoice, but it is a way of cheating in the professional construction market, one we've seen for many years. (Investigation/mgmt, 3)

Much of WRC is another name for fake invoicing. (Intelligence analysis, 44)

The narrative of stability makes sense of WRC as crimes for profit that have always existed within the context of business, and at first sight privileges offences over actors as defining features. This contrasts with the narrative of change's strong emphasis on the role played by actors in (transnational) organized crime. The image of the threat in the narrative of stability is like the economic crimes with which police have become familiar, and WRC comprises mainly familiar forms of economic or white-collar crime:

There's nothing new in and of itself that you find carpenters who recruit Poles to work undeclared for them, and who live in poor conditions in barracks. That's something that's always happened. (Prevention, 37)

[...] lots of people do exactly what they used to do before [the anti-WRC effort started], both in the police and in the control agencies. But now it is as if they've started working on something completely different now that they're working on WRC. But really, they're doing the exact same things they used to do before. (Investigation, 51)

There is no existential threat described in the narrative of stability, and there is no unquestionably immoral and *other* enemies, as that upon which the change narrative relies. This is consistent with the ambiguity regarding white-collar crime discussed in the literature, notably by [Aubert \(1952\)](#), to whom the concept of 'white-collar crime' entangles the criminal with the ordinary, complicating attempts at drawing neat distinctions between criminal and not criminal. The story could, as this article shows, be argued either way: WRC is a by-product of rational action in a marketplace that requires a degree of technical regulation, or WRC is an intrinsic moral evil posed by an Other who threatens our collective identity ([Garland 2001](#); [Tognato 2015](#)). This tension is partly resolved by terming how licit businesses cut corners as 'cheating'. Describing an alleged wage scam affecting 100 workers, one participant invoked the cheating charge:

It's one of the largest construction projects ever in the country, and there's this big [nationality redacted] company that cheats. The 100 people who work for them don't get paid according to what their contract states. In accordance with the rules governing public acquisitions. [...] And the financial crime unit won't even look at it, and management says 'we don't have the time for this' before we've even pitched the case. (Prevention, 35)

Presumptively there exists a threshold for when 'cheating' is no longer a plausible nor socially acceptable way to make sense of events, although the assessment is complex ([Weick 1995](#); [Keeton 2015](#)). An investigator reflects on the (blurred) line:

[I]n the cases we deal with, someone is actually going to deliver goods or services, but they cheat. [...] Violations used as a competitive advantage, not violations as exploitation and pure profits. [...] The Lime case<sup>4</sup> is actually a sort of crossover where you have both the ugly violations and the economic element as well. (Investigation, 49)

Real criminals, concluded [Levi \(2009: 64\)](#), 'are those who do not provide us with any services that we define as "productive"'. Within the narrative of stability, drawing the line between legitimate actors who break the rules to increase their competitive viability versus those willing to secure a profit by any means, is a way to wrestle with the tension and ambiguity of WRC and economic crime more generally. Notably, this narrative casts regular, presumptively licit, businesses in an array of roles: as victims of fraud and competition distortion, as direct perpetrators, and as beneficiaries of irregular business behaviour further down their supply chains:

It has come as a surprise to many that there's that element [to WRC] as well, that there are the more serious actors, I mean more like white-collar crime with a side of workplace accidents. [Investigating these] may lead us to businesses that operate under the cover of running an ordinary, serious business. And they're not. And they're well known. Publicly traded. And that

<sup>4</sup> A highly publicized multi-agency organized crime investigation of a national grocery store chain. See [Bjelland and Vestby \(2017\)](#).

is as damaging as having organised crime and mafia exploiting people more in those kinds of undercurrents. (Investigation, 49)

Drawing hard lines between legitimate and illegitimate businesses is challenging (Ruggiero 1996):

The alarming thing is that the line is blurring between what looks legal and what doesn't. The tendency to dress up as licit, that they make sure they're not all illicit. Of course, if you want to make more money than you can as a purely illicit business, to win big jobs etcetera, you need a front that customers seek out. [...] This makes it so much harder to uncover. (Intelligence analysis, 45)

While this narrative takes the underlying classes of economic offences as its starting point, it also applies actor-oriented criteria—albeit with a distinction between serious versus illicit businesses rather than the ethnic networks and transnational organized crime seen in the narrative of change (Levi 2009). Practitioners attempting to make sense of WRC draw on the concepts of both economic and organized crime, and it has been argued that the similarities between these categories require joint analyses (Croall 2001). How these categories become institutionalized in policing, however, impacts the potential for this to happen in practice. This brings us to the third, and final, narrative.

#### **Policing as a prime mover: a reflexive organizational narrative**

The reflexive organizational narrative locates the power to shape definitions of, and reactions to, WRC within policing. In this narrative, WRC finds its shape as a phenomenon by being perceived and made sense of by control agencies, based on a range of unwanted acts (Christie 2004) to which the label may be assigned. For instance, the reflexive narrative does not adjudicate whether WRC is *really* a domestic or transnational issue, or whether organized crime or illicit work are its most salient expressions. This sets it apart as an epistemological perspective compared to the preceding ontological narratives.

Which acts become categorized as WRC is a result of contingent sensemaking processes (Mills *et al.* 2010). Three related contingencies will be discussed here with the reflexive organizational narrative: First, which juridical crime categories are already familiar within an organizational unit's mandate; second, the introduction of intelligence-led policing; and third, resource availability, including funding opportunities for extraordinary operations and the use of deportation as a cost-efficient tool.

Policing juridical crime categories listed as WRC is largely organized within specialized silos in the police organization and across the inter-organizational apparatus which is tasked with WRC control. Units may thus possess different competencies and information sources that apply to different parts of what the WRC concept aims to capture (Bjelland and Vestby 2017; Jahnsen and Rykkja 2020). The organization provides a framework within which in situ sensemaking occurs:

[The immigration unit] is going to discuss WRC as illicit work. Illegal immigrants. Tax is going to discuss it as having to do with tax fraud. (Intelligence analysis/management, 44)

Interpretation is 'bounded by the preexisting conditions of a given social environment' (Keeton 2015: 128), and turning WRC into an actionable category interplay with organizational structures. To note that several labels could conceivably be applied to events is not to say that anything goes, as 'the range of things an event can be made into legitimately [...] are organization-

ally circumscribed and constrained' (Ericson 1981: 19). Specialization hones specific skills but may create divisions that inhibit efforts to tackle a category like WRC that does not align with organizational boundaries (Sheptycki 2004; Fyfe *et al.* 2013). For example:

[I'm] placed here with the immigration police, and that's not because that's where WRC should be organised, but because no one cares about it. Not the financial crime unit, not the organised crime unit, no one is interested. WRC falls between the cracks. There's a bit of financial stuff, there's some human trafficking, there's some worker safety things in there, and no one grabs onto it because 'that case is not mine'. There's no sense of ownership. (Prevention, 35)

In this narrative, how cases come to be known by police (or not) is heavily weighted. A contingency of sensemaking is the introduction of a national intelligence-led policing model in Norway, which aims to improve data-driven decision-making. For instance, in much public discourse, and control practices, the construction industry has been a mainstay WRC arena. Many cases involving WRC relate to construction businesses, producing effects such as market distortion and worker injuries and deaths (NTAES 2017). While there is ample evidence of criminal distortion of the construction market, the reflexive narrative ascribes the prevalence of construction-related cases in WRC to practices of control agencies. A crime prevention officer reflected:

[W]e see the massive problems that the construction industry has had [with WRC]. That's because that is where we've looked. We've looked for WRC in the construction industry, but we haven't looked anywhere else. (Prevention, 30)

It is likely that construction-related instances disproportionately colour the WRC phenomenon relative to other industries. For example, several participants mentioned the fish farms along the Norwegian coastline as an example of an industry in which the opportunities to cut corners and increase profits through worker exploitation, environmental crimes, and other white-collar offences are as plentiful as they are in construction:

The aquaculture industry has grown rapidly over the last several decades and is a bit of a cowboy industry in the sense that it has been allowed to develop quite unchecked. And it has been supported with public funds. But if you break this down [...] there are many steps: There's feed, butchery, sales, processing ... pollution. [...] And we know there are many foreign workers; is there exploitation? (Prevention, 29)

However, the fisheries are less accessible to the police compared with construction, which not only takes place on land but is often highly visible in public spaces and/or outdoors.

I don't think our lack of cases related to fisheries is due to there being no crime in that industry. I think it is due to our competencies and our—really what starts with basic intelligence and our ability and resources to build a basis for sound decision-making to do anything about it. (Prevention, 36)

The availability of information about a crime relates to the initial point in this section: that a unit's formal mandate is a likely determinant for whether WRC is identified as such and if so, the WRC type it is interpreted to be. The body of intelligence data will be coloured by the categorizations of a given unit, regardless of the relative weight between formal mandate and informal culture in the sensemaking process. Intelligence-led policing has been under implementation

in Norway over the last several years, aiming to improve decision-making by making it more data-driven (Vestby 2018). Indicia is the national criminal intelligence platform, comprising the criminal intelligence database and the software interface used to access it. A bespoke WRC 'tag' can be used to make information available e.g. for aggregate analyses or to guide local enforcement. One participant reflected on information as a prerequisite to initiating an investigation:

[W]e have to start out by getting a hold of some piece of information from someone, either in our own organisation or from another, to begin unravelling it [a crime]. We've rarely initiated a project just by hanging out at a street corner and seeing what happens. We depend on information coming in, which is why Indicia is so neat, you can dump results from controls and other information there, so you have somewhere to start digging. (Investigation/management, 14)

Third and finally, the reflexive narrative about WRC relates its operationalization to fiscal and efficiency considerations. This includes the availability of funding for special operations and the use of deportation as a cost-efficient way to process cases:

I think the WRC topic will remain with us [the police]. But there are fashions in our business as well, you know, and people go for it in part because it comes with more resources. [Investigation/management, 5]

[N]ot that there is intra-police competition, but this [WRC] is an area of commitment which again has to do with resources and what are considered important prioritisations. (Investigation, 49)

Back in 2013–2014, a large-scale interagency project was assembled to investigate the Lime grocery chain (Bjelland and Vestby 2017). In effect, it functioned as a signal case (Innes 2014), broadcasting the WRC concept to a wider public during a subsequent period of national media coverage. The case brought the concept to the public's attention and introduced concerns about WRC as an encroachment of organized crime networks into licit businesses and labour market infrastructures. The interagency and interunit (i.e. within the police) investigation was partly enabled by a centralized grant that supports policing projects against organized and serious crime ('Samordningsorganet'):

[the media] are interested and have gotten politicians fired up, it has gotten people fired up in the police and prosecution. [Representatives of the investigation] get invited to meetings and seminars to relay where we're at in the case, strategy meetings hosted by ['Samordningsorganet' and NCIS<sup>5</sup>]. Which the Attorney General, the National Police Commissioner and representatives from the business community attend. And things really sped up from that point, we got so much attention and the case, I think, had a much easier time accessing resources than it otherwise would have. So much attention, and this is supposed to become a signal case. 'This is the hill where we take a stand', you know. (Investigation, 9)

A good sense of the zeitgeist on the part of the initiators of the interagency investigation was partly why the extraordinary effort was made possible. However, the reflexive narrative emphasizes that cost efficiency considerations contribute to sensemaking on a quotidian scale as well. Solving organized criminal network cases and financial crimes is costly and draws on scarce

5 The National Criminal Investigation Service ('Kripas').

specialized resources. This makes them higher-risk endeavours than less complex offences that are cheaper to investigate (Croall 2001).

We often select the easy stuff, or easier—we tend to deal with the surface. (...) We always want to catch the main guy (...), but we don't find him. It is incredibly demanding, so what we do is often deal with the least central actors, couriers and such. Taking these things by the root takes resources away from many other things. (Investigation/management, 1)

[WRC] is so resource intensive to investigate, unless you just deal with standalone offences like we do today. We take standalone cases, minor cases, pick the easy ones, cut them down to the bone and then we deal with the bone. (Investigation, 26)

Policing workers' immigration status is one way to 'deal with the bone' and make WRC actionable. It is an example of choosing a less complex offence, and one that may serve as a proxy for policing employers directly. It enables the use of less resource-intensive administrative sanctions, which are also perceived as effective deterrents (Franko 2020b):

We take these shortcuts all the time, I'm sure of it. I'm convinced that the goal of kicking out foreigners, getting them on the Immigration Act, get them out for staying without legal residence and so on—some of them won't co-operate and it's easier just to get them out. Which disrupts the employer at the same time. (Investigation, 12)

Migrant workers' identity as such may place them under scrutiny as potential risky subjects, and objects of the intertwined powers of the state to punish and banish (Aas 2014; Gundhus and Jansen 2020). An analyst reflected on the possibility that trafficked or otherwise exploited workers might be deported due to their immigration status, rather than having their exploitation dealt with as a violation against them:

Take workers, for an example—I find this is often overlooked within the police. Workers' interests. Particularly foreign workers are often spoken of [within the police] as perpetrators of crime, whereas the Labour Inspection Authority tends to view them as victims of crime. That's a dilemma one probably faces quite a lot: should you expel someone who has been a victim of a crime? Have you accomplished anything if you do or don't proceed in that direction? Expulsion counts and looks good in the police's performance measurement system. While for the Labour Inspection Authority that's not really a success. (Intelligence analysis, 46)

Importantly, by increasing performance targets, substantial pressure has been placed on the Norwegian police to apply for deportation in place of, or in addition to, penal sanctions (Franko 2020b; Gundhus 2020). It has been argued elsewhere that deportation targets and the resource-intensive nature of investigating offences to suspected networks appear to impact law enforcement decision-making in the anti-WRC interagency task forces, whose sanctions are often best suited to targeting front-line workers rather than kingpins (NTAES 2017: 42; Jahnsen and Rykkja 2020). In this narrative, performance targets are an important condition in the field where WRC sensemaking occurs (Mills *et al.* 2010):

[When] choosing between either going after kingpins or deporting victims, and possible witnesses, the deportation track is often chosen. [...] This has to do with performance targets, of course. [...] Of course, if the police are required to deport X number of thousands of foreigners each year, that will affect the choices people make. If you have a handful of illegal workers,



this may have the effect that you'd rather deport than listen to their stories and worry about whether the kingpin just brings in five new workers. (Intelligence analysis, 47)

Foreign workers stand in an interstice of conflicting interpretations. They can be made plausible sense of both as victims of exploitation, and as a perpetrator of immigration offences; as complicit actors in an organized crime network, or as enabling instruments to suspect businesses. A participant reflected thus on the role of nationality in the political shaping of WRC:

[WRC] is an area that has been important to deal with, there's no doubt about that, but I'm unsure whether you'd see this kind of push if you had discovered torpedoing of the welfare system by affluent people whose Norwegian lineage went back for generations. That you'd see this kind of political pressure—I think probably not. (Prevention, 28)

The symbolic figure of the crimmigrant *Other* casts a suspicious light on these workers, one that differs from that shed on full citizens whose exploitation in labour relations may be discovered—despite migrant workers' vulnerability to exploitation (Scott 2017; NTAES 2020).

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

To analyze organizational narratives as sensemaking devices is useful to improve our understanding of policing as the situated practice that draws on cultural metanarratives and simultaneously contributes powerfully to shared public perceptions of crime and social control. This article's dual emphasis on sensemaking theory and narrative criminology has enabled an analysis that grapples with the three narratives as sites where this exchange occurs. This helps to avoid an overemphasis on the *sub-* of policing subcultures, which both neglect their embeddedness in mainstream culture along with opportunities to examine why some stories have a greater potential for mobilization than others.

Studying narratives allows us to explore which features of our complex world remain visible once it has been distilled in the story. The first step in sensemaking is turning circumstances into words and categories, imposing an order from which to act (Weick *et al.* 2005). The three narratives have the power to transform 'an individual event into categories which have a character of permanence and exactness' (Ericson 1981: 18). While the anti-WRC strategy is part of a broader push against economic crime (Departementene 2019: 6), the portrayal of its target as multi-criminal, transnational and organized is akin to that found in the narrative of change. The Government strategizes to increase the risks and difficulties for illicit business actors, without adding burdens for licit enterprises (Arbeids- og sosialdepartementet 2015: 4). Despite the traditional white-collar nature of many of the offences listed in the policy, the general business community is not portrayed as offenders. The threat—ultimately against social structure itself (Office of the Prime Minister 2017a)—is seen to emanate from beyond the Norwegian state borders, and to be posed by actors in transnational organized crime. The changing narrative is not only congruent with police preoccupations with organized crime, but as shown, also with common cultural notions e.g. about immigrant conspiracies (Woodiwiss and Hobbs 2009). This may explain in part why it is this narrative, despite its almost apocalyptic articulation, that most closely resembles the narrative of the political 'discourse coalition' (Hajer in Annon 2021: 5) that has formed around WRC.

Interagency enforcement brings police methods to be deployed against offences that traditionally have been controlled within the regulatory sphere. Thus, it is pertinent to explore the stories that vitalize coordinated, inter-organizational policing and to question practically and politically the significance of agencies aligning according to the logic of one story or another.

For instances, the three sensemaking narratives herein differ in their logical implications for as-signing blame, allocating victim status and developing crime prevention measures. Explorations into organizational sensemaking narratives enable us to see how similar events may be narrated differently and to use our insights to articulate what is taken for granted in powerful existing, emerging and settling categories (Fleetwood *et al.* 2019; Skilbrei 2020).

## FUNDING

This study was funded by The Research Council of Norway (NFR 238170/F60).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful for invaluable feedback from professor Helene O.I. Gundhus and professor Heidi Mork Lomell on this article, and for discussions on early drafts with members of the New Trends in Modern Policing project team at the Norwegian Police University College.

## REFERENCES

- Aas, K. F. (2014), 'Bordered Penalty: Precarious Membership and Abnormal Justice', *Punishment & Society*, 16: 520–41.
- Annisson, H. (2021), 'The Role of Storylines in Penal Policy Change', *Punishment & Society*, 1–23.
- Arbeids- og sosialdepartementet (2015), Strategi mot Arbeidslivskriminalitet [Strategy Against Work-Related Crime. January 13, 2015]. Regjeringen. Available at: [https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/4f7ae70171bd480682b8dafddadaf311/strategi\\_mot\\_arbeidslivskriminalitet.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/4f7ae70171bd480682b8dafddadaf311/strategi_mot_arbeidslivskriminalitet.pdf) (accessed 21 April 2016)
- Atkinson, C. (2019), 'Where Were You While We Were Getting High Policing? The Consequences of Co-location for Broader Partnership Working in Tackling Organised Crime and Terrorism', *Policing and Society*, 29: 922–35.
- Aubert, V. (1952), 'White-Collar Crime and Social Structure', *American Journal of Sociology*, 58: 263–71.
- Bacon, M. (2013), 'Police Culture and the New Policing Context', in J. M. Brown, ed., *The Future of Policing*, 103–19. Routledge.
- Bjelland, H. F. and Vestby, A. (2017), "It's about Using the Full Sanction Catalogue": On Boundary Negotiations in a Multi-Agency Organised Crime Investigation', *Policing and Society*, 27: 1–16.
- Boels, D. and Verhage, A. (2016), 'Plural Policing: A State-of-the-Art Review', *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 39: 2–18.
- Bowling, B. and Sheptycki, J. (2015), 'Global Policing and Transnational Rule with Law', *Transnational Legal Theory*, 6: 141–73.
- Brown, A. D., Colville, I. and Pye, A. (2015), 'Making Sense of Sensemaking in Organization Studies', *Organization Studies*, 36: 265–77.
- Chan, J. (2007), 'Making Sense of Police Reforms', *Theoretical Criminology*, 11: 323–45.
- Chia, R. (2000), 'Discourse Analysis as Organizational Analysis', *Organization*, 7: 513–8.
- Christie, N. (2004), *A Suitable Amount of Crime*. Routledge.
- Crawford, A. and L'Hoiry, X. (2017), 'Boundary Crossing: Networked Policing and Emergent 'Communities of Practice' in Safeguarding Children', *Policing and Society*, 27: 1–19.
- Croall, H. (2001), *Understanding White Collar Crime*. Open University Press.
- Departementene. (2017), Strategi mot arbeidslivskriminalitet. Revidert 13. februar 2017. [Strategy Against Work-Related Crime. Revised February 13, 2017]. Available at: [https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/18425e5b42f84340b02fbb74bdb90b19/no/pdfs/a-0044-b\\_strategi\\_arbeidslivskriminalitet\\_regjerin.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/18425e5b42f84340b02fbb74bdb90b19/no/pdfs/a-0044-b_strategi_arbeidslivskriminalitet_regjerin.pdf) (accessed 15 February 2017).
- (2019), Strategi mot arbeidslivskriminalitet. Revidert 5. februar 2019. [Strategy Against Work-Related Crime. Revised February 5, 2019]. Available at: <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/7f4788717a724ef79921004f211350b5/no/pdfs/strategi-mot-arbedslivskriminalitet-2019.pdf> (accessed 8 April 2019).
- (2021), Strategi mot arbeidslivskriminalitet. Revidert 8. februar 2021. [Strategy Against Work-Related Crime. Revised February 8, 2021]. Available at: <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/1>

- [7f35b6ba95f4da2a7ac4682b0a052af/no/pdfs/revident-strategi-mot-arbeidslivskriminalitet-2021.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353566ba95f4da2a7ac4682b0a052af/no/pdfs/revident-strategi-mot-arbeidslivskriminalitet-2021.pdf) (accessed 9 April 2021).
- Ericson, R. V. (1981), *Making Crime: A Study of Detective Work*. Butterworths Toronto.
- Fleetwood, J., Presser, L., Sandberg, S. and Ugelvik, T. (2019), 'Introduction', in J. Fleetwood, L. Presser, S. Sandberg and T. Ugelvik, eds, *The Emerald Handbook of Narrative Criminology*, 1–21. Emerald.
- Franko, K. (2020a), *Globalization and Crime*. Sage.
- (2020b), *The Crimmigrant Other: Migration and Penal Power*. Routledge.
- Fyfe, N. R., Terpstra, J. and Tops, P. (2013), *Centralizing Forces?: Comparative Perspectives on Contemporary Police Reform in Northern and Western Europe*. Eleven International.
- Garland, D. (2001), *The Culture of Control. Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society*. Oxford University Press.
- Gundhus, H. O. I. (2020), 'Sorting out Welfare: Crimmigration Practices and Abnormal Justice in Norway', in R. Koulisch, and M. Van der Woude, eds, *Crimmigrant Nations: Resurgent Nationalism and the Closing of Borders*, 249–78. Fordham University Press.
- Gundhus, H. O. I. and Jansen, P. T. (2020), 'Pre-crime and Policing of Migrants: Anticipatory Action Meets Management of Concerns', *Theoretical Criminology*, 24: 90–109.
- Henne, K. (2017), 'Multi-sited Fieldwork in Regulatory Studies', in P. Drahos, ed., *Regulatory Theory: Foundations and Applications*, 97–114. ANU Press.
- Horst, C. (2009), 'Expanding Sites: The Question of 'Depth' Explored', in M.-A. Falzon, ed., *Multi-Sited Ethnography. Theory, Praxis and Locality in Contemporary Research*, 133–48. Ashgate.
- Ingram, J. R., Paoline, E. A. and Terrill, W. (2013), 'A Multilevel Framework for Understanding Police Culture: The Role of the Workgroup', *Criminology*, 51: 365–97.
- Innes, M. (2014), 'A Signal Crimes Perspective', in *Signal Crimes: Social Reactions to Crime, Disorder and Control*, 1–24. Oxford University Press.
- Jahnsen, S. Ø. and Rykkja, L. H. (2020), 'Coordinating Against Work-Related Crime in Norway', *International Public Management Review*, 20: 3–22.
- Johnston, L. and Shearing, C. (2003), *Governing Security: Explorations in Policing and Justice*. Routledge.
- Kammersgaard, T. (2019), 'Private Security Guards Policing Public Space: Using Soft Power in Place of Legal Authority', *Policing and Society*, 31:117–30. doi:[10.1080/10439463.2019.1688811](https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2019.1688811)
- Keeton, R. M. (2015), "'The Race of Pale Men Should Increase and Multiply": Religious Narratives and Indian Removal', in L. Presser and S. Sandberg, eds, *Narrative Criminology. Understanding Stories of Crime*, 125–49. New York University Press.
- Kirby, S. and Snow, N. (2016), 'Praxis and the Disruption of Organized Crime Groups', *Trends in Organized Crime*, 19: 111–24.
- Kleemans, E. R. (2014), 'Theoretical Perspectives on Organized Crime', in L. Paoli, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Organized Crime*, 32–52. Oxford University Press.
- Kurtz, D. L. and Upton, L. (2017), 'War Stories and Occupying Soldiers: A Narrative Approach to Understanding Police Culture and Community Conflict', *Critical Criminology*, 25: 539–58.
- Levi, M. (2009), 'Suite Revenge? The Shaping of Folk Devils and Moral Panics about White-Collar Crimes', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 49: 48–67.
- Loader, I. (2002), 'Policing, Securitization and Democratization in Europe', *Criminal Justice*, 2: 125–53.
- Loftus, B. (2009), *Police Culture in a Changing World*. Oxford University Press.
- Loftus, B., Goold, B. and Mac Giollabhui, S. (2015), 'From a Visible Spectacle to an Invisible Presence: The Working Culture of Covert Policing', *British Journal of Criminology*, 56: 629–45.
- Maguire, E. R. and Katz, C. M. (2002), 'Community Policing, Loose Coupling, and Sensemaking in American Police Agencies', *Justice Quarterly*, 19: 503–36.
- Maitlis, S. and Christianson, M. (2014), 'Sensemaking in Organizations: Taking Stock and Moving Forward', *The Academy of Management Annals*, 8: 57–125.
- Manning, P. K. (1997), 'Organizations as Sense-making Contexts', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 14: 139–50.
- Marcus, G. E. (1995), 'Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-sited Ethnography', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24: 95–117.
- Marshall, N. and Rollinson, J. (2004), 'Maybe Bacon Had a Point: The Politics of Interpretation in Collective Sensemaking', *British Journal of Management*, 15: 71–86.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, M. A. and Saldaña, J. (2014), *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. Sage.
- Mills, J. H., Thurlow, A. and Mills, A. J. (2010), 'Making Sense of Sensemaking: The Critical Sensemaking Approach', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 5: 182–95.

- Norwegian Ministries (2019), Revised Strategy for Combating Work-Related Crime. Norwegian Ministries. Available at: [https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/7f4788717a724ef79921004f211350b5/a-0049-e\\_revised-strategy-for-combating-work-related-crime.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/7f4788717a724ef79921004f211350b5/a-0049-e_revised-strategy-for-combating-work-related-crime.pdf) (accessed 21 September 2020).
- NTAES (2017), *Arbeidslivskriminalitet i Norge. Situasjonsbeskrivelse 2017*. Nasjonalt tverretatlig analyse- og etterretningssenter.
- (2020), *Arbeidslivskriminalitet. Situasjonsbeskrivelse 2020*. Nasjonalt tverretatlig analyse- og etterretningssenter.
- Office of the Prime Minister (2017a), Revised Strategy for Combating Work-Related Crime. Statement from the Office of the Prime Minister. Available at: [https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/18425e5b42f84340b02fbb74bdb90b19/revised\\_strategy\\_for\\_combating\\_work\\_related\\_crime.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/18425e5b42f84340b02fbb74bdb90b19/revised_strategy_for_combating_work_related_crime.pdf) (accessed 26 November 2020).
- (2017b), Strengthening European Cooperation for Combating Work-Related Crime. Report to the European Commission. Available at: <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/0931fcb84a444689bf70cde1876b82b/workrelaterdcrime-report.pdf> (accessed 6 March 2019).
- Ofit, A. (2019), 'Storyed Justice: The Narrative Strategies of US Federal Prosecutors', in J. Fleetwood, L. Presser, S. Sandberg, and T. Ugelvik, eds, *The Emerald Handbook of Narrative Criminology*, 45–62. Emerald.
- Presser, L. (2009), 'The Narratives of Offenders', *Theoretical Criminology*, 13: 177–200.
- (2016), 'Criminology and the Narrative Turn', *Crime, Media, Culture*, 12: 137–51.
- Presser, L. and Sandberg, S. (2015), 'Research Strategies for Narrative Criminology', in J. Miller and W. R. Palacios, eds, *Qualitative Research in Criminology*, 85–100. Transaction Publishers.
- Ruggiero, V. (1996), *Organized and Corporate Crime in Europe: Offers That Can't Be Refused*. Dartmouth.
- Sandberg, S. (2016), 'The Importance of Stories Untold: Life-story, Event-story and Trope', *Crime, Media, Culture*, 12: 153–71.
- Sandberg, S. and Ugelvik, T. (2016), 'The Past, Present, and Future of Narrative Criminology: A Review and an Invitation', *Crime, Media, Culture: An International Journal*, 12: 129–36.
- Scott, S. (2017), *Labour Exploitation and Work-Based Harm*. Policy Press.
- Shearing, C. D. and Ericson, R. V. (1991), 'Culture as Figurative Action', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 42: 481–506.
- Sheptycki, J. (2004), 'Organizational Pathologies in Police Intelligence Systems: Some Contributions to the Lexicon of Intelligence-led Policing', *European Journal of Criminology*, 1: 307–32.
- Skilbrei, M.-L. (2020), 'Taking on the Categories, Terms and Worldviews of the Powerful: The Pitfalls of Trying to be Relevant', *Identities*, 1–17.
- Tjora, A. (2018), *Qualitative Research as Stepwise-Deductive Induction*. Routledge.
- Tognato, C. (2015), 'Narratives of Tax Evasion: The Cultural Legitimacy of Harmful Behaviour', in L. Presser and S. Sandberg, eds, *Narrative Criminology. Understanding Stories of Crime*, 260–86. New York University Press.
- Ugelvik, T. (2016), 'Techniques of Legitimation: The Narrative Construction of Legitimacy Among Immigration Detention Officers', *Crime, Media, Culture*, 12: 215–32.
- Vaara, E., Sonenshein, S. and Boje, D. (2016), 'Narratives as Sources of Stability and Change in Organizations: Approaches and Directions for Future Research', *The Academy of Management Annals*, 10: 495–560.
- Van Hulst, M. (2013), 'Storytelling at the Police Station: The Canteen Culture Revisited', *British Journal of Criminology*, 53: 624–42.
- Vestby, A. (2018), 'Policy Making Without Politics: Overstating Objectivity in Intelligence-led Policing', in H. O. I. Gundhus, K. V. Rønn and N. Fyfe, eds, *Moral Issues in Intelligence-Led Policing*, 265–82. Routledge.
- Waddington, P. A. J. (1999), 'Police (Canteen) Sub-culture', *British Journal of Criminology*, 39: 287–309.
- Weber, K. and Glynn, M. A. (2006), 'Making Sense with Institutions: Context, Thought and Action in Karl Weick's Theory', *Organization Studies*, 27: 1639–60.
- Weick, K. E. (1995), *Sensemaking in Organizations*, Vol. 3. Sage.
- Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. M. and Obstfeld, D. (2005), 'Organizing and the Process of Sensemaking', *Organization Science*, 16: 409–21.
- Whelan, C. (2015), 'Security Networks and Occupational Culture: Understanding Culture Within and Between Organisations', *Policing and Society*, 27: 113–35.
- Woodiwiss, M. and Hobbs, D. (2009), 'Organized Evil and the Atlantic Alliance: Moral Panics and the Rhetoric of Organized Crime Policing in America and Britain', *British Journal of Criminology*, 49: 106–28.
- Zedner, L. (2009), *Security*. Routledge.

# 'It's about using the full sanction catalogue': on boundary negotiations in a multi-agency organised crime investigation<sup>1</sup>

Heidi Fischer Bjelland & Annette Vestby

## ABSTRACT

Inter-organisational and inter-disciplinary investigations are increasingly deployed against criminal networks and cross-jurisdictional crimes. This study provides a unique empirical window into an inter-organisational investigation against a large organised crime network in Norway. Building on interview data from the participants in the multi-agency investigation team that was summoned for this case, the article discusses co-ordination issues that arise when organisations with different goals and interests collaborate to reach a common goal. The article studies co-ordination from inside of the investigation team and discusses the interchangeable use of criminal and administrative law. While bridging organisational boundaries enable agencies to pool powers, co-ordination across organisations may challenge the protection of sometimes conflicting aims and interests.

## Introduction

*Oslo area, September 2014:* After a period of comprehensive communication surveillance and covert investigation, 280 officers from the police, the Tax Administration (henceforth 'TA'), and the Labour and Welfare Administration ('Labour & Welfare') carried out a raid on 20 shops in the 'Lime' grocery chain. The grocery chain was established and operated by an organised criminal network that was previously known to the police. The shops were profitable to the network who allegedly utilised human trafficking for forced labour, illicit work, money

---

<sup>1</sup> This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Policing and Society*, available online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10439463.2017.1341510>

Full reference: Bjelland, H. F., & Vestby, A. (2017). 'It's about using the full sanction catalogue': On boundary negotiations in a multi-agency organised crime investigation. *Policing and Society*, 27(6), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2017.1341510>

laundering, benefit fraud, tax evasion, violations of immigration law, employment offences, identity theft and credit card fraud.<sup>2</sup> The raid marked the beginning of a prolonged multi-agency investigation, covering a variety of criminal and administrative violations. The investigation was structured as a multi-agency project, which meant that investigators from all participating agencies (police, TA, Labour & Welfare) were removed from their daily tasks, co-localised in a shared, rented office space and co-ordinated by the Lime project's chief investigator.

Pluralisation characterises contemporary policing, and partnerships as well as networked security governance between state and non-state actors have been examined empirically (Gundhus et al.2008, Nøkleberg 2016, Søgaaard et al.2016). This study explores the co-ordination of state powers in the multi-agency Lime project. While the literature on the pluralisation of policing and nodal governance of security (Johnston and Shearing 2003, Shearing and Wood 2003) emphasises the role of non-state agents in the provision of security, this study delves into the heterogeneity of powers and interests in state sector governmental nodes. Partnership working and information sharing among public agencies intensifies 'the state gaze' [...] in a way which is valued for its ability to make the daily work of the various state agents easier' (O'Neill and Loftus 2013, p. 451). This study contributes to the existing literature in two ways: empirically, through studying the internal operations of a pragmatically assembled multi-agency security network whose operations spanned the jurisdictions of a wide range of agencies, and theoretically, by analysing how instrumental practices of co-ordination may challenge accountability and the institutional integrity of deliberately separated public agencies.

While we view the agencies involved in the Lime investigation as 'nodes' in a security network, they also exist as discrete, formal organisations. While the agencies agreed to pool their legal resources and expertise in a joint effort against the allegedly criminal network, accomplishing shared objectives required negotiation of the boundaries drawn around their organisations. In the past, each

---

<sup>2</sup> The Oslo District Court is expected to render its decision in the spring of 2017

agency had had some knowledge about parts of the total criminal enterprise. Their knowledge of the criminal network and coercive powers were dispersed due to their separate jurisdictions and information sources. Prior to the establishment of the project, Labour & Welfare had some administrative law cases regarding illicit work circulating in the courts, and TA had previously been involved in a short-lived collaboration with a police unit targeting the network's businesses. The police's national intelligence database was rife with entries from all over the country. For the project participants, access to shared information was a key incentive to participate in the co-ordinated project, as well as a perceived necessity to put an end to the criminal enterprise.

Co-ordinating the work and resources of nodes in security networks necessitates negotiations over organisational boundaries. Following Giacomantonio's recent work on the sociology of police co-ordination (2015), this article explores negotiations of such boundaries within a multi-agency investigation: How did organisational boundaries shape the internal operations of the Lime project? The study builds on unique empirical data consisting of 23 interviews with investigators and management-level officers from all three agencies in the Lime project.

### Multi-agency co-ordination

Multi-agency co-ordination has been an area of interest in the literature on both organisations (Alexander 1995, Hardy et al.2003) and the police (Crawford 1994, O'Neill and McCarthy 2014, Webster 2015). Faced with multi-jurisdictional criminal activities, police are increasingly participating in multi-agency networks that include regulatory agencies and other non-police agencies (Maguire 2000, Rosenbaum 2002, Willis and Mastrofski 2011, O'Neill and McCarthy 2014, Webster 2015). Although police involvement in such networks is most commonly associated with preventive policing (e.g. Meyer and Mazerolle 2014, Strype et al.2014), the police are now increasingly involved in more reactive efforts, such as in the formation and use of joint investigation teams (Block 2008). A recent example is Operation Wasp Nest, a multi-agency investigation of human trafficking co-ordinated by the Danish police, and the pan-European Operation ETUTU, directed

at West African human trafficking networks (Europol 2016). The growth of multi-agency co-ordination is claimed to be part of a broader shift in governance and crime control (Maguire 2000, Mazerolle and Ransley 2006a, 2006b).

Some studies have noted police scepticism regarding partnerships and have pointed out practical issues, cultural challenges, and the potential for conflict in multi-agency networks (see Crawford 1999, Bullock et al.2006). However, research has also demonstrated that multi-agency co-ordination will create greater opportunities to use suitable legal tools in criminal prosecutions (Mazerolle and Ransley 2006b), that it may ease the work load for the police, facilitate for pragmatic approaches and thus result in more effective police work (O'Neill and McCarthy 2014). One of the most prominent arguments in favour of multi-agency co-ordination is the opportunity it provides to facilitate information sharing across organisations, and thereby increase the efficiency of law enforcement (Plecas et al.2011). Previous studies have demonstrated that information sharing between agencies will increase both the quality and usefulness of data, which in turn will lead to better decision-making (Kahn et al.2002). Researchers exploring some of the internal dynamics of multi-agency networks (Whelan 2015) have also identified the importance of interpersonal trust (Beech and Huxham2003, Fleming and Rhodes 2005, O'Neill and McCarthy 2014, Cotter 2015, Whelan 2016). Informal communication and personal relationships have been found to particularly affect the access to and sharing of information in networks (LeBeuf 2005, Cotter 2015).

### Sharing resources in security networks

Viewing the co-ordinated agencies in this study as a security network, we consider them a set of organisational nodes that were interconnected and co-ordinated 'in order to authorize and/or provide security [...]' (Dupont 2004, p. 78). The agencies in this study agreed to co-ordinate their resources because of a high degree of consensus around the objectives of the project. In network terms, studying how resources are pooled and used amounts to analysing how 'connections between nodes [...] influence security outcomes by shaping the flow of network assets (that is, information and resources)' (Brewer 2017, p. 453). Coining the term 'ad hoc instrumentalism', Sklansky (2012, p. 161) outlines a perspective of 'legal rules and



legal procedures simply as a set of interchangeable tools’, where ‘officials are encouraged to use whichever tools are most effective against the person or persons causing the problem’. In the Lime project, the legal resources of the co-ordinated agencies were put to use where they were perceived to be most likely to succeed, indicating an instrumentalist view of the legal tools. Renan (2015) terms the creation of toolboxes by coordinating resources that exist across state agencies, ‘pooling powers’. Among the security outcomes discussed in this article are both the efficiency of the instrumentalist approach of the project, as well as the significance of pooling the networked agencies’ resources for accountability (Mazerolle and Ransley 2006b, Sklansky 2012, Renan 2015, Dowdle 2017).

### Power relations

Previous research on multi-agency partnerships has shown that although a flat structure is often sought in such collaborations, power differentials exist and conflicts between agencies still tend to arise. This can create unexpected or even undesirable outcomes for the partners in the network (Crawford 1999, Gilling et al. 2013). Often, it is the police that end up with the lead position (Crawford 1999, pp. 127-128). In the Lime project, the police was defined as the leading agency already from the outset. Although agreeing on a shared project objective the project was principally defined by the police’s understanding of the crime problem, meaning it was the criminal violations rather than the administrative law cases that defined the project. As discussed by Fleming and Rhodes (2005), tensions over objectives and priorities may cause competition between those involved in a network. The importance of initial clarifications of project objectives and lines of accountability within inter-organisational partnerships has also been highlighted by other researchers (Crawford 1999, Bullock et al. 2002, Meyer and Mazerolle 2014). Clarifying responsibilities between the agencies in the Lime project may have reduced ‘the level of “latent conflict”’ (Crawford 1999, p. 146) that may develop from different objectives and success criteria.

### Police co-ordination

Organisational boundaries are a central phenomenon in the organisational literature (see, e.g. Luhmann 1995, Yan and Louis 1999, Hernes 2004, Santos and

Eisenhardt 2005), and have been linked to tasks and identity (Hirschhorn and Gilmore 1992), efficiency, power and competence (Santos and Eisenhardt 2005), as well as normative, relational and activity criteria (Scott 2000).

Grounded in the open-systems perspective on formal organisations (see, e.g. Scott 2004) and a broader sociology of organisations, Giacomantonio's typology of police organisational boundaries (2014, 2015) concerns co-ordination and negotiation of organisational boundaries between work units in police organisations. Giacomantonio defines work units as 'teams of people organized for particular work tasks within organizations' (Giacomantonio 2015, p. 18), and organisational boundaries as sites where negotiations between these units take place. More specifically, organisational boundaries are 'areas of responsibility that are unclaimed or contested between units' (2015, p. 23). As such, 'boundaries' are only analytically meaningful where there is a need for frequent negotiations (2015, p. 104). Negotiations occur over resources such as personnel or equipment (scarcity boundaries), over geographical distance or jurisdictional lines (proximity boundaries) and over issues related to the use of common databases or communication systems (technical/systemic boundaries).

The typology of police organisational boundaries poses a relevant and significant frame of reference for our empirical case. However, building on a fieldwork within a multi-jurisdictional police environment, Giacomantonio's typology does not encompass boundary negotiation that may arise between the police and non-police agencies. The type of co-ordination work explored by Giacomantonio thus differs from the co-ordination that takes place in the inter-organisational Lime project. While intra-organisational co-ordination between work units within the police is aided by police officials' shared purpose of law enforcement, this is not the case for the Lime investigation network which is, with respect to the participants' organisational mandates and corresponding legal authorities, more heterogeneous. Although both TA and Labour & Welfare officials involved in the Lime project investigated specific areas within the project and can reasonably be seen as doing policing, they are not police. Committed to different

rules and mandates, co-ordination – that is, synchronising the work of purposely separate agencies – may contrast with their respective goals and interests.

Because the agencies participating in the Lime project controlled their own personnel and resources, they did not have to negotiate over resources with one another (i.e. negotiations of scarcity boundaries, cf. Giacomantonio 2015). Below, we will therefore focus on how proximity and systemic boundaries shaped the internal operations of the project.

## Data and methods

This study is based on semi-structured interviews with 23 participants from the police, TA and Labour & Welfare, of whom 17 are investigators and 6 are management-level officers. All three agencies are represented in the study by participants from both levels. Twelve participants hail from various police districts, another six from special police agencies with national mandates, and five participants are from TA and Labour & Welfare. All participants explicitly and individually gave their free and informed consent to participate in the study

### Sampling

Upon first meeting with the project group in December 2015, the project management provided a list of 43 people currently involved in the project, including 7 management-level officers. We sampled participants from different agencies and hierarchical levels from the list of active participants (the project was based on secondments, and several investigators joined and left during the investigation). All participants were affiliated with a specialised sub-group within the investigation (e.g. ‘Analysis’, ‘Financial investigation’ or ‘Victims’), and we sampled to cover these groups, and organisational affiliation. The sampling strategy was not undertaken to secure generalisability, but to achieve maximum variation, with sampling conducted on ‘conceptual grounds’ (Miles et al.2013). Participants were recruited successively throughout the collection period. Our sampling strategy can thus be characterised as sequential (Miles et al.2013).

The interviews were semi-structured and based on a topic guide concerning interviewees’ experiences working on the investigation, covering (a) the

participant's entry into the project group and his/ her role and tasks, (b) detection, co-ordination and information sharing during the covert phase of the investigation, (c) experiences with the open investigation, with emphasis on co-ordination, (d) project management and goal setting and (e) agencies' limits and possibilities in relation to a complex and changing crime area. Interviews were recorded and lasted on average one hour. Interviews were conducted at the participants' workplaces, either in the project's rented office space or at their regular workplace. Both authors participated in all interviews.

### Data analysis

All interviews were transcribed concurrently with data collection, and our collaborative analysis (Cornish et al.2013) began with transcription and a round of largely inductive and descriptive annotations. After writing up a descriptive account of our case, we found 'co-ordination' to be a key concept by which we decided to 'attempt to theorise the significance of the patterns and their broader meanings' (Braun and Clarke 2006, Bazeley 2009). We developed codes partly deduced from theory (Bowen 2006), and coded the data with terms focused on co-ordination, boundaries, comparisons, negotiations and other expressions of difference and alignment between groups of actors in the project (cf. Giacomantonio 2015).

We analysed our data using thematic analysis, a flexible and widely used 'method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data' (Braun and Clarke 2006). Using NVivo 10, we coded for manifest expressions of experience with an understanding of boundaries and differences, looking for 'repeated patterns of meaning' (Braun and Clarke 2006). The aim of the analysis was to give a rich description of this particular aspect of the data which in turn could provide a narrow focus suitable for an analysis of boundary negotiations within the multi-agency security network (Braun and Clarke 2006). We co-ordinated our coding practice by reviewing matrices of coded excerpts. Although no further formal test of inter-coder reliability (Cornish et al.2013) was performed, we monitored the consistency of our coding by continuously reviewing coded excerpts.

## Findings

‘The full sanction catalogue’: bridging the proximity boundary of criminal and administrative law

Different violations discovered in relation to the grocery chain fell under the criminal and administrative jurisdictions of the three agencies. Human trafficking, credit card fraud and money laundering ‘belong’ to the police and were part of the criminal case, benefit fraud and illicit work within the purview of Labour & Welfare, and tax evasion to the TA. The project generated many administrative law cases, and some of these were used to support the criminal charges. Many of the suspects’ actions could be targeted using either administrative or criminal law, most notably in the financial investigations of the network. Here, the agencies were functionally proximate. Thus we consider the delineation of jurisdiction between the agencies as proximity boundaries which required negotiation of which agency and corresponding set of legislation would be used to target particular violations (Giacomantonio 2015).

As separate nodes in the security network that relates to the labour market, no one agency was responsible for the totality of offences uncovered in the project. The overarching goal of the project was to stop the criminal activities by seizing the network’s assets, and co-ordinating the agencies’ legal powers and sanctions could aid in accomplishing it. ‘Pooling powers’ dispersed among agencies enables legal authority and expertise to be combined (Renan 2015). The pragmatic and goal-oriented multi-agency approach taken in this police-initiated project is congruent with previous research on the fit between the pragmatism of police occupational culture, and partnership working (Reiner 2010, O’Neill and McCarthy 2014).

The administrative agencies have coercive powers suited to fulfil their mandates. These are founded in administrative law, and require a lower threshold of suspicion than the police’s enforcement measures. Under their administrative rules, Labour & Welfare were authorised to ID workers in the grocery chain. They would check whether workers received unemployment or sickness benefits while working, proving benefit fraud and preparing the case for a special administrative

court. Under similar rules, TA can collect documents, computers and mobile phones from a place of business. If tax evasion can be proved in an administrative law case, the required threshold of proof is lower than for the criminal law route to confiscation. Pragmatic decisions were made with regard to which agency would confiscate and thus whether the administrative or criminal 'track' should be used (Sklansky 2012). A TA informant said:

Isn't it better that we, who can get assets through a lower threshold of proof, take them? And perhaps greater sums, and more easily. Maybe even more quickly. The most important thing is that someone takes their profits, and does it in the most efficient way. [...] So we went with those two parallel tracks. [...] It's about taking their profits by using – let's call it the full sanction catalogue.

A police officer reflected similarly:

So far, we work in both tracks: Police and TA. We'll see how far that takes us. I think it's the right way to do it, and the most important thing is the goal: Stop the business and take the money.

Both quotes reflect a goal-oriented pragmatism. The legal authority of the participating agencies become if not shared, at least conditionally available, in pursuit of the stated goal. The approach of the Lime project can be analysed through Sklansky's concept 'ad hoc instrumentalism':

[A]d hoc instrumentalism empowers a wider range of front-line officials, including but not limited to prosecutors, to view all substantive laws and all enforcement regimes, criminal and civil, as tools to be employed strategically, as the circumstances demand. (2012, p. 201)

From this instrumental perspective, whether violations are pursued using administrative or criminal law is not important in and of itself. The most important thing is that the network's assets are seized. There runs a proximity boundary between the police and the TA in relation to offences that may authorise

confiscation, and bridging creates a pool of resources out of which the connected agencies can choose the ones that are most likely to accomplish their goal (Sklansky 2012, Renan 2015). Pooling of resources in pursuit of increased effectiveness and decreased vulnerability is an important aspect to why being connected to a security network is attractive (cf. Fleming and Rhodes 2005, Dupont 2006, p. 168).

The dynamic between the agencies carried the potential of mutual benefit: Unlike TA, the police are allowed to conduct searches and to seize property at private addresses (which TA's regulations do not allow). The police may achieve confiscations more easily by collaborating with TA, and when TA is partnered with the police, they may gain access to information (from the police's searches at private addresses or communication surveillance) that they would not be able to procure themselves. A similar dynamic applied in the relationship between police and Labour & Welfare. Due to the suspicion of 'aggravated human trafficking' in the criminal case, police were authorised to use communications surveillance. This brought to light possible frauds that Labour & Welfare were unable to discover through their own methods:

[T]his is perhaps the first time people who have been at no risk of being caught, have actually been caught. [...] We wouldn't have been able to handle these cases with our own means, our legal authority. There had been zero risk, really. (*Labour & Welfare investigator*)

Sharing data from the communication surveillance with Labour and Welfare was necessary to optimally pool the agencies' resources. Through explicit negotiation of which suspects were of mutual interest to the agencies and whom their efforts should thus be directed towards, data from the communications surveillance could be transmitted to Labour and Welfare for use in their administrative case:

We run into some challenges with communications surveillance. We can't use it directly in our administrative case. [The administrative law] violations have to be reported to the police for that to happen. We had

a number of persons of interest, and so we came to an agreement with the police as to which suspects they would go for. [...] and that we would report to the police. So we and the police selected 18 persons that we [Labour and Welfare] would look into from our end, and then we used what was discovered in the police's investigation of those persons.

The outcome of boundary negotiations may be to uphold boundaries, as well as to bridge (Giacomantonio 2015). Striking the balance between maintaining and bridging the boundaries between agencies remained challenging throughout, as illustrated by the example given by a senior police officer:

[W]e want Labour & Welfare to check a shop because we [the police] want to know who's there. But they only record those workers who receive benefits. [...] But they get the names of everyone who's there, right? But the ones receiving benefits are the only ones entered into the system. And they sit there with a piece of paper with the name of everyone that was in the shop. [We] who're investigating human trafficking, we're very interested in the names of the others who were there. In one way, we were the ones who sent them there [Labour & Welfare to the shop], but they need independent grounds for doing it. We can't deputise them, and there's a reason why that's the case. That we can't just say 'Labour & Welfare – go there – [...] – If the police were supposed to be able to do that, we would've had that legal authority ourselves. So, we can't deputise them, but we're in the same project. We share a goal. We must be able to say to Labour & Welfare: 'Check that shop'. And they'll do it, but we need to be able to get the information [...] into the shared project [...].

### Power relations

The participating agencies' combined legal authority and expertise were suited to serve the shared goal of the project. All the while, each agency still had their own agency-specific goals and interests which were furthered by participating in the project. Although many administrative cases were investigated to support the



criminal prosecution, some 'satellite' administrative cases were pursued by the agencies due to their own organisational mandates. Even though not every administrative case could be subsumed under the shared umbrella of the overarching goal, the goals of the participating agencies were largely complementary.

While we find that the relationship between the goals of the agencies relative to the shared goal of the project was harmonious, actualising the goals proved more fraught. Signs of this emerged during the raid against the shops in the early stage of the project: Each shop was raided by a multi-agency team in order to use their various authorities to collect evidence, arrest, and interview witnesses, as well as for the agencies to confiscate according to their own needs. Large numbers of (largely patrol) police officers from several districts were seconded to participate in the raid, and with few exceptions these had no relation to the case or subject areas of the regulatory agencies. This created friction between participants whose agency-specific needs were not always met, as described by an informant from the TA:

There was so much chaos that day. [S]everal police officers thought that we should seize as few documents as possible. I think a lot of police officers aren't used to taking so many papers for evidence, but we want to bring all of it with us. [...] But the police had the last word, so in most of the shops a lot of material was left behind.

A Labour & Welfare investigator relayed similar experiences:

[...] We had hoped to be able to give more input before the raid. About what sorts of investigative steps we would like for our cases. And I think that's where ... some of that communication, that we hadn't worked together before, that they sort of "Yeah, yeah, benefit fraud. We got it." But we were like, "There are so many exceptions, we'll need this and this documentation." And we don't have it. And now it's too late.

The raid made practical, professional differences between agencies visible. Despite a complementary goal structure, many seconded police officers were not

familiar enough with financial investigations or the work of the administrative agencies to support the evidence collection and thus the further investigation of some administrative cases. '[O]nly certain nodes can fully exploit the opportunities this new governance yields' (Dupont 2004, p. 78), and while we found no conflict regarding the goals or fundamental idea of pooling authority and expertise, the project was initiated by the police and structured with criminal prosecution and policing objectives in mind. The police, we argue, was 'the most central (and, hence, most powerful)' (Brewer 2017, p. 454), least constrained, and most influential node within the project (Dupont 2006, p. 175). That we found no evidence of overt conflict over objectives does not mean that negotiations over how the work of the agencies should be connected took place in a space void of power relations. The police importantly exercised power 'through the power to define: to set broad agendas [...] and direct resources' which increased their 'relative capacity [...] to achieve desired outcomes' (Crawford 1999, pp. 132-133). Our analysis suggests that every agency was largely satisfied with what they got out of participating. Still, it is likely that their interests would be better and more easily served had their problem definitions and investigative requirements been equally present to the police's in the planning stages of the project.

#### Connecting the work of similarly specialised sub-groups

'Police is not just police' one informant from one of the regulatory agencies said, pointing out that expertise and experience is not predictably located within organisations. Financial crime detection and investigation is not generalised knowledge in the police. We found that police and non-police participants alike experienced the difference between investigators with and without financial investigation expertise as significant. Police investigators were either generalist criminal investigators, organised crime investigators, or financial crime investigators:

What it's like to work with the police? It varies, really. I don't feel that we work with 'the police', because we work with some officers that work with financial crimes, and those who work with other cases [...] [T]hey have different platforms. But [...] we've been on a team with the people

from [national financial crime unit], and then you're on the same planet, really, if you know what I mean. We understand that things take time, that there is a crazy number of documents and numbers and everything else. (TA investigator)

Both the TA's and Labour and Welfare's investigations related wholly to the financial aspects of the Lime project. The difference between police with and without any expertise in that subject area was thus most keenly felt by the regulatory agencies. The Labour and Welfare investigator who gave the following quote had extensive experience from working with the police on cases involving benefit fraud, but had never previously worked with an organised crime unit:

We worked with a new branch of the police this time. We've worked with the specialists in the police districts for a long time. But now – I don't know, they work with organised crime and they're not used to working with other public agencies, I think. The cultures are different. There are keys to investigating benefit fraud that are difficult for a novice to understand. There were some things from the early cooperation, I don't want to call it problematic, but it takes time to speak the same language, understand each other, what's important and how we work.

Both quotes illustrate how the informants distinguish between 'police' in general on the one hand, and specialist financial crime investigators on the other. Professionals with expertise in some form of financial investigation can be viewed as a sub-group that was less heterogeneous than the project as a whole with regard to expertise and prior case experiences. Our findings suggest that shared expertise among partners from separate organisations was a beneficial background on which to connect the work of the participating agencies.

### Professional secrecy

Throughout the project, the regulatory agencies contributed information useful to the criminal investigation, while they also used information from the criminal investigation in their administrative cases. However, all participating agencies

were bound by separate legislation regarding information exchange with partner agencies. These rules of professional secrecy ran through the project organisation and represented systemic boundaries (cf. Giacomantonio 2015) between participants from different agencies. The purpose of secrecy provisions is to protect data from improper dissemination, and sharing information is thus an exception. Negotiations over access to other agencies' data were often explicit, and thus were suitable for studying tensions between network demands and the purposes and obligations of its connected formal organisations.

Each of the agencies whose work was co-ordinated in the project had purchase of parts of the activities of the suspects, and it varied which agency could share what information, at what time, for what purpose, and with whom. As a Labour & Welfare investigator put it:

[Information sharing] is problematic when you're in a group like this – well, we're released from our confidentiality depending on who else is present. For example, there'll be information that we can give to the Tax authority, but if the Labour Inspection Authority is in the same room, we'll either have to ask them to leave, or – you know.

Due to mutually supporting rules and a formalised procedure, neither TA nor Labour & Welfare described information sharing between the two as particularly challenging. TA could share more with the police than Labour & Welfare could. If the minimum sentence for a suspected crime is six months' imprisonment, TA may share 'most of what we have' (TA investigator). The relationship between the police and Labour & Welfare, on the other hand, was described as challenging:

[Information sharing has been] challenging. That's got mostly to do with Labour & Welfare, though, in this project. Customs – no problem. TA – more pragmatic about these things, and we have better formal agreements with them. While Labour & Welfare – they're a bit of a hybrid organisation, they aren't primarily a control agency [...] (Police officer)

The primary aim of Labour & Welfare is to contribute to social and economic security, and to support (re-)entry into the workforce (Administration of Labour and Welfare Act 2006). They can share information with the police to the extent that sharing promotes their own purposes. As the quote from a Labour & Welfare investigator illustrates, this was challenging in the multi-agency, co-localised environment of the Lime project:

Our legal basis for sharing information is based on whether it serves our purposes to do so. And that's quite a discretionary judgment – when we can say that it is, and when it isn't. You're sitting in a meeting and have to weigh every word in a way that doesn't breach confidentiality. It's a big responsibility [...] and the other thing is that we may well have information that in light of the group's shared goals we should've shared. But we can't necessarily do that.

Labour & Welfare is allowed to share more with TA than they are permitted to share with the police, and don't have rules governing sharing information related to criminal activity. However, the police have wider access to share information with the partner agencies in the project:

We [the police] can probably get a bit too eager sometimes. We've talked about information sharing all the time. And what we've arrived at is, and I've always meant this, but to get the other agencies to see it – there are purposes behind what we're doing that enables us to share information. (Police officer)

We found that the police viewed themselves as the most able and willing to share information in the project. The police are allowed to share information with public agencies if the purpose is crime prevention. This mandate gives the police wide purchase on a range of social and criminal problems, making their potential reach in security networks less 'confined within distinct subgroups, or clusters' (Brewer 2017, p. 453). Whether an effort is considered 'preventive' is largely a matter of discretion. For instance, if the police pick up information suggesting ongoing benefit fraud during communications surveillance, sharing this with

Labour & Welfare could be considered preventive. Thus, the police are far more able to bridge the systemic boundary of professional secrecy from their side, compared with the partner agencies in this study (Giacomantonio 2015).

#### Access to shared IT systems

The lack of shared software for information processing and project management highlighted IT systems as yet another systemic boundary between participants. The project was subdivided into eight functional teams, and every individual participant was assigned to one of the following: analysis, confiscations, communication surveillance, documents, investigation management, victims, tactical investigation and financial investigation (Labour & Welfare and TA participants were members of the tactical and financial investigation teams). In the information infrastructure, communication surveillance, confiscations and analysis occupied central positions. The communications surveillance team recorded e-mails, texts and phone calls in both the covert and the exploratory phase of the criminal investigation. The confiscations group systematised and recorded the extensive materials collected. The analysis group created systems and procedures for data processing that facilitated sharing of the materials collected.

The proprietary software Indicia was the analysis team's primary tool to impose a unitary order and recording practices for information in the project. Indicia is used by Norwegian police for intelligence work and project management. Its separate modules makes it well suited for recording, systematising and linking information, as well as for delegating and following up on tasks. An interview transcript, for instance, can be uploaded to the database with names or places tagged, enabling others who may be interested in those names or places to find them. Additionally, Indicia features free text searches in the database. Ideally, the software could be a one-stop shop for anyone who wanted to know whether someone had recorded information of interest.

All police officers, but only the police, have had access to Indicia. The software is connected to a national intelligence database where most information is visible to every user, but access can be controlled. Entries related to organised crime or ongoing projects are usually hidden from anyone not positively

authorised to view them. However, a user cannot be given access only to the project module without access to the national intelligence database at the same time. There was a perceived need for everyone, regardless of agency, to work together in the same information environment:

It's been hell getting the system owners to let the control agencies in – TA and Labour & Welfare. That's where the job gets done, and we can't have satellites that don't see what we're working on or that we can't delegate tasks to. (Police officer)

The question of access to Indicia highlighted tension between the concern for expediency and communication within the project, and the separation of agencies' data. Everyone was eventually given access, and could search police reports and interview transcripts. The key to bridging this systemic boundary was to define the participants as police personnel. As an investigator from one of the non-police agencies explains: 'We worked in Indicia, but not as [representative from our own agency]. As police.' Once they had access, the investigators from the control agencies had varying experiences with the usefulness of this access:

We've had access to the police systems when we worked in the shared office space, but we received some training in Indicia [...] There's probably a lot there that could have been useful that we only now [in a late stage of the project] feel like we have the time to look up. There are piles and piles of documents. You'd drown.

Another says that:

[Indicia] was very useful. When a case has so many people working on it and there are so many documents, we don't always know who we're looking for. Someone could have discovered something that they didn't know was relevant to us because they didn't know that this person received benefits. And we didn't know that the person worked [while receiving benefits].

Familiarity with the system, adequate training, but also the quality of the entries and how information was indexed for retrieval likely impacted how and to what extent this bridge between the police system and the control agencies was utilised. While the analysis team created a system for information processing, the result was largely determined by how the investigators who added documents to the data base adhered to it.

### Connecting disparate areas of expertise

The material collected in the Lime project was massive: interviews, communication surveillance containing e-mails and text messages in addition to at least 50,000 phone calls, confiscations of paper documents from the 20 raided shops and electronic confiscations consisting of hundreds of thousands of files. While giving all agencies access to Indicia helped bridge a systemic boundary, the information flow between participants and teams hinged in part on the ability to recognise data of interest to other participants. While Indicia was a tool for organising information, the interpretation, naming and tagging of the data required manual and deliberate action from whoever handled it. A police officer who worked on communication surveillance reflected on the challenges of serving colleagues in the multi-agency and multi-disciplinary project with relevant information:

[K]nowing what to look for – what should we look for to support the financial investigators? [ ... ] [T]hose of us who work on communication surveillance, who don't have any background in financial crime – what should we look for? Which calls are important? What is required to prove guilt?

The communication surveillance police officer is an expert on this collection method, but is not familiar with every crime type detected in the project. The function of his team was to collect and convey information to investigators from the different agencies as it emerged. Similarly, police officers conducted interviews, and the TA investigators could see from the transcripts that follow-up questions that were obvious to them had not been asked:



It has been challenging, really, that the people who have interviewed and that have listened to the phone calls – that don't know about financial crimes – they can hear things and they don't know what to ask that would be relevant for us [TA] to know about. [...] It's been completely impossible for police officers who don't work with financial crimes to recognise that this would be something the TA needs.

Distributing information from the interviews or telephone tap to specialised investigators was challenging. At times, the information flow was hindered by 'gatekeepers' lacking expertise in financial crime in general, or benefit or tax fraud in particular. This challenge was somewhat alleviated by the ability of the agencies to search parts of the collected material themselves in Indicia. However, as a Labour & Welfare investigator reported, delving into the data in this way was not an entirely satisfactory option:

I know there is a lot of information there, and I know where to find it. It's more a question of finding the time to look for it. Looking through communication surveillance and confiscations is very time consuming.

Despite the challenges described above, working in a shared space appears to have aided investigators in locating specialised knowledge within the project, improving information flow to some extent. Through collegial conversations and overhearing what other teams were working on, investigators became familiar with details and status of other parts of the investigation:

If the police have something we need – say from the telephone tap – and we can use it, they usually have to give it to us in a format that we're allowed to use. We'll say: 'We need this. Can you write us a report?' (TA investigator)

The quote above also refers to how information in a police document, for instance from communication surveillance, was translated into a format that the administrative agencies could use in their own cases. TA could not lawfully use that information in their investigation, but had to receive it in the form of a police report. The information flow from the police to the other agencies was facilitated

by informal transmission of snippets of information, as well as through inclusion in the shared ICT environment. Simply sharing the same office space created opportunities to overhear and subsequently ask for the right information report from the police. Information was translated from a police-specific format to a report accessible to TA.

## Discussion

### Bridging systemic boundaries of information flow

Shared knowledge is important because it enables participants to communicate with greater accuracy (Gittell 2011), and increases awareness of how their tasks relate to those of others. Above, we argued that professional secrecy and the lack of a common management system were influential systemic boundaries which impacted the information flow within the project, and required negotiation by the participants.

To connect the work of agencies within the project, the project management secured access to the police intelligence database and project management system Indicia for the non-police agencies. This initiative resembles boundary spanning activities discussed by Giacomantonio (2015), in that relevant boundary actors (such as managers) may overcome systemic boundaries by creating new systems or rule frameworks. The non-police agencies' access was the result of intra-organisational negotiation between project managers and system administrators, and was unique in the sense that, as far as we have been able to ascertain, access had never been given to anyone outside the police before. Still, information exchange raises complex issues of confidentiality (Nash and Walker 2009, Harvey et al. 2015), contrasting agency-specific obligations with the shared interest of the project as a whole. Although the use of the intelligence software as a medium for information sharing is striking, basic confidentiality considerations underlay the negotiation (as by default users do not have access to classified intelligence).

Indicia in principle made the police's information readily available, but availability of data does not, as noted by Dupont (2006, p. 169), 'ensure its diffusion and use by all institutional nodes'. Having access to the same information is

important because ‘the holder of information often fails to recognize the value of it to others’ (LeBeuf 2005). Still, unfamiliarity with partners’ interests and needs proved to interfere with the project’s information flow. Challenges existed both between participants belonging to different agencies, and between participants with expertise in different subject areas. While the projects’ police investigators share basic standardised training in criminal investigation, specialisation makes investigators more apt at recognising valuable information for some types of crime rather than others. Examining the negotiation of inter-organisational boundaries between the project participants, we found that the sharing of expertise, such as ‘having knowledge about financial investigation’, helped participants from different agencies co-operate. Nevertheless, it was a common perception that information flow persisted to be difficult throughout the project.

While some information simply could not be shared due to issues of confidentiality – the administrative agencies notably have less license to share with the police than vice versa – the participants in many cases managed to find pragmatic solutions to co-ordinate their work. Co-localisation in the shared, rented office space appears to have created an organisational context conducive for building familiarity and trust within the project as a work unit. Spending every day in the same space gave ample opportunity for informal meetings, coffee breaks, and accidental encounters between investigators from different agencies. This facilitated what we consider informal pockets of information sharing where inter-agency co-ordination was aided by the personalised trust that participants came to place in each other, giving room for attempts to bridge systemic boundaries of information flow (cf. Giacomantonio 2015). These findings align with previous research, which has found that information sharing also relies on informal activities and personal relationships (Dupont 2004, O’Neill and McCarthy 2014, Cotter 2015, Søgaaard et al.2016), and ‘that the underlying relational properties of security networks [...]make] it difficult to distinguish between formal and informal ties’ (Whelan 2016).

Although we identify informal pockets of information sharing, we do not claim that the codes of confidentiality were dishonoured by the investigators.

While all participants were guided by separate codes of secrecy which regulated each agency's information sharing practices, these regulations also enabled them to make discretionary judgment calls based on their abstract knowledge, regarding whether a particular case justified information sharing. Discretion accounts for much of the usefulness of a flexible network approach (Mazerolle and Ransley 2006b, p. 185), and, as we find in this study, the discretionary space is even more flexible in partnerships where interests are strongly interwoven (Hartmann 2014).

#### Negotiating jurisdiction: using the whole 'sanction catalogue'

Partnerships (or other modes of networked practice, such as third party policing) represent pragmatic attempts to solve problems of crime and disorder, in which getting the job done might be more important than questions of whether the problem at hand is crime or an administrative violation (Maguire 2000, cf. Weber 2013). Networked crime control occurs in response to external pressures to disperse the 'responsibility and interest in crime control across a range of regulatory nodes' (Mazerolle and Ransley 2006b). Partnering with other 'regulatory nodes', the police gain access to the 'legal levers' and sanctions of their partners. The police inhabit a role as information brokers in security networks, partly because of the content of their information (Ericson and Haggerty 1997, Crawford 1999).

Co-ordinating resources from three agencies created a potentially wide and varied toolbox for the Lime project, referred to as 'the sanction catalogue' by one participant. As shown, different parts of the Lime case complex fell under the separate jurisdictions of the involved agencies. While many violations firmly and obviously belonged to one particular agency, other violations could be handled by either TA or the police. Working towards a shared project goal, these jurisdictions could be interpreted as proximity boundaries (cf. Giacomantonio 2015) that necessitated negotiation to achieve effective co-ordination. For instance, if hindered by own organisational jurisdictions, the police could propose Labour & Welfare to do shop controls. These controls were legitimate in light of Labour & Welfare's jurisdiction, but might not have occurred but for the request of the police. Being able to choose strategically between the most suitable 'tracks' available for the project as a whole, also known as 'ad hoc instrumentalism'

(Sklansky 2012), was perceived as an effective strategy for spanning the proximity boundaries and ensuring that useful information was shared in included in the project.

#### Accountability versus efficiency

The collaborative strategy and 'pooling powers' made the Lime project's investigations more efficient (Dupont 2006, Mazerolle and Ransley 2006b, Renan 2015): securing confiscation through the TA's authority required a lower threshold of proof compared with the police, and reduced the risk of failure and wasted resources. Further, pooling enabled participants to be effective in the first place: Labour & Welfare would not be in a position to discover and investigate many of the cases discovered except through the police's communications surveillance. Joining the two tracks of administrative and criminal law in pursuit of a shared objective created a dynamic toolbox which furthered agencies' ability to handle a cross-jurisdictional crime problem. However, whether participation is an effective strategy for individual agencies in achieving their goals will depend in part, as shown in this study, to what extent their interests and particular needs are embedded in the goals and structure of the co-ordinated effort (Mazerolle and Ransley 2006b, p. 181). While agencies agreed on the goals and the general road map for getting there, the police benefited from having had an important hand in defining the project, its 'crimes [and] appropriate solutions' (Crawford 1999, p. 133).

Increased efficiency, though, came bundled with accountability challenges. Even if the instrumental approach demonstrated in this study was conducted according to the letter of the law, such practices border on deputisation of partner agencies by the police. Co-ordinating agencies potentially creates tension between the goal of the joint project and the separate mandates of the agencies and professions involved. Ad hoc instrumentalism challenges traditional expectations of political accountability, meaning 'the desirability of formal, legal constraints on official action' (Sklansky 2012), sought by adherence to 'rationalised and transparent systems of bureaucratic control' (Dowdle 2017, p. 198). Using administrative law for crime control ends and vice versa blurs the boundary between the two tracks, and requires that we find 'ways to bolster accountability

at the intersection of the systems [...] by making the system, and its lines of responsibility, more transparent' (Sklansky 2012, p. 219). The tracks exist with different purposes, and the choice between them is consequential for those whom interventions are directed at, in terms of rights and the standard of proof required to sanction (Mazerolle and Ransley 2006b, p. 179, cf. Goold 2016). Our findings illustrate the need for further studies on whether close-knit multi-agency constellations strain professionals' primary obligations to the recipients of their services (Grimen 2008).

### Concluding remarks

Multi-agency investigations are increasingly deployed against criminal networks and cross-jurisdictional crimes. This study's unique empirical material from an inter-organisational investigation allows an analysis of the internal dynamics of a security network of co-ordinated state sector governmental nodes. Networks involving multiple state agencies hold great potential power, which warrants further studies into the practices and ideologies of co-ordination.

Despite difficulties presented by organisational boundaries, we find that the participants generally managed to co-ordinate work across agencies. While bridging organisational boundaries enabled agencies to pool their powers, co-ordination across organisations may challenge the protection of sometimes conflicting aims and interests. Although potentially effective against cross-jurisdictional crime, use of the full 'sanction catalogue' also raises important questions about weighing efficiency against the protections offered by formal organisations in terms of accountability. This study thus also contributes to the literature on the interchangeable use of criminal and administrative law, a topic notably explored in 'crimmigration' research (Stumpf 2006, Sklansky 2012, Weber 2013, Gundhus 2017). Tempering efficiency with transparency, we argue, is paramount to preserve the institutional integrity of, and trust in, deliberately separated public agencies as they participate in powerful networked assemblages.

## References

- Alexander, E.R., 1995. *How organizations act together: interorganizational coordination in theory and practice*. Luxembourg: Gordon and Breach.
- Bazeley, P., 2009. Analysing qualitative data: more than 'identifying themes'. *Malaysian journal of qualitative research*, 2, 6–22.
- Beech, N. and Huxham, C., 2003. Cycles of identity formation in interorganizational collaborations. *International studies of management & organization*, 33, 28–52.
- Block, L., 2008. Combating organized crime in Europe: practicalities of police cooperation. *Policing: an international journal of police strategies & management*, 2, 74–81.
- Bowen, G.A., 2006. Grounded theory and sensitizing concepts. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 5, 12–23.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V., 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3, 77–101.
- Brewer, R. et al., 2017. Controlling crime through networks. In: P.E. Drahos, ed. *Regulatory theory. Foundations and applications*. Canberra: ANU Press, 447–464.
- Bullock, K., Erol, R., and Tilley, N., 2006. *Problem-oriented policing and partnerships: implementing an evidence-based approach to crime reduction*. Abingdon: Taylor & Francis.
- Bullock, K., Farrell, G., and Tilley, N., 2002. *Funding and implementing crime reduction projects*. London: Home Office.
- Cornish, F., Gillespie, A., and Zittoun, T., 2013. Collaborative analysis of qualitative data. In: U. Flick, ed. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis*. London: Sage, 79–93.
- Cotter, R.S., 2015. Police intelligence: connecting-the-dots in a network society. *Policing and society*, 1–15.

Crawford, A., 1994. Social values and managerial goals: police and probation officers' experiences and views of interagency co-operation. *Policing and society*, 4, 323-339.

Crawford, A., 1999. *The local governance of crime: appeals to community and partnerships*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dowdle, M.W., 2017. Public accountability: conceptual, historical and epistemic mappings. In: P. Drahos, ed. *Regulatory theory: foundations and applications*. Canberra: ANU Press.

Dupont, B., 2004. Security in the age of networks. *Policing and society*, 14, 76-91.

Dupont, B., 2006. Delivering security through networks: surveying the relational landscape of security managers in an urban setting. *Crime, law and social change*, 45, 165-184.

Ericson, R.V. and Haggerty, K.D., 1997. *Policing the risk society*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Europol. 2016. *Joint action to tackle West African human trafficking networks* [online]. Press Release. Available from: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/joint-action-to-tackle-west-african-human-trafficking-networks-o> [Accessed 2 February 2017].

Fleming, J. and Rhodes, R.A.W., 2005. Bureaucracy, contracts and networks: the unholy trinity and the police. *Australian & New Zealand journal of criminology*, 38 (2), 192-215.

Giacomantonio, C., 2014. A typology of police organizational boundaries. *Policing and society*, 24, 545-565.

Giacomantonio, C., 2015. *Policing integration. The sociology of police coordination work*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gilling, D., et al., 2013. Powers, liabilities and expertise in community safety: comparative lessons for 'urban security' from the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. *European journal of criminology*, 10 (3), 326-340.

Gittell, J.H., 2011. 30 New directions for relational coordination theory. In: K.S. Cameron and G.M. Spreitzer, eds. *The Oxford handbook of positive organizational scholarship*. New York: Oxford University Press, 400-411.



- Goold, B.J., 2016. Policing and human rights. In: B. Bradford, B. Jauregui, I. Loader, and J. Steinberg, eds. *The SAGE handbook of global policing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 226–240.
- Grimen, H., 2008. Profesjon og profesjonsmoral. In: A. Molander and L.I. Terum, eds. *Profesjonsstudier*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 144–160.
- Gundhus, H.I. et al., 2008. *Modell for forebygging av kriminalitet?: evaluering av Samordning av Lokale kriminalitetsforebyggende tiltak (SLT)*. Oslo: Politihøgskolen.
- Gundhus, H.O.I., 2017. Discretion as an obstacle: police culture, change, and governance in a Norwegian context. *Policing*. doi:10.1093/polic/pax012.
- Hardy, C., Phillips, N., and Lawrence, T.B., 2003. Resources, knowledge and influence: the organizational effects of interorganizational collaboration. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40, 321–347.
- Hartmann, M.R.K. 2014. *In the gray zone. With police in making space for creativity* (PhD thesis). Copenhagen Business School. Available from: [http://openarchive.cbs.dk/bitstream/handle/10398/9043/Mia\\_Rosa\\_Koss\\_Hartmann.pdf?sequence=1](http://openarchive.cbs.dk/bitstream/handle/10398/9043/Mia_Rosa_Koss_Hartmann.pdf?sequence=1).
- Harvey, J.H., Hornsby, R.A., and Sattar, Z., 2015. Disjointed service: an English case study of multi-agency provision in tackling child trafficking. *British Journal of Criminology*, 55 (3), 494–513. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azu115>.
- Hernes, T., 2004. Studying composite boundaries: a framework of analysis. *Human Relations*, 57, 9–29.
- Hirschhorn, L. and Gilmore, T., 1992. The new boundaries of the “boundaryless” company. *Harvard Business Review*, 70, 104–115.
- Johnston, L. and Shearing, C., 2003. *Governing security. Explorations in policing and justice*. New York: Routledge. Kahn, B.K., Strong, D.M., and Wang, R.Y., 2002. Information quality benchmarks: product and service performance. *Communications of the ACM*, 45, 184–192.
- Lebeuf, M.-E., 2005. Information sharing among Canadian police departments: trusting individuals or systems? *The Canadian Review of*

*Policing Research*, 1, <http://crpr.icaap.org/index.php/crpr/article/view/36/32>.

Luhmann, N., 1995. *Social systems*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Maguire, M., 2000. Policing by risks and targets: some dimensions and implications of intelligence-led crime control. *Policing and society*, 9, 315–336.

Mazerolle, L. and Ransley, J., 2006a. The case for third-party policing. In: D. Weisburd and A.A. Braga, eds. *Police innovation. Contrasting perspectives*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 191–206.

Mazerolle, L. and Ransley, J., 2006b. *Third party policing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Meyer, S. and Mazerolle, L., 2014. Police-led partnership responses to high risk youths and their families: challenges associated with forming successful and sustainable partnerships. *Policing and society*, 24, 242–260.

Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M., and Saldaña, J., 2013. *Qualitative data analysis: a methods sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Nash, M. and Walker, L., 2009. Mappa – Is closer collaboration really the key to effectiveness? *Policing*, 3 (2), 172–180. doi:10.1093/police/pap007.

Nøkleberg, M., 2016. Security governance – an empirical analysis of the Norwegian context. *Nordisk politiforskning*, 3, 53–82.

O’Neill, M. and Loftus, B., 2013. Policing and the surveillance of the marginal: everyday contexts of social control. *Theoretical criminology*, 17 (4), 437–454.

O’Neill, M. and McCarthy, D.J., 2014. (Re) negotiating police culture through partnership working: trust, compromise and the ‘new’ pragmatism. *Criminology and criminal justice*, 14, 143–159.

Plecas, D., et al., 2011. Evidence-based solution to information sharing between law enforcement agencies. *Policing: An International journal of police strategies & management*, 34, 120–134.

Reiner, R., 2010. *The politics of the police*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Renan, D., 2015. Pooling powers. *Columbia law review*, 115 (2), 211–291.

- Rosenbaum, D.P., 2002. Evaluating multi-agency anti-crime partnerships: theory, design, and measurement issues. *Crime prevention studies*, 14, 171–225.
- Santos, F.M. and Eisenhardt, K.M., 2005. Organizational boundaries and theories of organization. *Organization science*, 16, 491–508.
- Scott, W.R., 2000. Institutional change and structuration processes. In: W.R. Scott, M. Ruef, P.J. Mendel, and C.A. Caronna, eds. *Institutional change and healthcare organizations: from professional dominance to managed care*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 340–363.
- Scott, W.R., 2004. Reflections on a half-century of organizational sociology. *Annual review of sociology*, 30, 1–21.
- Shearing, C. and Wood, J., 2003. Nodal governance, democracy, and the new ‘denizens’. *Journal of law and society*, 30, 400–419.
- Sklansky, D.A., 2012. Crime, immigration, and ad hoc instrumentalism. *New criminal law review: an international and interdisciplinary journal*, 15 (2), 157–223.
- Strype, J. et al., 2014. Perceptions of interprofessional collaboration. *Professions and professionalism*, 4, 1–16.
- Stumpf, J.P., 2006. The crimmigration crisis: immigrants, crime, and sovereign power. *American university law review*, 56, 367–419.
- Søgaard, T.F., Houborg, E., and Tutenges, S., 2016. Nightlife partnership policing-(dis) trust building between bouncers and the police in the war on gangs. *Nordisk politiforskning*, 3, 132–153.
- The Administration of Labour and Welfare Act.*, 2006. Act of 1 July 2006.
- Weber, L., 2013. *Policing non-citizens*. London: Routledge.
- Webster, J., 2015. Effective third-party policing partnerships or missed opportunities? *Policing and society*, 25, 97–114.
- Whelan, C., 2015. Security networks and occupational culture: understanding culture within and between organisations. *Policing and society*, 1–23. doi:10.1080/10439463.2015.1020804.

Whelan, C., 2016. Informal social networks within and between organisations: on the properties of interpersonal ties and trust. *Policing: an international journal of police strategies & management*, 39, 145–158.

Willis, J.J. and Mastrofski, S.D., 2011. Innovations in policing: meanings, structures, and processes. *Annual review of law and social science*, 7, 309–334.

Yan, A. and Louis, M.R., 1999. The migration of organizational functions to the work unit level: buffering, spanning, and bringing up boundaries. *Human relations*, 52, 25–47.

# Policy-making without politics: Overstating objectivity in intelligence-led policing<sup>1</sup>

Annette Vestby

## Introduction

Models of intelligence-led policing (ILP) tend to assume that perfect execution can yield objective results (Ratcliffe, 2016). The social and technological context of intelligence work has been shown to impact what kind of information is collected, and how it is interpreted. While this can be seen as a technical challenge for achieving objective results, it raises a more fundamental question: If intelligence analysis is an interpretive endeavour, is objectivity a useful concept for assessing its quality?

Strategic analysis aims to support decision-making regarding the long-term goals that the police should steer towards in the future and how they might be achieved. In contrast to operational or tactical intelligence, strategic analysis is more apparently tangent on political questions about what the police should do and be. The more objective strategic intelligence is perceived to be, the more it can be left to experts in the field. This chapter argues that the non-objective nature of intelligence analysis and the increasing prevalence of ILP strategies at all levels of policing should prompt greater transparency and also collaboration with actors outside the police on strategic intelligence products. Criticising the claim to objectivity in relation to organised crime threat assessments, Rønn (2013) argued for a participatory approach to what she judged to be value-laden considerations. As ILP becomes increasingly popular in mainstream, everyday policing, it becomes ever more pressing to decide what is the proper relationship between expert police

---

<sup>1</sup> This is an Accepted Manuscript version of a chapter published by Routledge.

Full reference: Vestby, A. (2018). Policy making without politics: Overstating objectivity in intelligence-led policing. In H. I. Gundhus, K. V. Rønn, & N. Fyfe (Eds.), *Moral issues in intelligence-led policing* (pp. 265–282). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315231259-14>

analysts' judgment and other, expert and non-expert, opinion on what the police should be and do.

This chapter builds on a thematic analysis of two Norwegian cases: the National Police Directorate's Intelligence doctrine, which began to be implemented throughout the Norwegian Police in 2014 as part of the (so far) most recent reform, and an Oslo Police District strategic intelligence product designed to develop methodology. These documents both have normative aspects regarding intelligence, and they have been analysed for the view of objectivity they express, how they perceive the potential for prediction, and how they think uncertainty should be communicated.

### **Background**

Intelligence-led policing has emerged as a practical approach for managing police work. It bases decisions about priorities and resource allocation on data analysis. ILP has been used to target prolific offenders, organised crime networks and hot spots for crime. Focused primarily on law enforcement (Tilley, 2008), use of intelligence can help make policing more cost-effective (Innes and Sheptycki, 2004). In times of austerity, it has been used as a framework for fiscal accountability and the documentation of prioritisations within limited resources (Sanders, Weston and Schott, 2015). Systematic and rigorous analysis is the cornerstone of evidence-based practices more broadly, in policing as in other areas of governance (Lum and Koper, 2014). In debates on what the police should do, everyone has an opinion. Analytical products draw on an understanding of science as impartial and objective, which adds to their value as arguments in a culture where the 'rhetoric of rationality' (Ericson and Haggerty, in Innes, Fielding and Cope, 2005: 39) is respected. The authority of an objective bedrock on which to ground decisions about the future is attractive, and ILP offers it: 'When practised properly, intelligence-led policing provides an objective mechanism to formulate strategic policing priorities' (Ratcliffe, 2016: 5). This view that intelligence supplies objective assessments for decision-makers is consonant with what is known as 'the standard model' in intelligence studies (Phythian, 2012).

In this chapter the focus remains on strategic analysis, which stands apart from tactical and operational levels, in that it relates to an organisation's overarching plans and objectives, addressing 'any issue at the level of breadth and detail necessary to describe risks, threats, and opportunities in a way that helps determine programs and policies' (McDowell, 2008: 5). The business of the strategic analyst is to provide expert advice (Rønn and Høffding, 2013) to support decision-making.

In the standard model of intelligence, objectivity is considered achievable, but is challenged by poor data quality and analysis, as well as organisational obstacles. The academic literature on knowledge work in police organisations has revealed issues in the information flow from collectors to analysts. Cope (2004) found that, due to a need-to-know culture, analysts weren't trusted with sensitive information, and were thus left to draw on an incomplete body of data. Police were guided by largely undocumented 'experiential knowledge' about the nature of the crime problem and offenders (2004: 199). Weston (2015) identified similar issues to do with the analyst being either unknown or perceived as of little value to the police mission. Without a tradition of documentation and disseminating information, knowledge can also become a source of power within the organisation. The analyst who acts as a hub and coordinator of information can thus challenge existing hierarchies based on privileged access to a particular source (Gundhus, 2009: 88), creating a potential disincentive for officers to report via the designated system. Notwithstanding the fact that open sources are important to intelligence analysis, intelligence from informants and surveillance is favoured in policing circles, and interpersonal trust has been known to facilitate information sharing (Whelan, 2016). Recording information can be incentivised if it is understood to contribute to a successful prosecution (Sheptycki, 2004: 318). Sanders, Weston and Schott (2015) found selective reporting and poor data quality in their study of intelligence-led policing in Canada. These are problems for police organisations that seek to implement an ILP framework. However, systematically skewed collection is also an ethical issue, insofar as what officers report becomes what the police know, which then forms the basis for analyses directing police resources toward certain crime problems and offenders rather than others. The dark figure is of more than

academic interest, since data about known crimes is used to inform the direction of policing. The issue of how observed criminality relates to the totality of crime is obscured by reporting practices in the police.

### *Underlying epistemologies*

Claims to objectivity can be challenged in more fundamental ways than technical ones. Problems with documentation and information sharing challenge the validity of strategic intelligence products. Whether and how intelligence is shaped by the context in which it is produced is a slightly different question, and one asked from a different epistemological point of view. How the police come to know what they know (Brodeur and Dupont, 2006) is morally relevant because what the police know about becomes the basis for their future interventions. In the field of intelligence studies, the impact of politics and culture is ascribed varying weight as a factor in the intelligence process, although '[f]ew would deny that the process of identifying threats is inextricably bound up with political choices and assumptions' (Scott and Jackson, 2004: 144).

The degree of self-reflection that goes into the intelligence process is one line that can be drawn between different epistemological positions relating to intelligence. According to Mythen, research in the risk analysis tradition is influenced by a realist epistemology and has largely focused on cognition rather than the social context and processes that intelligence, as risk management work, is part of (2014: 25). The risk theory position, by contrast, emphasizes social and contextual factors whereby riskiness is attributed to phenomena 'through social processes of attribution' (Douglas in Mythen, 2014: 40). Depending on the underlying epistemology, intelligence will be considered able to achieve objectivity to a greater or lesser extent. Views on this point will also influence whether non-police specialists, other civilians or other members of the relevant community get to play a part in deciding the strategic priorities of the police organisation. Presupposing a 'tacit police criminology' (Innes et al., 2005: 54), that colours the meaning that is ascribed to data, makes it less obvious that the police's interpretation should be unilaterally privileged. Mounting a critique against positivism, Gill and Phythian (2012: 34) say that an underlying theory 'plays a part



in determining what are relevant facts'. Innes and Sheptycki write: 'The point is that the meaning of intelligence does not inhere in the information itself but is dependent upon how it is interpreted and defined by its users, who are themselves situated in an organisational context' (2004: 10). Dearth (in Rathmell, 2002; 89) stresses that 'intelligence is an art relying on assessment and interpretation. Products are therefore subject to "political" influences'. The possible political influences may 'include organizational, bureaucratic, and party political pressures, as well as individual or institutional cognitive filters' (ibid.).

*Is overstating objectivity a moral issue?*

Drawing on Gill's discussion on 'rounding up the usual suspects', Innes and Sheptycki (2004: 20) discuss how 'the practices of intelligence-led policing may have the paradoxical impact of increasing systemic myopia by focusing police efforts on what is easily knowable at the expense of what is knowable with some difficulty'. Specialisation cuts both ways. It enables increasingly effective detection of type A crimes, but not – at the same time – of type B crimes. Recognising an objectively most harmful crime or disorder within the police's purview requires a step outside one's own frame of reference that we must assume is cognitively demanding – and expensive in terms of time and effort. What is familiar to the police in one context is more likely to be recognised than a phenomenon that requires different skills to discover.

We know that criminal acts take place in the world and that some of these are known to the police. The totality of crime remains unobserved. A central, underlying aim for criminal intelligence is to observe crime – that is, parts of the totality of criminal acts. It is a fundamental challenge for intelligence-led police organisations to discern how the criminality they observe relates to the unobserved total of all the crime that exists. This challenge is morally relevant when we want the aim of crime-fighting police work to be the reduction of harm to society caused by crime. A specialised analyst or decision-maker may have no way of knowing whether the type of crime they are studying and/or targeting, is the one that should be targeted, if the goal is to use finite resources to maximise the reduction of harm. The crime problem currently identified and targeted may not be the one that is

most harmful and/or cost-effective with regard to reducing harm. The 'usual suspect' isn't necessarily the most harmful possible suspect, and the systematic search for particular types of offences may result in selection bias (i.e. the discrepancy between the seriousness of the targeted crimes and their 'actual' seriousness in the light of the total, unobserved, mass of crimes). Providing expert advice to decision-makers, '[Intelligence] is not only the "load-bearing" pillar for pre-emptive and preventive actions ... . Intelligence may be legitimately regarded as bearing the weight of responsibility for creating decision superiority for policymakers considering any pre-emptive or preventive actions' (DeFalco in Rønn and Høffding, 2013: 710). The two cases analysed in this chapter represent different approaches to getting expert advice, and as I will argue, build on different epistemological foundations.

Intelligence-led policing has had far-reaching influence on contemporary policing practices. The National Intelligence Model (NIM) is a well-known example. Briefly, NIM can be characterised as a business model for the police, delivering services at all levels of crime and social disorder. Policing is prioritised and allocated by decision-makers on the basis of intelligence products covering the areas of local, cross-border and serious and organised crime (Tilley, 2008: 384). Implementation in all English and Welsh forces was completed by the end of 2004 (Kleiven, 2007). Through professionalisation of the intelligence function, shared vocabularies and frames of reference across forces, practice based on the model would provide the necessary knowledge-based support for decision-makers and cost-effective delivery of services (James, 2013; Kleiven, 2007).

### Competing views on intelligence-led policing

This chapter builds on a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) of two documents. The first is the Norwegian national 'Intelligence doctrine for the police' (Politidirektoratet, 2014). It was launched by the Police Directorate in 2014 and implementation is ongoing as of 2017. The doctrine is an authoritative document describing the premises and purposes of intelligence work in the police going forward. It aims to unify the terminology of the police across districts and national

agencies and contribute to overall knowledge-based management and resource allocation.

The second document is the strategic intelligence report 'Trends in crime 2016–2017: Challenges in the global city' from Oslo Police District (henceforth OPD). OPD has for many years produced annual trend reports, with an emphasis on descriptions of and projections about organised crime in the city. This report was published in 2015. In a departure from previous reports, organised crime was de-emphasized as against other types of crime and disorder, and the analysts aimed to develop methodology, and communicate with a wider audience of stakeholders, researchers and practitioners in the intelligence field.

These documents were chosen because they both present normatively the intelligence process and are contemporary at a time when intelligence was being professionalised and institutionalised in new ways as part of the ongoing Norwegian police reform. Each represents a distinct view of what intelligence is in a police context, and both are publicly available.

The documents were coded for stated purposes of intelligence, issues of objectivity, how uncertainty ought to be communicated, and how and whether predictions can be made. All quotations were translated from Norwegian by the author.

### *Case 1: The intelligence doctrine*

The Norwegian police force is currently undergoing reform and the role of intelligence is strongly emphasized. The aim is twofold: to reform structure and improve quality. Developing and professionalising the intelligence function is an important way to improve police performance and the fiscally responsible knowledge-based delivery of services with the resources available. The reform was inspired by NIM, and shared fundamental goals and assumptions about ILP. As well as a definition of the what, how, and why of intelligence, implementation of the doctrine entails changes in organisational structure. A national infrastructure for intelligence is being created in order to 'provide the requirements for making correct decisions at all levels of the operation' (Nærpolitireformen, 2015: 15). The doctrine was partly based on NATO's intelligence doctrine and shares the

terminology and concepts used by the Norwegian Police Security Service and the Norwegian Armed Forces. It is thus rooted in a national security tradition of intelligence.

The doctrine is brief: a 76-page normative work of policy and reference. It points to the utility of intelligence for situational awareness, decision support and strategic planning (including resource allocation) within crime prevention and investigation, emergency services, crisis management, and administrative law tasks. Although this definition is comprehensive, law enforcement and crisis management permeate the document, and dominate both the applied and explicit definitions of intelligence in the text: 'Intelligence focuses on the part of the basis for decision-making that is about persons, groups, and phenomena which create, or may create, crime, as well as unwanted or exceptional incidents' (Politidirektoratet, 2014: 12).

The audience for the doctrine is declared to be every employee of the Norwegian police. The doctrine distinguishes its definition of intelligence from a tactical and prosecution-oriented application found in organised crime units. Post-reform, the aim is for intelligence to be a management-led process in which intelligence products can be commissioned from dedicated units. It promotes a top-down model of the intelligence process wherein the intelligence cycle is initiated by a commission from a manager who needs decision support:

Management and prioritization is the first step in the intelligence process. Managers require decision support regarding challenges to fulfilling the police mandate. These needs can be made visible through earlier intelligence work, be derived from overarching priorities, or by the individual leader's wish for decision support. (Politidirektoratet, 2014: 27)

#### **Decision-making for the future: prediction and uncertainty**

According to the doctrine, the purpose of intelligence at tactical, operational and strategic levels is to minimise and mitigate uncertainty in decision-making. Analyses, or intelligence products, may be descriptive accounts of a phenomenon in its present state, although the greatest value of analysis lies in its potential for

predicting future development: ‘In order to provide the best decision support possible, analyses should be future-oriented [...] Predictions provide the decision-maker with the opportunity to plan for the future’ (Politidirektoratet, 2014: 37). Asking how and why an event or development happens may reveal causal ‘dynamics and driving forces’, making it more possible to make predictions about future development.

Uncertainty is the natural corollary of prediction. Decisions are made, by police chiefs and the rest of us, under some (usually unquantified!) degree of uncertainty. The intelligence doctrine promotes intelligence as a way for police to increase the chances that priorities and efforts are ‘right’, and not misguided, irrelevant or ill advised. Analyses contribute to this by giving an account of the bigger picture, and contextualising problems and possible interventions. The analysts’ confidence in their assessment has to be expressed in probabilistic terms to the recipient. The doctrine warns that intelligence products should not be thought to provide ‘certain knowledge’. As long as analyses are properly contextualised, however, they ‘will provide better insight and understanding, thereby reducing the degree of uncertainty surrounding decisions’ (Politidirektoratet, 2014: 18). The analyst’s judgment must be clearly stated in the finished product, and this assessment is expressed on a scale of five levels – see Table 13.1.

As a heuristic device, the scale is intended to facilitate communication between intelligence professionals and units. Its purpose is not ‘to minimize a complex reality’ (Politidirektoratet, 2014: 39).

Expressions of certainty	Synonyms	Confidence level	%
Very likely	We are convinced that...	Highly likely	<90 [sic]
Likely	We are confident that... We think that...	Likely	60-90
As likely as unlikely	It is possible that... 50/50 chance There are indications...	Even chance	40-60
Not very likely	It is unlikely that...	Unlikely	10-40
Unlikely	It is almost impossible... It is very unlikely...	Highly unlikely	>10 [sic]

Source: Politidirektoratet (2014: 39)

### **Striving for objectivity**

Objectivity and integrity are listed in the doctrine among 'Principles for intelligence':

Intelligence must be unprejudiced and objective. This demands integrity, which is a prerequisite for the quality and credibility of intelligence products. Intelligence products should as a rule rely on several sources. Uncertainty in assessments must be clearly stated. (Politidirektoratet, 2014: 19)

The normative definition of intelligence as objective implies that proper intelligence isn't prejudiced, and ideally is unsullied by influences that should have no bearing on the process or products. Triangulation of multiple sources and the use of multiple hypotheses in analysis, the doctrine suggests, are possible ways to improve objectivity. It is also improved if the analyst distinguishes between 'collected information and [their] own evaluations' (Politidirektoratet, 2014: 37). Analysts' previous experience, background and skills are factors that influence their assessments, and need to be controlled for in the analytic process. 'To overcome this and secure the greatest possible degree of objectivity and reliability, social scientific methods must be applied' (ibid.). This suggests that the analyst's subjectivity is viewed as inherently problematic, given the purposes of intelligence work. The doctrine mentions social scientific principles without further comment, although whether objectivity can be attained by either the social or the natural sciences is debatable (see Anderson, 2015; Innes et al., 2005). The doctrine's model of science speaks to its espousal of a standard model of intelligence. In this model, 'intelligence organisations provide objective assessment to decision-makers who may otherwise be (mis-)guided by reliance on their own judgements', and the model itself 'is derived from an image of an 'idealized policy expert', implicitly based on a science model' (Phythian, 2012: 199).

Interestingly, the doctrine does not problematise subjectivity either in connection with data collection or with managers' commissioning of intelligence (see the earlier quote stating that the intelligence cycle can be initiated by 'an individual leader's wish for decision support'). The analytical step is where the door opens to let subjectivity into the cycle. Collection, by contrast, is presented as non-interpretive, being carried out by 'operators' or 'sensors' (human and technical

collection agents). Examples given of operators are undercover detectives and informant handlers. Open sources are mentioned but not specified, while examples of other possible sources are police specific: interrogators, crime scene investigations, communications surveillance and databases. The terminology is technical and shared with national security intelligence services and the military. The terminology and the description of the intelligence process do not reveal that the topic is intelligence by and for *the police*.<sup>2</sup> 1 Issues of objectivity are not raised. While the validity of data from human sources ('HUMINT') can be compromised by planted disinformation, collected information is discussed as something 'out there', available for the taking by intelligence professionals. Ideally these data can be weighed and assessed in such a way that an objective analytical decision can be reached.

The doctrine thus defines the business of 'intelligence production' as an essentially technical enterprise. With proper methodology and sufficient integrity, intelligence products can be objective. Prior experience and professional proclivities are potential subjective drawbacks that must be countered. The analytical process is not perceived as fundamentally subjective or partially contingent on context, and analysis is presented as science rather than art (Innes et al., 2005; Sanders et al., 2015). Science, like the law, can be a source of 'police legitimacy and power' (Ericson AND Shearing, 1986: 132). While listing possibly problematic background influences on the analyst's judgment, the doctrine does not raise the wider issue of how the police come to have certain beliefs (see Brodeur and Dupont, 2006: 10) or how 'knowledge or "to know" is not feasible without a knowing subject' (Rønn, 2014: 357).

#### *Case 2: 'Trends in crime 2016–2017: Challenges in the global city'*

The Oslo PD report states several aims: to practically and proactively contribute to decision-making regarding prioritising crime types, give insight into the complexity of crime in the city, improve the methodological and epistemological aspects of strategic analysis, and bring practitioner and research knowledge together. Citing research showing that police knowledge production leaves

---

<sup>2</sup> However, the doctrine outlines the legal boundary between intelligence and investigation.

something to be desired, the analysts deem the time 'ripe for professional self-reflection' (Oslo politidistrikt, 2015: 15). Adding phenomenology to the analytical framework:

Crime is the result of agency and choice, but also of changes in the structural conditions that affect the situations where these decisions are made, and how a society chooses to understand and react to challenges with legal tools. (Oslo politidistrikt, 2015:7)

The report utilises a new analytical framework developed by the analysts. Previous trend reports built their analyses on a theoretical model with two axes, placing actors and crimes on the vertical and structural factors, such as migration patterns or ICT innovations, on the horizontal. The analysts argue that the two axes are ill suited to elucidate political and cultural aspects of crime and social disorder. These are important, given that analysis should 'identify and describe changes in what will be considered as serious crime, and probably call for police attention in the future' (Oslo politidistrikt, 2015: 22).

The new theoretical model analyses trends along three dimensions: the empirical, the cultural and the structural. Different data sources are required to shed light on each of these:

*The empirical dimension* encompasses 'events and practices that challenge expected social order', such as being punched or having your mobile stolen (Oslo politidistrikt, 2015: 21). Local, national and international crime statistics are used to investigate this, but the report also builds on victim surveys, living-condition research, published qualitative research and interviews with experts in the police. This axis relates to the material reality of crime.

*The cultural dimension* emphasizes the ways phenomena are understood, including the language we use to make sense of our experiences (Oslo politidistrikt, 2015: 21). Whether an unwanted experience is interpreted as a crime or not is considered culturally contingent and subject to change over time. The legal strategy may go in or out of favour regarding particular crime categories, impacting how, and whether, the police are called upon to deal with them. Cultural or phenomenological factors could change without concurrent changes in the



material world, and the separation of these dimensions treats them as potentially independent moving parts. Debates in social media and the press constitute the primary source.

*The structural dimension* is defined as ‘patterned relations between people that position them and give them identity relative to each other, their surroundings, and society’s resources’. Gender and labour market relations are examples of this (Oslo politidistrikt, 2015: 21). The data sources for this dimension are primarily published research literature.

### **Trends, prediction and uncertainty**

In an appendix to the report, the analysts note that earlier trend reports were based on projections of crime statistics into the future. This, they say, was done without reflection on, or reservations about, what factors have produced the current numbers and what might affect them in the future. Scenarios were also created, using identified actors’ intentions and interactions as a basis for attempting to predict the outcomes of these interactions in the future. The report criticises both approaches for implicitly holding the structural and cultural variables constant, limiting any opportunity to make qualified judgements and guesses about developments that may diverge from patterns already observed (Oslo politidistrikt, 2015: 109). This, the analysts argue, makes the concept of ‘trend’ in earlier reports appear too much like ‘fate’.

The report thus seeks to redefine a ‘trend’ as a space of possibilities. The three-dimensional model excludes the possibility of implicitly holding cultural and structural factors constant, while integrating considerations of, for example, social stratification and criminalisation into the standard model for strategic analysis. A trend in this sense, then, becomes a demarcation of social spaces where previously unseen conflicts and social problems may appear. Tension, unrest and inequalities in the social structures impact the space, influencing the extent and kind of ‘social turbulence’ (Oslo politidistrikt, 2015: 22) that appears.

Understanding trends in this way changes how predictions and uncertainty can be communicated. Probabilistic quantification (as prescribed by the intelligence doctrine) is inappropriate, as it over-emphasizes the empirical

dimension. The report moves from trying to predict how likely a given development is, to considering 'which possible areas of conflict and (parallel) spaces of possibilities for action may emerge' (Oslo politidistrikt, 2015:22).

The term 'uncertainty' itself is used a handful of times in the report, with reference to quantitative estimations, the validity of crime statistics, or the dark figure. In the assessment of potential future developments for the crime types discussed in the report, terms like 'can', 'will influence', 'will likely affect' and 'could be signs' are used. In accordance with their operationalisation of 'trend', the analysts outline thinkable (and reasonable?) future developments. The purpose of the report is to support strategic decision-making in the district, and it concludes with recommendations for areas to which attention should be directed in future. Based on their analysis, the foremost recommendation is to increase the district's awareness of technological developments, as the analysts judge these to fundamentally shift the conditions for committing a range of crimes (e.g. identity theft, fraud and the distribution of child abuse material).

### **Objectivity**

Naming social problems is never only about giving neutral description[s]

(Oslo politidistrikt, 2015: 20)

The term objectivity only appears once in the report, in the same paragraph as the quote above. The police organisation defines social problems, but also communicates 'how they see themselves, their present situation, and their role as police' (Oslo politidistrikt, 2015: 20). The police point of view is certainly important, but it is not the only point of view possible. The analysts say that they have made efforts not to take the city's majority population's interpretations of social problems as the only ones possible. Various views on what the important social problems, and crimes, are can be found along cultural, ethnic, gender- and age-based lines of conflict criss-crossing the city's population (Oslo politidistrikt, 2015: 20). The police interpretation of social problems is an influential one and helps shape how the communities they serve are policed. Traditional ways of categorising social problems, and dividing them up among various agencies,

impacts the police way of seeing the world as much as anyone else's; it affects 'what the police gaze sees and how reality is described' (ibid.).

Rather than abandoning hope that objective knowledge about the true nature of social problems can be found, the analysts appear to have developed a methodology that attempts to work with, rather than strain against, an acknowledgement that the police has a point of view that needs to be recognised as such. Analysing trends in crime, and giving recommendations for the future that are based on police sources and statistics, can hardly reveal what is culturally and politically contingent about crime and social disorder: 'The definition of an activity as "crime" is always, apart from its scientific merits, a "persuasive definition". It contains an element of propaganda' (Aubert, 1952: 266). The report brings current understandings and definitions of crime, as well as the police organisation itself, into the analysis as phenomena that require investigation.

## Discussion

The two cases described above represent two different underlying theories of intelligence: The intelligence doctrine aligns with the standard model of policing, building on realist premises and communicating a positivistic view of intelligence collection and analysis. In contrast, the methodology outlined in the Oslo PD strategic report incorporates phenomenology as a separate issue from material manifestations of crime or social disorder. Does it matter whether intelligence-led police work on one theory or the other?

### **Is a different point of view of any value?**

Does a different point of view help understand the world? The answer to this question would depend at least in part on the underlying theory of intelligence. If there were a model for intelligence production whose results were objective, it would be self-sufficient. Drawing on the philosophy of Thomas Nagel, Reiss and Sprenger (2016, section 2.1) write of 'a conception of objectivity that presupposes that there are two kinds of qualities: ones that vary with the perspective one has or takes, and ones that remain constant through changes of perspective'. If one seeks and finds objective knowledge about some phenomenon or thing, by identifying qualities that don't vary with perspective but remain the same, there is no point

adding more perspective-dependent information. If a model for police knowledge production could offer objective results, input from the outside would seem a lot less useful than would be the case if the underlying epistemology assumed that our knowledge of the world is of the perspective-dependent kind.

While the Oslo PD report includes the cultural – variable and contingent and phenomenological dimension, their model doesn't reject the possibility that knowledge that is not perspective-dependent exists (e.g. a fist hit a face), and could be characterised as critical realism: '[T]here is some "reality" in the world but the process of understanding it requires critical self-reflection on how we understand' (Gill and Phythian, 2012: 39). No data is collected without an underlying theory about the relevance of those data to the question or issue at hand, and '[i]nformation takes on meaning in a context' (Manning, 2001: 100).

Placing the two cases on a continuum, the intelligence doctrine is placed squarely at the standard model end of intelligence'. Relying largely on data from police-driven reporting and other controlled sources, it doesn't call the police perspective into question. According to Ratcliffe, analysts should promote 'an objective criminal intelligence assessment over less objective demands such as pressure from the media, political forces and single-issue community groups, all of whom are less inclined to recognise the complex mosaic of "the bigger picture"' (2009: 3). Rønn (2013), on the other hand, criticises the elevation of the expert analyst to being an objective arbitrator of facts: 'this attempt to manifest intelligence analysts as expert advisors of policing seems appealing because it induces integrity and autonomy into police organisations. However, the problem arises when what is measured is not easily defined and values are in dispute.' She proposes 'a participatory approach' for threat and harm assessment wherein 'all (or as many as possible) interests or parties in a particular challenge are voiced in order to obtain a variety of perspectives on the issue (Rønn, 2013: 60).

### **Policy-making without politics?**

I argue that strategic decision-making is policy-making and is akin to politics: In both cases analysed, strategic intelligence exists to provide knowledge for those whose job it is to prioritise possible courses of action, and to allocate resources

accordingly. The management model of intelligence-led policing privileges analysis as a source of knowledge for decision-making. It is thus an integral part of the performance management or governance of the organisation. Setting priorities and allocating resources amounts to policy-making.

The intelligence cycle outlined in the intelligence doctrine includes decision-making. According to the doctrine, insofar as influencing decision-makers is a goal and seen as part of the intelligence cycle, it seems reasonable to question the benefit of viewing the process as apolitical. While the police perspective on crime and social disorder is one among several, their perspective carries weight. Intelligence generates a body of knowledge about objects and phenomena that may threaten safety, security and social order. The body of knowledge built and articulated through intelligence, it could be argued, amounts to more than 'just another perspective' on the world. Police are positioned as experts who communicate knowledge about crime and disorder (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997) to other actors, including the government that funds the police.

ILP eschews reactive modes of policing<sup>3</sup> and promotes targeted and cost-effective interventions on crime problems. This requires the production of 'actionable' knowledge (Brodeur and Dupont, 2006). Questioning certainties is a moral imperative, they argue, because what the police believe shapes action:

It may make sense to divorce knowledge from validity for forms of 'knowledge' that do not generally entail harmful consequences if acted upon (everyday beliefs about what is 'real' or news in the media). This is not, however, the case with actionable information collected by the police or brought to its attention: police action is potentially harmful to individuals and may mean that they are deprived of their freedom. The requirement that police information or intelligence be thoroughly validated before being considered to be knowledge and acted upon is proportional to its potential for harm.

(Brodeur and Dupont, 2006: 22)

---

<sup>3</sup> E.g. responding to instances when '[S]omething-ought-not-to-be-happening-about-which-something-ought-to-be-done-NOW!' (Bittner in Klockars, 1985: 16-17).

While validation is appropriate and important, it isn't necessarily a principle that transfers easily to different kinds of knowledge or objects of inquiry. First, the object of police knowledge may not relate to a material or technical fact that can be definitely validated. As argued in the OPD report, cultural sensibilities about a phenomenon like, for example, hate crime may change in ways that are consequential for the police. Yet it is hard to imagine how a social fact like this can be validated. Second, actionable knowledge can be predictive as well as descriptive (Rathmell, 2002). Given the proactive ambition of ILP, actionable knowledge will consist of statistical predictions or qualitative judgments about the future. Even if predictions are made on the basis of validated, empirical observations (e.g. extrapolating trends into the future), prediction is notoriously hard and eludes validation, except that brought by the passage of time.

The potential for harm caused directly to individuals by strategic intelligence products is perhaps not easily perceived. Whereas flawed police work in intelligence or investigation may have tangible and serious adverse consequences for individuals, strategic intelligence runs the risk of causing a more macro type of harm. Police knowledge production is central to the governance of crime and disorder, and 'Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, "becomes true" (Foucault quoted in Mythen, 2014: 35). Good policing isn't all about not overstepping democratic and human rights ideals. It is also about striving to ensure that populations or areas aren't under-served because of prioritisation processes that fail to capture legitimate needs and demands for service. These are primarily value questions, though, and are inadequately dealt with behind a 'veil of objectivity' (Sanders et al., 2015: 723). Which is more deserving of police intervention: organised crime, which affects a few lives in a very serious way, or volume crime, which touches many people's lives, but not devastatingly?

### **The role of the police vis-à-vis communities of citizens**

Different ways of doing police work go in and out of fashion, and build on various ideologies and theories, and ILP can be usefully contrasted with community policing. While both aim to maintain order and investigate crimes, ILP seeks to improve efficiency, while community policing aims to improve legitimacy (Weisburd and Braga, 2006), 'To help reconcile freedom with security [...]' and 'To help create trust in communities' (Alderson in Tilley, 2008: 376). In ILP the scope of policing is narrowed to law enforcement: it 'has essentially been about doing the practical business of policing [...]. It is not about taking a critical line on what that business is' (Tilley, 2008: 383). With their law enforcement focus, ILP approaches risk overlooking issues that communities want the police to help deal with.

Kleiven studied the state of community intelligence in NIM, a model judged by her to be ILP 'in its purest form, meaning "rounding up the usual suspects"' (2007: 270). Community involvement was difficult within NIM, and arrests and surveillance were given priority above quality of life issues. The problem was partly that the definition and purpose of intelligence remained implicit: to aid detection (2007). An emphasis on crime and law enforcement challenges the wide range of legitimate concerns that citizens turn to the police for help with. However, intelligence-led policing practices could feasibly be adjusted: threat assessment could take a participatory approach (Rønn, 2013), community intelligence on a wide range of issues impinging on feelings of security could be collected from citizens not involved in crime (Innes, 2006; Innes et al., 2009), and citizens' reactions to police interventions could be systematically monitored and incorporated into police management systems (Lum and Nagin, 2017). These are examples of practices that could begin to overcome the problematic aspects of treating the police point of view as objective, pointed out in the OPD report.

The intelligence technologies and professions in policing have largely developed from organised crime units and security services. Within mainstream policing, intelligence has not been viewed or applied as a discipline in its own right (James, 2013). Lack of transparency has perhaps been accepted due to the seriousness of the problems handled by such units, and their relatively narrow scope compared with the broad 'low policing' (Brodeur, 2010) mandate.

Implementing ILP in 'volume policing' makes self-reflection on the process more pertinent.

### Conclusion

Although ILP perhaps presents itself more as tool than ideology, it is not devoid of perspective. Police organisations are active in drawing the map of the world seen from the point of view of crime specialists and communicating to others what the threats are and what can reasonably be expected to be done about them. Strategic intelligence conveys the police organisation's perception of threats and its categorisation of crime. This is not to say that the police are not, in fact, experts on crime, nor is it to claim that police organisations should not feed their analyses and experience into the knowledge base of, for example the political bodies that fund them. However, I argue that police organisations are not perfectly objective observers of where resources are 'best' spent. What the police believe shapes action (Brodeur and Dupont, 2006), and there is no view from 'behind the camera' (Nagel, 1989).

The underlying epistemology of intelligence theory is likely to impact how products are deemed actionable. Intelligence based on realist epistemology, like realist social science, promises detachment and impartiality in a way that self-reflexive theories of knowledge do not. From a governance perspective, realist intelligence may be more attractive, and more compatible with existing systems for performance management, audit and the measurement of results. Although both the cases analysed are normative texts, the intelligence doctrine is the more powerful one. Even though it leaves the development of methods to the intelligence professionals (e.g. Oslo PD analysts), I would argue that it builds on realist assumptions. Reflections on the impact of policing on the monitored environment, or phenomenological, perspective-dependent knowledge, is not discussed. Considering the ongoing reform that the intelligence doctrine is part of, Norwegian intelligence-led policing seems poised to start off with a realist epistemology.



## References

- Anderson, E. (2015) 'Feminist epistemology and philosophy of science', in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall). Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. Available: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/feminism-epistemology/> (accessed 7 June 2017).
- Aubert, V. (1952) 'White-collar crime and social structure', *American Journal of Sociology*, 58(3), 263–271.
- Braun, Virginia and Clarke, Victoria (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Brodeur, J.-P. (2010) *The Policing Web*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brodeur, J.-P. and Dupont, B. (2006) 'Knowledge workers or "knowledge" workers?', *Policing and Society*, 16(1), 7–26.
- Cope, N. (2004) 'Intelligence-led policing or policing-led intelligence? Integrating volume crime analysis into policing', *British Journal of Criminology*, 44(2), 188–203.
- Ericson, R. V. and Haggerty, K. D. (1997) *Policing the Risk Society*, Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.
- Ericson, R. V. and Shearing, C. D. (1986) 'The scientification of police work', in G. Böhme and N. Stehr (eds), *The Knowledge Society*, Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 129–159.
- Gill, P. and Phythian, M. (2012) *Intelligence in an Insecure World*, 2nd ed., Cambridge/ Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Gundhus, H. (2009) *For sikkerhets skyld: IKT, yrkeskulturer og kunnskapsarbeid i politiet* [To be on the safe side: ICT, occupational cultures and knowledge work in the police], Oslo: Unipub.
- Innes, M. (2006) 'Policing uncertainty: Countering terror through community intelligence and democratic policing', *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 605(1), 222–241.
- Innes, M. and Sheptycki, J. W. (2004) 'From detection to disruption: Intelligence and the changing logic of police crime control in the United Kingdom', *International Criminal Justice Review*, 14(1), 1–24.

- Innes, M., Fielding, N. and Cope, N. (2005) “The appliance of science?” The theory and practice of crime intelligence analysis’, *British Journal of Criminology*, 45(1), 39–57.
- Innes, M., Abbott, L., Lowe, T., and Roberts, C. (2009) ‘Seeing like a citizen: Field experiments in “community intelligence-led policing”’, *Police Practice and Research*, 10(2), 99–114.
- James, A. (2013) *Examining Intelligence-led Policing: Developments in Research, Policy and Practice*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Kleiven, M. E. (2007) ‘Where’s the intelligence in the National Intelligence Model?’, *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, 9(3), 257–273.
- Klockars, C. B. (1985) *The Idea of Police*, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Lum, C. and Koper, C. S. (2014) ‘Evidence-based policing’, in G. Bruinsma and D. Weisburd (eds), *Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, New York: Springer, 1426–1437.
- Lum, C. and Nagin, D. S. (2017) ‘Reinventing American policing’, *Crime and Justice*, 46(1). Available: <https://doi.org/10.1086/688462> (accessed 7 June 2017).
- Manning, P. K. (2001) ‘Technology’s ways: Information technology, crime analysis and the rationalizing of policing’, *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 1(1), 83–103.
- McDowell, D. (2008) *Strategic Intelligence: A Handbook for Practitioners, Managers, and Users*, Lanham: Scarecrow Press.
- Mythen, G. (2014) *Understanding the Risk Society: Crime, Security and Justice*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Nærpolitireformen (2015) Prop. 61 LS (2014–2015) [The proximity police reform]. Oslo: Justis og beredskapsdepartementet. Available: [www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/prop.-61-s-2014-2015/id2398784/](http://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/prop.-61-s-2014-2015/id2398784/) (accessed 7 June 2017).
- Nagel, T. (1989) *The View from Nowhere*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Oslo politidistrikt (2015) ‘Trender i kriminalitet 2016–2017: Utfordringer i den globale byen’ [Trends in crime 2016–2017: Challenges in the global

- city]. Available: [www.politi.no/vedlegg/lokale\\_vedlegg/oslo/Vedlegg\\_3454.pdf](http://www.politi.no/vedlegg/lokale_vedlegg/oslo/Vedlegg_3454.pdf) (accessed 7 June 2017).
- Phythian, M. (2012) 'Policing uncertainty: Intelligence, security and risk', *Intelligence and National Security*, 27(2), 187–205.
- Politidirektoratet (2014) 'Etterretningsdoktrine for politiet. Versjon 1.0' [Intelligence doctrine for the police. Version 1.0], POD publikasjon No. 11/2014. Available: [www.politi.no/vedlegg/lokale\\_vedlegg/politidirektoratet/Vedlegg\\_2722.pdf](http://www.politi.no/vedlegg/lokale_vedlegg/politidirektoratet/Vedlegg_2722.pdf) (accessed 7 June 2017).
- Ratcliffe, J. H. (2009) 'The structure of strategic thinking', in *Strategic Thinking in Criminal Intelligence*, 2nd ed., Sydney: Federation Press.
- Ratcliffe, J. H. (2016) *Intelligence-led Policing*, Abingdon/New York: Routledge.
- Rathmell, A. (2002) 'Towards postmodern intelligence', *Intelligence and National Security*, 17(3), 87–104.
- Reiss, J. and Sprenger, J. (2016) 'Scientific Objectivity', in E. N. Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer), Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. Retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2016/entries/scientific-objectivity/>
- Rønn, K. V. (2013) 'Democratizing strategic intelligence? On the feasibility of an objective, decision-making framework when assessing threats and harms of organized crime', *Policing*, 7(1), 53–62.
- Rønn, K. V. (2014) '(Mis-) informed decisions? On epistemic reasonability of intelligence claims', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence*, 27(2), 351–367.
- Rønn, K. V. and Høffding, S. (2013) 'The epistemic status of intelligence: An epistemological contribution to the understanding of intelligence', *Intelligence and National Security*, 28(5), 694–716.
- Scott, L. and Jackson, P. (2004) 'The study of intelligence in theory and practice', *Intelligence and National Security*, 19(2), 139–169.

- Sanders, C. B., Weston, C. and Schott, N. (2015) 'Police innovations, "secret squirrels" and accountability: Empirically studying intelligence-led policing in Canada', *British Journal of Criminology*, 55(4), 711-729.
- Sheptycki, J. (2004) 'Organizational pathologies in police intelligence systems: Some contributions to the lexicon of intelligence-led policing', *European Journal of Criminology*, 1(3), 307-332.
- Tilley, N. (2008) 'Modern approaches to policing: Community, problem-oriented and intelligence-led', in T. Newburn (ed.), *Handbook of Policing*, Cullompton, Devon: Willan Publishing.
- Weisburd, D. and Braga, A. A. (eds.) (2006) *Police Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weston, C. (2015) 'Hunting for "paper gangsters": An institutional analysis of intelligence-led policing in a Canadian context', PhD thesis, Wilfrid Laurier University. Available: <http://scholars.wlu.ca/etd/1758/>
- Whelan, C. (2016) 'Informal social networks within and between organisations: On the properties of interpersonal ties and trust', *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 39(1), 145-158.

# Machine Learning and the Police: Asking the Right Questions

Annette Vestby<sup>ID</sup>\*,\*\* and Jonas Vestby<sup>ID</sup>\*\*\*

**Abstract** How can we secure an accessible and open democratic debate about police use of predictive analytics when the technology itself is a specialized area of expertise? Police utilize technologies of prediction and automation where the underlying technology is often a machine learning (ML) model. The article argues that important issues concerning ML decision models can be unveiled without detailed knowledge about the learning algorithm, empowering non-ML experts and stakeholders in debates over if, and how to, include them, for example, in the form of predictive policing. Non-ML experts can, and should, review ML models. We provide a ‘toolbox’ of questions about three elements of a decision model that can be fruitfully scrutinized by non-ML experts: the learning data, the learning goal, and constructivism. Showing this room for fruitful criticism can empower non-ML experts and improve democratic accountability when using ML models in policing.

## Introduction

Police increasingly apply advances in computer science and statistics to attempt to predict events and automate work. In this, policing is like numerous other fields; machines are, for instance, used to count votes, drive cars, predict the weather, decide loan applications, and more. Predictive analytics support risk management across the field of security governance (Hälterlein and Ostermeier, 2018). London, Los Angeles, Munich, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Zürich are all examples of cities where police are using or have tested predictive policing software that aims to either predict where crimes are likely to take place, or who may be likely to commit a crime in the future. Machine

learning (ML) is a key technology underlying many of these applications.

While ML software may rationalize otherwise laborious data-processing tasks, such as sifting through a vast cache of documents disclosed in an investigation and categorizing them (Hughes, 2017), many are concerned that using algorithmic tools to support or to automate decision-making has the inadvertent effect of reducing accountability (Barocas and Selbst, 2016; Lum and Isaac, 2016; Kroll *et al.*, 2017; Wilson, 2017). Although police accountability was a concern before the advent of predictive analytics, the use of these techniques has raised the question of whether employing ML models render humans unable to account for

\*Annette Vestby, Doctoral researcher, Norwegian Police University College, Faculty of Law, The University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway. E-mail: anneve@phs.no

\*\*Department of Criminology and Sociology of Law, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway.

\*\*\*Jonas Vestby, Senior researcher, Peace Research Institute Oslo, Oslo, Norway.

decisions and how they were arrived at (Bennett Moses and Chan, 2016).

To hold police accountable for the fairness of their actions, and validity of their analyses, it is necessary to make processes of decision-making available for scrutiny. For example, transparency has been proposed as a solution to accountability issues (Pasquale, 2015; Bennett Moses and Chan, 2016; Mittelstadt *et al.*, 2016), as has the training of non-statisticians in statistics (Barocas and Selbst, 2016). Both suggestions presume that improved technical or statistical literacy is necessary to improve accountability when ML models<sup>1</sup> are applied in a socially consequential context such as policing. Although literacy in these fields is likely to benefit discussions among researchers, practitioners, policy-makers, and the wider public, it may not be a realistic goal. Furthermore, ML fluency alone is not enough to create morally acceptable and technically sound models (Holstein *et al.*, 2019). This article argues that technical literacy is often neither necessary nor sufficient to critically engage with the broad set of normative and technical questions raised by non-human agency in decision-making (cf. Hildebrandt, 2016a; cf. Zerilli, 2018). Such engagement is imperative to maintain and improve police accountability even in the context of new computational tools.

Besides formal accountability structures, a range of actors needs to deliberate and discuss implementation and use of ML software: internally in police organizations, between police professionals and in-house or commercial developers; stakeholders and affected populations with police and developers,

and so on. Most of these cannot be expected to be experts in ML. Similarly, specialists in ML are neither experts in the broad set of issues faced in policing, nor have access to the issues visible to, for example, affected populations and end users (Marda, 2018; Holstein *et al.*, 2019). Facts are not only often uncertain in the social world in which policing operates, but values are also contested. Conversations about what good policing looks like and what its goal ought to be must allow for democratic participation (cf. Rønn, 2013). How then can we reconcile the need for cross-disciplinary and open conversation about the use of ML models in policing with the fact that the technologies themselves remain a highly specialized area of expertise? (cf. Callon *et al.*, 2009)

The ways in which technology is perceived contribute to what modes of accountability and participation it is possible to imagine (Elish and Boyd, 2017). This article demonstrates that it is not necessary to know ML algorithms to be able to engage critically with many of the important questions regarding the validity and fairness of applied ML models in policing (and it is our assumption that many, if not most, of the important aspects of police practice can be subsumed under these concepts). More inclusive mechanisms of collective decision-making (Shapiro in Sklansky, 2008), for example, in the forms of stakeholder and civil society involvement (Cath, 2018) can enhance the fairness and validity of applied ML models in policing (cf. Holstein *et al.*, 2019). This article contributes a toolbox of clear and precise questions that can be used in fora where those with and without

<sup>1</sup> A 'model' is the system of weights that will be trained using learning data and the learning algorithm. The weights are numerical and are used to calculate predictions when given new data. They can be as simple as  $Y = bX$  (where  $b$  is the weight of input data feature  $X$ ), or as complex as millions of weights connected to each other through convolutional or recurrent networks and including functions that transform the output of these systems. Commonly throughout this article, we will use 'model' to mean the fully trained model, that is, the model after the weights have been updated by the learning data using the learning algorithm. The fully trained model (and not the learning algorithm) is what practitioners will be using to produce new predictions that can go into decision-making. The development of the structure of the model weights (for instance, the size and number of convolutional layers) is the domain of an ML expert and can have severe implications for the ability of the model to learn from new data. In this article, therefore, we will include such considerations into the term 'ML algorithm', although a more common use of this term would be to include only the algorithm for how to update the weights assigned to data.

ML expertise may discuss on even terms to advance accountability in police decision-making or improve on developing or implemented ML technology.

## Background

Predictive policing can be considered as a particular technique under the wider umbrella of intelligence-led policing (ILP) (Fyfe *et al.*, 2018). ILP emerged as a practical, managerial programme for basing decisions about police services on objective data analysis (Ratcliffe, 2016). Systematic collection and analysis of intelligence are intended to improve both the effectiveness of interventions against crime, providing more accurate targeting, and the cost efficiency (Innes and Sheptycki, 2004; Tilley, 2008). In predictive policing, as in ILP, analysis and decisions are centralized and rationalized; predictive policing '[emphasizes] the objective, scientific selection of strategies and tactics, and puts a premium on centralized, rationalized, bureaucratic decision-making.' (Sklansky, 2011, p. 4)

## Police accountability

Keeping police organizations and officials answerable and responsible is a key component of democratic policing, and has long been a concern of police researchers and practitioners (cf. Goldstein, 1960; Reiner, 2013). Control over individual and organizational police conduct has been sought in part through accountability systems by which police may be answerable to the public, a bureaucracy, or the law (Dowdle, 2017). In terms of the position of police forces within the democratic system, accountability can mean political control over the police, or cooperation between the police and government, whereby the police are expected

to provide explanations for decision-making (Chan, 1999, pp. 252–253).<sup>2</sup>

The application of predictive or automation software to support decision-making may fundamentally challenge the ability of officers and organizations to account for decision-making processes, as well as obfuscate responsibility in 'multi-agent structures' composed of humans and computational tools (Bennett Moses and Chan, 2016, p. 12). The opacity of 'algorithms'—applied predictive models or automated decision-making systems—remains at the core of the concerns about their use (Diakopoulos, 2015; Burrell, 2016; Mittelstadt *et al.*, 2016; Wilson, 2017). There is a worry that algorithms 'are opaque in the sense that if one is a recipient of the output of the algorithm (the classification decision), rarely does one have any concrete sense of how or why a particular classification has been arrived at from inputs' (Burrell, 2016, p. 1).

When one or more elements of the decision-making process are not comprehensible, either of the aforementioned conceptions of accountability is challenged. A statistical model, typically embedded in commercial, off-the-shelf software, works as a 'black box', where inputs (e.g. geospatial data on crime or demographics) are processed into output (e.g. a forecast or classification) through a calculation that remains invisible to the end-user. While arguably not essentially inscrutable (Kroll, 2018), the process is practically inscrutable to non-experts (cf. Latour, 1999), and can make the basis and rationale for decisions unclear. How can there be effective political control over decision-making if a key component in the shaping of the decision-making is essentially unknowable? How can the police give full account of their decisions if they rested, in part, on an analysis that they themselves are unable to explain?

<sup>2</sup> A distinction is made in the literature between a traditional, legalist concept of accountability and a more recent form focused on value-for-money and effectiveness. 'The new accountability' has shifted the accountability emphasis from a legalist or public-interest standard to one 'committed to fiscal restraint, efficiency, performance and the cutting back of the public sector' (Chan, 1999, p. 254). Or, '[a]ccountability has become accountancy' (Reiner, 2013, p. 1).

Transparency has been held up as part of the ideal solution to the challenges posed by ML to accountable decision-making (Pasquale, 2015; Bennett Moses and Chan, 2016; Hildebrandt, 2016b). To achieve transparency, information must be both accessible and comprehensible (Mittelstadt *et al.*, 2016, p. 6). This is difficult, however, when it comes to semi-autonomous learning machines. Some have thus argued that accountability may be possible without full transparency (e.g. the disclosure of source code) by designing accountability into the software (Kroll *et al.*, 2017). In addition to technical scrutiny and oversight, the application of algorithmic decision-making or algorithm-supported technology requires societal oversight, including public debate (Marda, 2018; Zweig *et al.*, 2018). Building on insights in this vein, we provide in this article an operationalization of these principles in the form of illuminating questions that lower the bar for entry into debates about the use of ML models in policing. Doing this, we effectively point to and demarcate a space where statistical or data science literacy is not a prerequisite to participation.<sup>3</sup>

## ML and policing

A widely cited understanding of learning in the context of artificial intelligence (AI) is that learning has occurred if ‘an agent<sup>4</sup> improves its performance on future tasks after making observations about the world’ (Russell and Norvig, 2010, p. 693). This understanding requires agreement as to what it means to become better at a task. Two judges of an agent’s performance

might disagree over how much the agent has learned. It follows that agreement on a judgement of how well any agent is learning depends on a prior agreement on how to evaluate performance. Some matters are easier to reach agreement about than others. There are, for instance, performance criteria that aptly capture what it means for vehicles to merge onto a highway (Knight, 2017) and we might not expect too much disagreement on this point. It is harder to reach agreement about more complex social issues such as how to balance performance measures of law enforcement against minor offences given that there are possible costs to citizen trust in police (cf. Lum and Nagin, 2017). Just as agreement that someone is learning is more likely if agreement has already been achieved as to what it means to become better, so agreement that ML is useful is more likely if everyone already agrees on the learning goal of the machine learner.

While machines have been able to learn from data for quite some time, in the last decades, machines have become able to learn and excel at cognitive tasks, such as labelling objects in pictures and identifying words from sound. One technological application of this has been automated number plate recognition (APNR). Mounted on police vehicles, APNR has facilitated police monitoring of offenders (Stanier, 2016). These developments in ML capability came through a combination of new learning algorithms (some developed from the 1950s and onwards), more computational power, and the development of code to use the machine computational power effectively to solve the learning problems (Schmidhuber, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Of course, such discussions need to be part of a wider, multifaceted accountability system, which it falls outside the scope of this article to address. The toolbox of questions offered in this article cannot, for example, reduce the opacity created by commercial secrecy (Burrell, 2016), which would require to make accountability actionable (Wright *et al.*, 2015), for example, by legislating a right to receive an explanation of machine decisions when requested (Norwegian Board of Technology, 2018), as well as having independent ML experts and non-ML-experts evaluate the outcomes of decisions made by machine models (Bennett Moses and Chan, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> We will use ‘agent’ in this text to mean something or someone that is capable of making decisions (if not actually acting them out in the world), such as a human individual, an organization, or a machine-learned model.



In addition to being able to learn cognitive tasks, another equally important ML development has been the invention of learning algorithms that can approximate complex functions and select important features without overfitting<sup>5</sup> (Hastie et al., 2009) the model to the training sample. These algorithmic improvements have made it possible for the machine to learn from datasets with thousands of labelled features so that it can pick out features (variables) and a functional form that is likely to perform well when predicting new samples. The implication is that the variables used in ML models are not necessarily chosen by human field experts, but rather by the ML algorithm itself, and that decisions are made less based on theories developed by humans, and more from a 'what works' perspective in terms of ML predictive power. Not surprisingly, these new abilities have made machine-learned models increasingly useful to agencies in decision-making and practice. ML models have been used, for example, by the UK Serious Fraud Office to identify legally privileged material among millions of disclosed documents in an investigation (Hughes, 2017), and by the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority to predict high-risk workplaces to be inspected by the agency (Øyvann, 2017).

When discussing whether to use ML in police decision-making, it is important to compare ML, not to ideal decision-making, but to human decision-making (Bennett Moses and Chan, 2016, p. 7). Machines reach decisions in suboptimal environments based on inconclusive, inscrutable, and misguided evidence (Mittelstadt *et al.*, 2016). Whenever decision-making leads to unfair outcomes, processes may be hard to trace and it is 'rarely straightforward to identify who should be held responsible for the harm caused' (Mittelstadt *et al.*, 2016, p. 5). This is, however, a fundamental problem of decision-making *per se*, and not unique

to decisions made or supported by machines (Zerilli *et al.*, 2018).

Humans excel at learning from cognitive data. Through hearing sounds, watching faces, and observing our surroundings, we distinguish syllables, words, sentences, and meaning. We can connect the dots between a smile, a sarcastic tone, the literal meaning of a sentence, and what the speaker intended to say. We can read books and news and talk to people, and from these activities, draw conclusions such as 'Democratic governance cannot allow police unfettered authority to achieve security; rather, police must do so in a manner that not only is within legal bounds but also is acceptable to citizens.' (Lum and Nagin, 2017, p. 361). Computers still do not make as comprehensive use of cognitive data as humans do. And whereas humans are always collecting (if not learning from) the whole sensory range of their experiences, only specific data (e.g. images/sound/video of a certain kind) are commonly collected for the purpose of training computers.

An important difference between machine and human learning is that ML is based on known algorithms. The Merriam-Webster definition of algorithm is 'a procedure for solving a mathematical problem . . . in a finite number of steps that frequently involves repetition of an operation' (Algorithm, n.d.). Humans, of course, also have procedures to solve problems in a finite number of steps and that frequently involve repetition of an operation. However, even the person using them may not always know or understand these procedures.

Since we both know the algorithms machines use (we write them down in programming languages), and can control the data by which they have learned (we can reset their biases at any time, feed particular training data to the model, or stop the learning process at any time), the learning and

<sup>5</sup> A model is overfit when it adjusts too much to quirks of the learning sample, and thus ends up performing worse on new data.

subsequent decisions are, in principle, more transparent in the case of machines than they are for humans (Zerilli *et al.*, 2018).<sup>6</sup> After all, we have not written the code for human learning, and we have little control over the input data that humans have used in their training. There is thus some irony in that one of the main critiques of the use of ML in decision-making is that machine decisions are opaque.

One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that it can be relatively straightforward to ask humans how they came to their decisions. It would be reasonable to expect a police chief to explain the facts, interpretations, and priorities behind her/his decision-making.<sup>7</sup> It can be much more difficult to produce similar explanations for why a machine model ended up with its biases;<sup>8</sup> in many cases, it can even be difficult to describe these biases in straightforward language. The learning opacity of machines may, in principle, be lower than it is for humans, but in practice, it is higher. As humans, we are better equipped to inquire of other humans how they reached their conclusions than we are to interrogate a machine model.

This opacity, although understandable, is worrisome because it could entail ‘de-responsibilisation’ of human actors in mixed networks of human and machine actors (Mittelstadt *et al.*, 2016, p. 12). While discriminatory policing practices have also arisen from purely human practices, ‘[...], filtering this decision-making process through sophisticated software that few people understand lends unwarranted legitimacy to biased policing strategies’ (Lum and Isaac, 2016, p. 19). In other words, the machine’s output may

appear ‘de-subjectified’ (Završnik, 2017) and thus be interpreted by end-users as more objective than it actually is (cf. Elish and Boyd, 2017; Waardenburg *et al.*, 2018).

However, we believe that the opacity problem should not be exaggerated, and that it is necessary to distinguish between various sources of complexity, impenetrability, and even obfuscation (cf. Burrell, 2016). We disagree that ML algorithms are ‘inherently opaque’ (Hildebrandt, 2016b, p. 57), and furthermore, we argue that common variations on ‘the fallacy of inscrutability’ (Kroll, 2018) belie the potential for empowerment of non-specialists in debates over the use of ML technologies.

In fact, many relevant normative and factual judgements that comprise decisions by humans often do not depend on knowing or understanding the exact interplay of data and algorithm behind the decision (c.f. ‘System 1’ in Kahneman, 2011). Moreover, we are perfectly able to understand human behaviour without consideration of the inner workings of the neural network that is our brain (Dennett, 1995; Zerilli *et al.*, 2018). A useful starting point to begin to understand an agent’s actions is to consider the previous experiences of the agent, what the agent wishes to accomplish, and what consequences the agent anticipates from its actions. We suggest that it can be helpful to structure a discussion between ML experts and non-ML experts around three elements that mirror this type of inspection: (1) the type of data we use to learn; (2) the learning goal we set; and (3) how later actions affect subsequent training data. These are elements that those who are not ML experts can understand and usefully discuss with ML experts,

<sup>6</sup> The blog posts of Andrej Karpathy (the director of AI at Tesla) contain excellent illustrations and examples of these points (<http://karpathy.github.io/>). The posts guide the reader through central algorithms and provide their source code. Karpathy has even written a JavaScript implementation of convolutional neural networks (<https://cs.stanford.edu/people/karpathy/convnetjs/>), so the reader can follow the training (‘learning’) process in real time on a web browser.

<sup>7</sup> For computers, we have not focused much on building software that provides post hoc explanations for a given machine decision in a way that any reasonable person would be able to comprehend. While the result of such an explanation in principle would be more transparent, the communication tools needed are not (yet) there (DARPA, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> Here, ‘bias’ just means the values of the weights in the model. These values will lead the model to produce biased results, preferably towards producing outcomes that we deem as proper given the learning task.

and that do not rely on the algorithm used for learning.<sup>9,10</sup>

A useful assumption for non-ML experts when discussing ML models is to assume that the learning algorithm chosen by the ML expert is optimal for achieving the established goal with the given data. While this assumption is many times wrong, it has the benefit of making much of the complexity of ML, such as knowing how recurrent neural networks function, irrelevant. We believe this assumption can lower the bar for non-experts for entry into a discussion with ML experts and facilitate a fruitful debate.

We do not imply that ML experts should be left to their own devices when it comes to designing the optimal learning algorithm for a given problem. Rather, the institutions that can ensure optimal learning algorithms, such as competitive environments and peer review, are clearly important. Our point is to delineate those aspects of the development of ML decision-making that can be the domain of all, experts and non-experts alike, and identify those aspects that require ML knowledge.

Optimal in this context is not a normative term, and there is a key distinction to be drawn between the concepts optimal and good. Computation and statistics offer the ability to test in a cost-effective way a vast number of possible models. For example, we can use ML algorithms to run a large number of tests to decide which parameters are important predictors of individual recidivism (cf. Berk and Bleich, 2013). The goal of an ML algorithm is to identify the optimal parameters for reaching the defined learning goal, disregarding such things as ethical concerns pertinent to policing unless these are explicitly operationalized and programmed (Norwegian Board of Technology, 2018, p. 12).

Optimization means choosing the parameters that make the most accurate predictions given the data and learning used, so that the best performance possible is achieved within that given frame. A suboptimal algorithm will result in poor learning, whatever the machine is set to learn—whether it is good or bad, morally speaking. Bad decisions can arise even assuming an optimal learning algorithm.

In a survey of ML practitioners about how to improve fairness in their systems, the most commonly reported strategy was to collect more training data, and respondents struggled to anticipate which subpopulations and forms of unfairness they needed to consider (Holstein *et al.*, 2019). Both findings point to the benefit of lowering the bar for democratic participation in the development and auditing of machine-learned models. It is crucial to realize that ML specialists are not necessarily the experts in answering or having knowledge about issues of fairness or of how models will be perceived, used, and work in an applied context. Rather, these issues can be perceived by experts and stakeholders in domains other than ML.<sup>11</sup> Machine-aided decision-making, as in the case of human decision-making overall, benefits in the end when people can discuss these issues in open, democratic forums (cf. Elster, 1998; Habermas, 2000).

### Asking about fairness and validity: a toolbox

As a society we have an interest in crime prevention and efficient policing, but we also have an interest in ensuring that law enforcement strategies, including deployment and surveillance

<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the algorithms in ML are used to learn some goal from data. Furthermore, the performance of machine-learned models is not generally measured in the beauty or structure of the algorithm, but in how well the model perform on the learning task for a particular set of data (Hastie *et al.*, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> The terms 'interpretable' and 'explainable' AI are used in the wider AI field and literature. Work to increase interpretability and understanding of ML models (i.e. procedures that (unlike the suggestion put forward by us in this article) depend on the ML algorithm used) is underway in a field of research called 'explainable AI' (DARPA, 2016).

<sup>11</sup> One responder replied 'You'll know if there's fairness issues if someone raises hell online' (Holstein, *et al.*, 2019, p. 7).

decisions, are effective, fair, and just. This requires understanding, testing, and governance (Bennett Moses and Chan, 2016, p. 14).

Broadly speaking, decisions can be criticized with respect to two different issues: the validity<sup>12</sup> of the decision and the fairness of the decision. To consider the validity of the model, we ask: did the decision lead to the intended result? To evaluate validity, a reviewer would need to consider whether the learning model reflects actual performance based on the agreed-upon performance metric, or whether the performance metric itself measures what we intended to measure.<sup>13</sup> Since learning goals can be quite abstract and contested (e.g. the goal of reducing crime), the scope of validity issues is likely to overlap with domains outside those of programmers and statisticians. However, even quite narrow issues, such as selection bias in the training data, may be easier for non-ML experts to expose who may know, for instance, how data are collected. As an example of the latter, Sheptycki (2004) found that information was more likely to be recorded by police officers if it was considered by them as useful to successfully prosecute a crime.

Reviewing the fairness of a decision resulting from either a human or a machine model, involves asking whether the intended result, and the means to achieve it, were good? Evaluating fairness is a normative endeavour. It entails, in this context, to consider if the learning goal, the process that improves learning, and the means for achieving learning success, are determined in a democratically legitimate way. Ensuring the possibility of an

open and democratic debate is both a requirement as well as part of the solution to the fairness issue.

What follows is a toolbox of questions that non-experts can ask creators of machine-learned models with the expectation of receiving understandable answers. Replies in the form of 'however, we have accounted for this in our model' require modelling decisions that could be stated explicitly, and these decisions need to be known caveats for everyone using the model. We have divided the toolbox into sections with questions about data, about learning, and about constructivism. We discuss both validity and fairness issues in each section. The goal of the toolbox is to empower non-ML experts in debates with ML experts.

### Asking questions about the data

Some crimes are more likely than others to be recorded by the police, and only recorded crimes become crime data. Thus, crime statistics have passed through a process of selection. The first stage in the process is legislative; this is when certain acts are criminalized. A further selection occurs because some crimes are not reported or discovered by the public and police; in addition, reporting practices may vary with crime type and district. Some are unlikely to be discovered let alone reported if not for systems for inspection or mandated reporting. Economic crime is an example of the latter category; an example is tax avoidance, where reporting depends on audits and inspections by designated agencies (Korsell, 2015), and the finance industry can mobilize secrecy to resist financial crime surveillance (Pasquale, 2015, 2017).

Practices, methods, and emphases of the police, and the other agencies, businesses, and citizens that

<sup>12</sup> In the applied ML context that we are mostly thinking of in this article, where learned models are used to make judgments in new cases, we are concerned about the external validity of the model. Of course, external validity depends on internal validity, and many of the issues we discuss in this section would affect internal validity as well as external.

<sup>13</sup> One aspect of internal validity is whether the model reflects causal mechanisms. In most settings, a machine-learned model would be answering a much more pragmatic question (such as, are we becoming better at doing a specific task, as defined by the learning goal and the data used to train the agent and test its performance?). There is no guarantee that the model would learn actual causal mechanisms. There exist some arguments for the connection between learning and causality, such as the probably approximately correct theorem (Valiant, 1984). However, in many ML applications, we are more concerned with what works than with why it works. ML can be used to probe hypotheses about causal effects, however (Rubin, 1974).

report to the police thus shape the composition of the data. Thus, it is not straightforward to establish the relationship between these known crimes and the 'actual' extent and distribution of crimes (i.e. the dark figure; see e.g. Reiner, 2016, p. 108). However, crimes that control agencies focus on and that are not generally reported by anyone else are particularly vulnerable to over-representation in the data in relation to their actual distribution in the universe of crime.

Problematic as well as desirable policing practices inscribe themselves on police-generated data. A study by the Human Rights Data Analysis Group provides an illustrative example (Lum and Isaac, 2016). The study modelled predictive policing forecasts using the published algorithm for PredPol (Mohler *et al.*, 2015) and police data on drug policing in Oakland, CA, and then compared the forecasts with patterns of drug use estimated from national survey data on drug use and health. It found that using the PredPol algorithm, 'black people would be targeted by predictive policing at roughly twice the rate of whites', despite estimates showing roughly equal levels of drug use (Lum and Isaac, 2016, p. 18). Low-income people and non-Whites other than Blacks would also be disproportionately targeted, that is, over-policed.

This example shows how input data used to train machines and humans alike can lead to invalid models and unfair practice. In this case, the invalid model or belief is that that targeting Black residential areas is a reasonable way to conduct drug policing, despite the fact that patterns of drug use suggest that Black residential areas should not have higher incidences of drug use. The result is unfair police practice, whereby Black citizens and neighbourhoods are policed more than Whites despite the lack of an objective basis in racial patterns of drug offence.

Those without expertise in ML can ask the following about data:

- what input data are used? What set has been used to train the model? What set is used to test performance? When and where were the data collected?
- are there named variables? If so, what are they and which contribute most to the decisions? How are these named variables operationalized and measured?
- does input data capture features (directly or indirectly) that should not be relevant to the decision? For example, are any input features correlated with gender in such a way that model decisions are different if you are male or female?
- is the data representative of the field that the model decisions affect? For example, has the model been tested in the setting where it is applied? What are the most obvious differences between the training setting and the current setting? Do we need to make any adjustments for particular groups or decisions? and
- how are the data collected? For example, were they collected with the intention of being used for these kinds of decisions? Do we know of any selection biases (either by design or due to practical issues) with regard to the data collection? Who collects the data?

### Asking questions about learning

All learning has a goal. In ML models, goals can be more or less explicit. Regardless of whether the learning is supervised, unsupervised, or reinforced,<sup>14</sup> it is possible and meaningful to ask what the overarching learning goal is and what specific

<sup>14</sup> In supervised learning, the correct response for any given input is provided so that the learning algorithm can attempt to reduce the error given this solution. Unsupervised learning uses rules, like similarity, to cluster observations. Here, the learning goal might be to cluster what we deem as relevant observations together. Lastly, in reinforcement learning, rewards and punishments for specific actions are provided to induce specific behaviour in the actor using the model.

rule or measurement is being used as the reference for determining if a model is learning.

As discussed earlier, it is easier to reach agreement on whether an agent is learning when agreement has already been established regarding the larger issue of how to evaluate performance. However, this is often not the case with social issues. Most social issues are complex; values are often in dispute and the facts may be uncertain. This complicates police decision-making. For example, given that resources are finite, should the police maximize their response to minor offences, or focus efforts at crime prevention? (cf. Lum and Nagin, 2017). Can police analysts objectively adjudicate this by measuring the harm (a value concept) caused or prevented (Rønn, 2013), and define where resources might ‘do “the most good”’ in a way that all agree with? (Sklansky, 2008, p. 122)

ML models optimize against particular learning goals that must be operationalized and measured. Since some types of outcomes are easier to measure than others, there is an inherent bias in ML models for choosing the learning goals that are easiest to measure.<sup>15</sup> Outcomes that have already been measured, such as the location of arrests, thus become more attractive than unmeasured outcomes, such as citizen response to police tactics (Lum and Nagin, 2017). When inherent bias is transferred from the machine models into actual decision-making, the consequences can be wide-ranging as the HRDAG study shows (Lum and Isaac, 2016).

When a learning goal, or what constitutes good performance of that goal, is disputed, and when learning goals are operationalized differently than what we ideally would want, predictions from ML models must be applied with caution, if at all. An extreme example can be found in Wu and Zhang (2016) who claim that their ML model can automatically identify criminals from facial characteristics only, and ‘empirically establish the validity of

automated face-induced inference on criminality, despite the historical controversy surrounding this line of enquiry’ (Wu and Zhang, 2016, p. 1). Here, the model does not separate criminals from non-criminals, but rather photos of convicts and suspects from a set of ID photos taken from the Internet. The authors themselves agree with critics who argue that a difference in socio-economic status in the two sets could possibly explain why the model manages to separate the sets (Wu and Zhang, 2016, p.3). If we, for the sake of argument, bypass the looming question of the purpose and value of automatic recognition of ‘criminals’, that is, the learning goal, it should be obvious that it would be highly problematic to use a model purporting to identify criminals that may in fact simply identify poverty.

Two clear concerns when thinking about employing an ML model in decision-making processes are (1) whether the operationalized goal optimized against in the ML model is delivering good performance also when measured against a more general and overarching learning goal and (2) whether the operationalized goal produces unwanted side effects. Humans commonly disagree on how best to solve social issues, and institutions such as political parties, academia, and the media, may facilitate discussion that is needed to reach agreement. Within these discussions, narrow arguments about the performance of ML models should be regarded as arguments about efficiency, not efficacy.

A further concern is that the ML model optimizes against many, but not all, aspects of the overarching learning goal(s). In developing a machine model and measuring the data that goes into learning, some aspects can be lost. By openly discussing the purpose of the agent, and what the overarching learning goals should be, it is possible to identify the elements that the ML model is not optimizing against and take appropriate action. When the

<sup>15</sup> A similar dynamic is discussed in relation to management by output measurement in the public sector. Smith terms a potential consequence ‘tunnel vision’, which ‘can be defined as an emphasis on phenomena that are quantified in the performance measurement scheme at the cost of unquantified aspects of performance.’ (1995, p. 284)

ML model only optimizes against some of the established goals, we should be wary about letting the ML model decide actions directly.

Those without expertise in ML can ask:

- what is the overarching learning goal? For example, what would we, as a society, like to accomplish by making these decisions?
- what specific rule(s) or measurement(s) are used as the reference for whether a model is learning? For example, what is the dependent variable(s)? What kind of similarity rule is being used? What kinds of actions are rewarded or punished? How is the rule operationalized and measured?
- is there agreement on the learning goal?
- is the specific learning goal a complete description of what the agent is supposed to achieve? and
- will optimizing action or decision-making against this learning goal take effort away from, or actively work against, other goals?

### Asking questions about constructivism

Our models, be they machine or mental, affect the world when we use them to make decisions. In policing, making some sort of wanted impact is of course the point. Predictive analyses are meant to guide action, ‘to identify likely targets for police intervention’ (Perry *et al.*, 2013, p. xiii). Decisions, actions, analyses, policies, and local and historical contexts contribute to present day policing concepts and practices. Unlike in the field of physics, say, our policing decisions affect social systems. We use the term constructivism to denote this insight.

The constructivist fact about the social world raises three main concerns for ML in decision-making. First, data can become outdated or otherwise fail to generalize; as a result, they will no longer provide good guidance for decision-making. Secondly, past decisions can reinforce unwanted or erroneous patterns used in the training of models. Thirdly, a narrow focus on predictive

performance within the bounds of the learning goal can make more difficult arguing for decisions intended to break or change social patterns.

The first concern mainly regards validity. ML algorithms can be used to make models that are optimized for a variety of settings. However, making models that fit particular settings can be difficult and time-consuming. In practice, therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the use of data that is unfit as a basis for generalization is widespread. Thus, input from outside the ML domain of expertise is important, in particular to make clear what data the model is optimizing against, and to demand that machine-learned models be shown to perform well in the particular settings in which they are implemented.

ML models identify patterns in data. When police implement ML models with mistaken causal assumptions, such as the ones exposed in the HRDAG study, they will reinforce the erroneous correlational patterns that underlie the model. These can then be picked up by later generation ML models and used to improve performance on their set learning task. If we continue to learn using models based on the same incorrect assumptions, and to rely on data that are reinforcing the correlational patterns, then we reproduce the same error (Zhang *et al.*, 2018).

Predictability is desirable because it commonly promises great cost-efficiency. The emphasis on resource efficiency is a selling point for predictive policing; it moves ‘law enforcement from focusing on what happened to focusing on what will happen and how to effectively deploy resources in front of crime, thereby changing outcomes.’ (Beck and McCue, 2009, p. 1). However, a sole emphasis on predictability can lead to choosing the learning goals that are easiest to predict, or to relying on correlational patterns that may have dubious causal merit to predict more accurately.

The validity issues discussed in the previous paragraphs have strong implications for fairness and the democratic quality of policing. Policing distributes benefits to and burdens on citizens, and impacts the

distribution of security among individuals and communities (Brodeur, 2010, pp. 135–136).

The democratic quality of policing is among its important moral dimensions. At a minimum, police action must be legal. But a commitment to democracy places demands on the police above this minimal threshold. For instance, the anti-inegalitarian view of democracy in the work of Ian Shapiro, entails ‘ongoing opposition to patterns of unjustifiable hierarchy (Sklansky, 2008, p. 109). Maximizing the democratic quality of policing means ‘making it as effective as possible in combating unjustified patterns of private domination and unthreatening as possible as a tool of official domination.’ (Sklansky, 2008, p. 109). To focus law enforcement disproportionately on disadvantaged groups embeds domination, not least through the reinforcing effect of the data stream going back into the police organization. A consequence of constructivism is, therefore, that we cannot ignore causality or ethics and rely solely on predictive performance in decision-making.

Interestingly, the possible pitfalls related to pattern reproduction also point to where ML models can improve on human learning and practice. Algorithmic tools can detect discrimination (Mittelstadt *et al.*, 2016, p. 15), but in contrast to individuals and organizations, they can be used to actively withhold from analysis dubious relationships between, for example, ethnicity and crime or ZIP code. While there is reason to be sceptical of purely technical solutions to protect, for example, a complex social concept such as ‘fairness’ (Lipton and Steinhardt, 2018), however, the work done to identify discriminatory practices and mitigate unfairness in and through algorithmic tools also represents opportunities to improve on human decision-making (Zerilli, 2018; Zhang, *et al.*, 2018; Holstein *et al.*, 2019).

Those without expertise in ML can ask:

- can the machine decision, if acted upon, affect later training data?
- does the machine model represent a causal relationship, or is it a pragmatic solution?

- does the model rely on correlations that likely only improve performance due to historical practices? Are these historical practices morally contested? and
- would we like to break or change certain observable patterns in society? If so, what potential consequences would this change involve for the machine model?

## Conclusion

As police departments seek to prevent both harm and spend resources frugally, they are increasingly adopting proactive policies and techniques. However, the use of predictive tools requires careful consideration, and we have argued that ML expertise is not necessary to participate in debates over many important facts and normative issues. Questions about the purpose of technology or police are both moral and political ones (cf. Turkle, 2004). Our goal is to empower non-technical experts and stakeholders and encourage their participation in debates over applied ML in policing, as well as in processes of ML model development. Several arguments have been made that such participation is not only technically and morally necessary (Cath, 2018; Holstein *et al.*, 2019; cf. Rønn, 2013) but also feasible (cf. Zerilli, 2018). This article contributes a toolbox of questions that in effect operationalizes such calls and provides context that illustrates the utility and purpose of asking them in the police and related crime control domains. Asking about the data, the learning goal, and how model decisions affect later data are three concrete lines of inquiry that non-experts can understand, and should discuss.

## Acknowledgments

The authors are grateful to all who have provided valuable feedback on this article, in particular the two anonymous reviewers, Helene O.I. Gundhus and the New Trends in Modern Policing project



group, Lynn P. Nygaard, and the Young Nordic Police Research Network.

## Funding

This work is funded by the European Research Council, Grant No. 648291, the Norwegian Research Council Grant No. 238170, and the Science Studies Colloquium Series at the University of Oslo.

## References

- Algorithm (n.d.). *Merriam-Webster Online*. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/algorithm> (accessed 16 October 2018).
- Barocas, S. and Selbst, A. D. (2016). 'Big Data's Disparate Impact'. *California Law Review* **104**: 671–732.
- Beck, C. and McCue, C. (2009). 'Predictive Policing: What Can we Learn from Wal-Mart and Amazon about Fighting Crime in a Recession?'. *Police Chief* **76** (11): 18–24.
- Bennett Moses, L. and Chan, J. (2016). 'Algorithmic Prediction in Policing: Assumptions, Evaluation, and Accountability'. *Policing and Society* **28** (7): 1–17.
- Berk, R. A. and Bleich, J. (2013). 'Statistical Procedures for Forecasting Criminal Behavior: A Comparative Assessment'. *Criminology & Public Policy* **12**(3): 513–544.
- Brodeur, J. P. (2010). *The Policing Web*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Burrell, J. (2016). 'How the Machine "Thinks": Understanding Opacity in Machine Learning Algorithms'. *Big Data & Society* **3**(1): 1–12.
- Callon, M., Lascoumes, P. and Barthe, Y. (2009). *Acting in an Uncertain World: An Essay on Technical Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Cath, C. (2018). 'Governing Artificial Intelligence: Ethical, Legal and Technical Opportunities and Challenges'. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* **376**(2133): 20180080.
- Chan, J. B. (1999). 'Governing Police Practice: Limits of the New Accountability'. *The British Journal of Sociology* **50**(2): 251–270.
- DARPA (2016). *Broad Agency Announcement. Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI)*. <https://www.darpa.mil/attachments/DARPA-BAA-16-53.pdf> (accessed 31 March 2019).
- Dennett, D. (1995). *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Diakopoulos, N. (2015). 'Algorithmic Accountability: Journalistic Investigation of Computational Power Structures'. *Digital Journalism* **3**(3): 398–415.
- Dowdle, M. W. (2017). 'Public Accountability: Conceptual, Historical and Epistemic Mappings'. In Drahos, P. (ed), *Regulatory Theory: Foundations and Applications*. Canberra: ANU Press.
- Elish, M. C. and Boyd, D. (2017). 'Situating Methods in the Magic of Big Data and AI'. *Communication Monographs* **85**(1): 57–80.
- Elster, J. (1998). *Deliberative Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fyfe, N., Gundhus, H. O. I. and Rønn, K. V. (eds) (2018). *Moral Issues in Intelligence-Led Policing*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Goldstein, J. (1960). 'Police Discretion Not to Invoke the Criminal Process: Low-Visibility Decisions in the Administration of Justice'. *The Yale Law Journal* **69**(4): 543–594.
- Habermas, J. (2000). *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hälterlein, J. and Ostermeier, L. (2018). 'Special Issue: Predictive Security Technologies'. *European Journal for Security Research* **3**(2): 91–94.
- Hastie, T., Tibshirani, R. and Friedman, J. (2009). *The Elements of Statistical Learning*. New York: Springer.
- Hildebrandt, M. (2016a). 'New Animism in Policing: Re-animating the Rule of Law?'. In Bradford, B., Loader, I., Jauregui, B. and Steinberg, J. (eds), *The Sage Handbook of Global Policing*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage, pp. 406–428.
- Hildebrandt, M. (2016b). 'The New Imbroglia. Living with Machine Algorithms'. In Janssens, L. (ed), *The Art of Ethics in the Information Society*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 55–60.
- Holstein, K., Vaughan, J. W., Daumé H. III, Dudík, M. and Wallach, H. (2019). 'Improving Fairness in Machine Learning Systems: What Do Industry Practitioners Need?' ArXiv: 1812.05239 [Cs]. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3290605.3300830> (accessed 20 March 2019).
- Hughes, D. (2017). 'Robot Investigators "Could Be Used to Examine Documents in Criminal Cases'. *The Independent* (14 December 2017). <https://www.independent.co.uk> (accessed 20 November 2018).
- Innes, M. and Sheptycki, J. W. (2004). 'From Detection to Disruption: Intelligence and the Changing Logic of Police Crime Control in the United Kingdom'. *International Criminal Justice Review* **14**(1): 1–24.
- Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

- Knight, W. (2017). 'Reinforcement Learning: 10 Breakthrough Technologies 2017'. *MIT Technology Review* (April). <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/603501/10-breakthrough-technologies-2017-reinforcement-learning/> (accessed 23 November 2018).
- Korsell, L. (2015). 'On the Difficulty of Measuring Economic Crime'. In van Erp, J., Huisman, W. and Vande Walle G. (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of White-Collar and Corporate Crime in Europe*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, pp. 111–127.
- Kroll, J. A. (2018). 'The Fallacy of Inscrutability'. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* **376**(2133): 20180084.
- Kroll, J. A., Huey, J., Barocas, S. et al. (2017). 'Accountable Algorithms'. *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* **165**: 633–705.
- Latour, B. (1999). *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*. Cambridge, MA; London, England: Harvard University Press.
- Lum, C. and Nagin, D. S. (2017). 'Reinventing American Policing'. *Crime and Justice* **46**(1): 339–394.
- Lum, K. and Isaac, W. (2016). 'To Predict and Serve?'. *Significance* **13**(5): 14–19.
- Lipton, Z. C. and Steinhart, J. (2018). 'Troubling Trends in Machine Learning Scholarship'. ArXiv Preprint ArXiv: 1807.03341. <https://arxiv.org/pdf/1807.03341.pdf> (accessed 21 March 2019).
- Marda, V. (2018). 'Artificial Intelligence Policy in India: A Framework for Engaging the Limits of Data-Driven Decision-Making'. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* **376**(2133): 1–19.
- Mittelstadt, B. D., Allo, P., Taddeo, M., Wachter, S. and Floridi, L. (2016). 'The Ethics of Algorithms: Mapping the Debate'. *Big Data & Society* **3**(2): 1–21.
- Mohler, G. O., Short, M. B., Malinowski, S. et al. (2015). 'Randomized Controlled Field Trials of Predictive Policing'. *Journal of the American Statistical Association* **110**(512): 1399–1411.
- Norwegian Board of Technology (2018). *Artificial Intelligence: Opportunities, Challenges and a Plan for Norway*. Oslo: Norwegian Board of Technology.
- Øyvann, S. (2017). 'AI finner bedrifter som skal ha tilsyn [AI identifies businesses for inspection]'. *Computerworld* (8 July 2017). <http://www.cw.no/artikkel/offentlig-it/ai-finner-bedrifter-som-skal-ha-tilsyn> (accessed 15 January 2019).
- Pasquale, F. (2015). *The Black Box Society: The Secret Algorithms That Control Money and Information*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Pasquale, F. (2017). 'Paradoxes of Privacy in an Era of Asymmetrical Social Control'. In Završnik, A. (ed), *Big Data, Crime and Social Control*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge.
- Perry, W. L., McInnis, B., Price, C. C., Smith, S. C. and Hollywood, J. S. (2013). *Predictive Policing: The Role of Crime Forecasting in Law Enforcement Operations*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.
- Ratcliffe, J. H. (2016). *Intelligence-Led Policing*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge.
- Reiner, R. (2013). 'Who Governs? Democracy, Plutocracy, Science and Prophecy in Policing'. *Criminology & Criminal Justice* **13**(2): 161–180.
- Reiner, R. (2016). *Crime: The Mystery of the Common-Sense Concept*. Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Rønn, K. V. (2013). 'Democratizing Strategic Intelligence: On the Feasibility of an Objective, Decision-Making Framework When Assessing Threats and Harms of Organized Crime'. *Policing* **7**(1): 53–62.
- Rubin, D. B. (1974). 'Estimating Causal Effects of Treatments in Randomized and Nonrandomized Studies'. *Journal of Educational Psychology* **66**(5): 688–701.
- Russell, S. and Norvig, P. (2010). *Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Schmidhuber, J. (2015). 'Deep Learning in Neural Networks: An Overview'. *Neural Networks* **61**: 85–117.
- Sheptycki, J. (2004). 'Organizational Pathologies in Police Intelligence Systems: Some Contributions to the Lexicon of Intelligence-Led Policing'. *European Journal of Criminology* **1**(3): 307–332.
- Sklansky, D. A. (2008). *Democracy and the Police*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Sklansky, D. A. (2011). 'The Persistent Pull of Police Professionalism'. *New Perspectives in Policing* 1–19.
- Smith, P. (1995). 'On the Unintended Consequences of Publishing Performance Data in the Public Sector'. *International Journal of Public Administration* **18**(2–3): 277–310.
- Stanier, I. (2016). 'Enhancing Intelligence-Led Policing: Law Enforcement's Big Data Revolution'. In Bunnik, A., Cawley, A., Mulqueen, M. and Zwitter, A. (eds), *Big Data Challenges*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, pp. 97–113.
- Tilley, N. (2008). 'Modern Approaches to Policing: Community, Problem-Oriented and Intelligence-Led'. In Newburn T. (ed), *Handbook of Policing*. Cullompton, Devon: Willan Publishing, pp. 373–403.
- Turkle, S. (2004). 'How Computers Change the Way We Think'. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* **50**(21): B26.
- Valiant, L. G. (1984). 'A Theory of the Learnable'. *Communications of the ACM* **27**(11): 1134–1142.
- Waardenburg, L., Sergeeva, A. and Huysman, M. (2018). 'Hotspots and Blind Spots'. In Schultze, U., Aanestad,

- M., Mähring, M., Østerlund, C. and Riemer K. (eds.), *Living with Monsters? Social Implications of Algorithmic Phenomena, Hybrid Agency, and the Performativity of Technology*, Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 96–109.
- Wilson, D. (2017). 'Algorithmic Patrol. The Futures of Predictive Policing'. In Završnik, A. (ed.), *Big Data, Crime and Social Control*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, pp. 146–155.
- Wright, D., Rodrigues, R., Raab, C. *et al.* (2015). 'Questioning Surveillance'. *Computer Law & Security Review* 31(2): 280–292.
- Wu, X. and Zhang, X. (2016). 'Responses to Critiques on Machine Learning of Criminality Perceptions' (Addendum of arXiv: 1611.04135). *ArXiv: 1611.04135 [Cs]*. <http://arxiv.org/abs/1611.04135> (accessed 8 January 2019).
- Završnik, A. (2017). 'Big Data. What Is It and Why Does It Matter for Crime and Social Control?' In Završnik, A. (ed), *Big Data, Crime and Social Control*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, pp. 24–50.
- Zerilli, J., Knott, A., Maclaurin, J. and Gavaghan, C. (2018). 'Transparency in Algorithmic and Human Decision-Making: Is There a Double Standard?' *Philosophy & Technology*, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-018-0330-6>.
- Zhang, B. H.3, Lemoine, B. and Mitchell, M. (2018). Mitigating Unwanted Biases with Adversarial Learning. *Proceedings of the 2018 AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society, ACM*. pp. 335–340.
- Zweig, K. A., Wenzelburger, G. and Krafft, T. D. (2018). 'On Chances and Risks of Security Related Algorithmic Decision Making Systems'. *European Journal for Security Research* 3(2): 181–203.



# Preventing prosecution: Narratives on proactive policing<sup>1</sup>

Annette Vestby

## ABSTRACT

This article uses narrative criminology to articulate the co-constitution of proactive preventive policing with policed populations. It finds a non-reducible definition by negation of proactive preventive policing in the domain under study; any police strategy or method that does not involve investigation and is not aimed at building a criminal case for prosecution can be termed 'preventive'. Whereas the effects of crime prevention effects are considered desirable and achievable, at least in theory, their immediate aim, according to this organisational narrative, is to prevent prosecution. This is a consequence of law as a mode of governance having ceded some legitimacy as the pivotal ideological site of crime control to pragmatic and instrumentalist interventions within the domain of police power.

## Introduction

Those engaged in policing and setting criminal justice policy increasingly view crime in terms of future risk rather than wrongs committed in the past (Schuilenburg, 2017; Zedner, 2007). Conceptualizing crime as risk rather than as an object for post hoc redress prompts action in the present to prevent possible, impending harms. According to this anticipatory logic, proactive—i.e., self-directed and preventive—policing strategies are essential to affect the future (Maguire, 2000; McCulloch and Wilson, 2016; Weisburd et al., 2019). Although prevention and risk management are not new concerns to police and criminal justice systems, some scholars have argued that we are seeing the use of more 'justice-careless' and exclusionary risk control strategies, and that such strategies exert a particular pressure on justice (Hudson, 2003: xi; Zedner, 2003). Under a new preventive paradigm, preparatory acts have become punishable at ever earlier points in time, proactive police powers have been expanded and the criminal trial has been challenged as ineffective in providing crime prevention (Ashworth and

---

<sup>1</sup> This manuscript is under review with *Theoretical Criminology*.

Zedner, 2008; Husabø, 2013; Lomell, 2012). This article is concerned with the manifestation of this paradigm in policing, wherein acts and persons have not yet—and may never—become cases framed by the criminal justice process. Within policing, crime prevention aims coexist with organisational incentives to prevent prosecution and manage problems of crime and disorder outside the criminal process (Innes and Sheptycki, 2004). This article offers an empirical exploration of the relationship between crime-control strategies and their target populations, asking, How are proactive policing strategies narratively made sense of in relation to reactive policing, and how are they co-constituted with victims and offenders?

‘Proactive policing’ refers to a range of strategies that share traits that set them apart from post hoc order maintenance and crime control. These characteristics include being self-directed, as opposed to responding to an external call for service, being data-driven, relying often on intelligence-led policing, and aiming to strategically mobilize police and other resources either to intervene before crimes and harms take place or to mitigate harmful consequences of such occurrences (Weisburd et al., 2019). The preventive aim shared by proactive policing strategies may be consistent with traditional, ‘soft’ crime prevention, although some have argued that coercive, disruptive tactics and the enforcement of criminal law have become increasingly central to a new preventive paradigm (Ashworth and Zedner, 2014; Hestehave, 2021). It is necessary to explore an internal organisational perspective to consider how these strategies are understood and operationalized in relation to different tasks and populations. Based on a narrative analysis, this article finds that the practice field under study operates with a non-reducible definition by negation of proactive, preventive policing; any police strategy or method that is not investigative and is not aimed at building a criminal case for prosecution can meaningfully be termed *preventive*. Whereas crime-prevention effects are considered desirable and achievable, at least in theory, the immediate aim, according to this organisational narrative of proactive policing, is to *prevent prosecution*.

This article builds on a study of ‘work-related crime’ (WRC) policing in Norway. WRC encompasses profit-motivated offenses connected to the labour market; it has been conceptualized as an inter-sectorial issue for which the police,

along with the tax, welfare and labour authorities, are responsible. To facilitate a proactive approach, interagency organisational cooperation has been established to make possible, for example, joint strategic intelligence analysis and crime prevention by the police and business community. Prosecution is prioritized only for the most serious offences (Departementene, 2021; Riksadvokaten, 2021). Police and other agencies are thus required to draw meaningful distinctions between licit businesses that could be included in preventive partnerships from the fly-by-night or downright criminal businesses against which other, potentially coercive, methods can be used.

Classification is fundamental to policing and is a prerequisite for choosing a course of action (Dubber, 2005; Lundgaard, 2021). Drawing on narrative criminology and sensemaking theory, I examine how segments of the labour market in all their variety are narratively made sense of by participants in the study, and in relation to perceived victims and offenders. Narratives exist at individual as well as aggregate scales (Presser, 2009), and enable us to impose order and coherence by reducing complexity. When explanations of phenomena resonate and appear plausible, they may act as heuristic devices for determining appropriate action (Weick et al., 2005). Stories can also impose moral order, assigning purity and blameworthiness, for example (Ugelvik, 2016). For instance, Tognato (2015) found two different public stories of tax evasion in Italy, one connecting it to a symbolic centre of society, and the other, depicting it as a specialized matter. A story that dramatized a subject provoked a moral response whereas one that downplayed it elicited a technical one (Garland, 2001; Tognato, 2015). Recent research that has considered narrative constructions of work-related crime has either portrayed it as a near-existential threat posed by transnational organized crime and requiring action, or as a type of economic crime resulting from normal market dynamics within the framework of the welfare state (Vestby, 2021). Presenting findings about two discrete, proactive anti-WRC strategies, the present article discusses how crime prevention is operationalized differently depending on target population and examines the definition by negation of proactive strategies in general in relation to criminal investigation and prosecution. Based on these findings, the article then discusses the proactive police paradigm in contemporary

policy and practice as an historically particular and contingent articulation of *police* as a mode of governance (Dubber, 2005; Seigel, 2018).

#### A proactive policing paradigm

Proactive policing, with its prospective and preventive orientation, caters to the needs of knowledge-hungry, risk-oriented criminal justice and security organisations, frequently operating under conditions of austerity (Brodeur, 2010; Dahl et al., 2021; Sanders et al., 2015). This umbrella term, according to Weisburd et al. (2019: 2), comprises strategies that aim for ‘the prevention or reduction of crime and disorder’ and that include ‘an emphasis on prevention, mobilizing resources based on police initiative, and targeting the broader underlying forces at work that may be driving crime and disorder.’ Compared to the standard model of policing in which there is ‘an emphasis on reacting to particular crime events after they have occurred and mobilizing resources based on requests coming from outside the police’ (ibid.), proactive policing models give police agencies wide berth to define their own remit and objectives (Hestehave, 2021). Intelligence-led policing (ILP) offers, in theory and practice, a salient example of a proactive strategy, emphasizing strategic agenda-setting and resource allocation based on crime-data analysis (Fyfe et al., 2018; Ratcliffe, 2016). The ideals and practices of proactive policing have been articulated in Norway, the national context of this study. Among the clearest examples are the Norwegian Police Directorate’s implementation of a national model for ILP in 2014 (Vestby, 2018), and the national police force’s naming of crime *prevention* as its foremost strategy, stating, ‘The police will work to be one step ahead of crime and unwanted incidents, and to promote a safe society!’ (Politidirektoratet, 2020: 2 author’s translation).

The prevention of crime and disorder is a key aim of proactive policing. However, the term prevention is ambiguous. Prevention has often been considered non-punitive and an alternative to punishment. Yet, scholars argue that, within a new preventive paradigm, prevention now tends to be conceptualized as the disruption of specific acts committed by specific persons, and to place criminal law enforcement at its core (Ashworth and Zedner, 2014; Hestehave, 2021; Lomell, 2012, 2018). The two police methods described in this article—collaboration between the



police and the business community, and the disruptive, organized-crime (OC) approach—represent, respectively, these two understandings of preventive policing.

This article examines the narrative understanding and legitimation of proactive policing vis-à-vis reactive crime control and the narrative co-construction of victims and offenders in relation to these policing strategies. I use both ‘proactivity’ and ‘prevention’ as first-order concepts, that is, as terms used by participants and in policy documents in the field under study (Van Maanen, 1979). The two terms are studied here both as situated articulations of circumstances and as reflective of participants’ ongoing efforts to connect plausible explanations to appropriate courses of action (Weick et al., 2005). Through organisational narratives—by which I mean shared interpretive patterns (Vaara et al., 2016), practices and ideas are given meaning, are lauded or rejected and become connected to particular populations, crimes and police roles.

#### Police power, risk, and classification

Although proactive innovations, such as problem-oriented and intelligence-led policing, emerged during the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, police-directed and future-oriented social control and public administration are not new (Dubber and Valverde, 2006; Weisburd et al., 2019). *Police* as a mode of governance, not force or organisation, predates even Peel’s oft-cited preventive patrolman. The term dates to the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the Anglo-American tradition and already existed in the Danish-Norwegian language by the early 1500s (Dubber, 2005; Ellefsen, 2021). In both contexts, the word refers to the wide-ranging ‘power of the state to govern the persons and things within its dominion as a household’ (Dubber, 2005: 159), or ‘the regulatory power to take coercive measures to ensure the safety and the welfare of “the community”’ (Dubber and Valverde, 2006: 2). *Police* denotes a wide-ranging discretionary and preventive mode of governance aimed at protecting the present and future welfare and safety of a designated community. Unlike *law* as mode of governance, police seeks to prevent undesired outcomes in the future rather than to punish specific acts committed in the past (which are within the purview of the individualistic and rights-based system of law). Modern proactive

policing seeks to prevent through strategic, knowledge-based interventions into populations and territories rather than to redress through justice measures (Weisburd et al., 2019). This approach to policing thus falls within the original sense of a police governance tradition: ‘Police is the power to prevent the need for law’. (Dubber, 2005: 163)

Whereas crime traditionally has been regarded as a wrong to be addressed post hoc, it is increasingly perceived as a risk of future losses. These potential losses might be averted through action in the present (Zedner, 2007). There has thus been a ‘shift from “justice” to “risk” as the primary organizing principle of criminal justice’ (Hudson, 2012: 146). Within the tradition of critical risk studies, risk is understood as a constructed entity that brings into existence the very effects it anticipates (McCulloch and Wilson, 2016; Mythen, 2014). Risk can be studied as a governance tool with associated strategies and methods for acting on ‘uncertain futures’ in the present (Amoore, 2013). This article explores the types of populations that ‘are brought into being and made amenable to governing within the politics of possibility’ (ibid., p. 6). Absent the particulars of a committed crime, classifying subjects and objects according to their perceived riskiness becomes paramount to security. At the core of police-as-governance is the act of classifying governed persons and things either as resources or as threats to the safety of the protected social order, to be able to ‘treat each object according to its classification’ (Dubber, 2005: 180). This separation into resources and threats resonates with Hudson’s distinction between ‘those (potential victims) who *deserve* rights and those (potential offenders) who don’t’ (Hudson, 2003: x). Classification is essential to developing and using differentiated proactive strategies within the remit of police power.

## Context and methods

This study has been carried out against the background of a national Norwegian initiative against WRC. An inter-ministerial strategy that has been updated and reaffirmed biannually since 2015, the initiative is in its fourth iteration (Departementene, 2021). The definition of WRC has remained largely unchanged:

Work-related crime comprises actions that violate Norwegian laws on pay and working conditions, social security, and taxation, often committed in an organised manner, which exploits workers, or which distorts fair market competition and undermines the structural underpinnings of society. (Departementene, 2021: 6 author's translation)

The term intends to capture a range of profit-motivated offenses that fall under the ambit of different jurisdictions. Labour exploitation, tax evasion, human trafficking and fraud relating to bankruptcies, credit and welfare benefits are common expressions of WRC (NTAES, 2020). Interorganisational coordination is considered essential to develop flexible and effective forms of control that rely on methods other than criminal investigation and prosecution (Departementene, 2021), although prosecution remains an option for the most serious cases (Riksadvokaten, 2021). Within the police organisation, units specializing in economic and environmental crime, organized crime and migration are often tasked with WRC enforcement. Each police district has one police-business liaison who sits in the districts' crime prevention units. The government has established a secondary inter-agency structure that includes a strategic intelligence analysis unit and regional interagency task forces (Departementene, 2021; Jahnsen and Rykkja, 2020).

This article's dataset comprises semi-structured interviews, publicly available policy documents and strategic intelligence analyses.<sup>2</sup> During 2015–2020, I conducted 43 interviews<sup>3</sup> with professionals, including managers, employed in units tasked with criminal intelligence gathering and analysis, investigation and crime prevention. Thirty-six of the 43 were employed by the national Norwegian police force; the other seven did similar work within the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority and The Norwegian Tax Administration. These four agencies, although distinct and placed within different governmental ministries, participate in the anti-WRC initiative.

---

<sup>2</sup> Approximately 140 hours of unsystematized observations made at an organized crime unit and in police seminars and classes at the police college have provided background information for developing interview guides and recruiting participants, but they are not included in the data analysed for this article.

<sup>3</sup> 23 of these were conducted together with, and transcribed by, Heidi Fischer-Norman and myself for Bjelland & Vestby (2017).

Although not members of the police force, the seven non-police participants were embedded alongside police officers in interagency collaborative work and, as such, were highly relevant sources to understand *policing* in this field. I analysed the documents using a thematic analysis strategy, and the interview materials using an approach inspired by Tjora's stepwise-deductive-inductive method (2018). This method aims to generate creative and systematic theoretical abstractions and includes iterative steps to trace the origins of concepts to ensure that they retain the meaning of the first-order coded materials. The narratives described in this article are the analytical products of this process.

## Findings

This section explains the narrative co-constitution of victims and offenders through an analysis of two proactive police models for anti-WRC efforts. The first is essentially 'the organised crime policing concept', which is taken here to represent a risk-control approach whose 'primary intent is [...] containment, not change [...]' (Clear and Cadora in Hudson, 2003: 50) of suspect persons and enterprises. The second involves a liaison model that requires representatives from the police to foster preventive partnerships with others, such as members of the business community. The proactive paradigm can include both 'soft' and more coercive police models. Those involved in anti-WRC efforts make sense of and justify the two approaches described here with reference to their crime-prevention effects. These justifications appear and recur in the data as comparisons between proactive, preventive crime control with criminal investigation and prosecution. This section thus begins with a brief outline of the narrative construction of economic-crime policing as the reactive and law-centered counterpart to other forms of proactive and/or operative police work. It then offers descriptions of the narrative justifications for the police-business liaison and OC policing concepts.

### Economic crime investigation as the epitome of reactive policing

Registered crime is suffocating us. (036)

There is near unanimous agreement among the investigators, prosecutors and crime prevention and intelligence officers who participated in this study that

economic-crime policing, a key component in efforts to prevent and punish profit-motivated WRC, epitomizes reactive policing. Criminal investigation of past events is inherently reactive, of course. Additionally, within police departments, crime types and police methods have typically been connected. Operative and covert police methods (e.g., surveillance) have been applied by units specialising in organized crime and terrorism, and rarely by economic crime units whose enforcement has been shaped to a great extent by investigators and prosecutors acting on incoming reports and with the resources available to them. Referring to the allocation of investigative resources to incoming reports, an investigator specializing in economic crime stated:

We drop case files [due to capacity], more than we actually make strategic choices about which cases to investigate. (037)

Further, those interviewed recognize that other serious crimes take priority over economic crimes, and that investigations cost a great deal in both money and time. Arguing for the value of investigation despite the absence of quick results, an investigator from a specialist economic crime unit put it like this:

Everyone understands that sexual abuse and homicide cases require rapid responses from the police and have to take priority over our [economic crime] cases. But someone has to deal with what I call 'long crime' as well, [m]eaning forms of crime that are persistent, practically ambient. That is where we come in. [...] Investigations take a long time, are resource intensive and sometimes the cases are too complicated for us to be able to do anything. We don't often get quick results, but we can get good signal cases. And that's where a unit like ours comes in, dealing with 'long crime' is our job. (049)

Quick results are more likely in the case of operative police interventions that occur close to the real-time occurrence of crimes. An investigator at a national special unit for economic crime stated with reference to the operative ideal,

We lack - we're not operative in that sense, we don't visit building sites, we don't do surveillance and that sort of thing. But we're quite good at tracing large sums of money and can be quite effective in taking down central actors (048)

An officer with experience in both organized crime and economic-crime policing characterized the specialized economic-crime teams as being too oriented toward the law, in contrast to the operative ideal of the police:

They are too juridical! They have too many lawyers and are too preoccupied with the law. They're not operative enough, and they use operative police methods too rarely. They need to learn from the OC policing units. (036)

Economic-crime investigation epitomizes reactive policing and functions narratively to negatively define proactivity. It is thus an important backdrop for the two narratives about models that rely on police power, not law.

**The police-business liaison: Serving and sharing responsibility with bona fide businesses**

As part of a major structural reform of the Norwegian police in 2017, a 'police-business liaison'<sup>4</sup> position was established in each police district and assigned an explicit preventive scope within the organisation. The directive for the standardized position states,

The liaison shall work to prevent and reduce work-related crime and crime which targets businesses. The function shall foster good local collaborations between the police, businesses, security authorities and other actors in civil society. This will contribute to proactive and targeted actions undertaken by businesses and other private actors, as well as to knowledge-based crime-fighting by police.

The liaison is the police district's main contact point for businesses outside the penal track, and shall act as an advisor and forward inquiries to the proper authority. (Politidirektoratet, 2017: 90, author's translation)

Organisationally, the liaison sits within the department for crime prevention. Per the directive, the liaison should play an advisory role vis-à-vis the business community and work outside the penal track. One liaison, in describing the advisory function, emphasized its intentional separation from any penal or coercive measures that police might take:

If there's a problem, if businesses are uncertain if they're on the right track or whether they've done something wrong, they can come to me and we'll talk about it and not

---

<sup>4</sup> Orig: 'næringslivskontakt', literally 'business contact'.

necessarily have it become a reported case. It's been important to our police district that there's a low threshold for businesses to reach out. This is also to build trust in the business community. (030)

The police-business liaison position is designed to face a business community whose features remain implied in this model. Here, *the* business community is cast as valuable to society and at risk of victimisation from WRC and other forms of misconduct against the private sector. Prominent in the narrative is the assumption of businesses' innocence, or at the very least an assumption of their good intentions; businesses may overstep but they are well-meaning and corrigible through the advice and aid of the police. The business community as an arena for, or perpetrator of, these forms of crime goes largely unmentioned:

The liaison has a unique preventive role in the sense that they can be a team player for a business community that mostly is interested in combating crime. Work-related crime. (038)

To be included in the implicitly bounded business community is, according to the liaison model, to be classified as a proper business, a societal resource worthy of protection and a legal entity whose rights should not be infringed upon by either criminals or public authorities (Dubber, 2005; Hudson, 2003). One liaison, reflecting on appropriate methods to use against bona fide businesses as opposed to their less serious counterparts, stated,

Serious businesses should be left in peace. We can advise and guide them, but we have to catch the fly-by-night businesses using the [police operative] WRC task force. One could imagine that we could get rid of those businesses using preventive methods, but we would need to challenge each other more on that [...] (029)

In the liaison model, the liaison acts as an information broker, drawing on the intelligence capabilities of the police organisation to distribute information to the business community and enable it to act in a prudent and knowledge-based manner (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997).

We [liaisons] are going to be proactive, aware of current trends in crime, and be able to say something about any type of crime that may threaten the business community. (030)

In providing businesses with information, police assign responsibility to them to protect their own interests and values and enable them to protect themselves against future harm and loss.

Whenever we see a trend in WRC that requires us to do something, it is my role to provide information—either publicly or in meetings with businesses. We can raise a warning finger as well and say “Beware!” (o38)

The liaison model for crime prevention is articulated as non-coercive and respectful of the autonomy and privacy of the implicitly bona fide business community. The target audience for the liaison model is defined as the business community, against which there is no need for coercive measures. Here, concern over the cost associated with false positives is articulated as limitations on the acceptable methods the police should use and even on the roles the police should embody. Whereas the liaison model fits within a proactive policing paradigm, this particular approach involving the police and business community is explicitly concerned with the rights of the target population—the business community.

#### The OC policing concept: dynamism, pragmatism, effectiveness

Whereas the police-business liaison model is codified in the police organisation’s formal directives, ‘the OC policing concept’ is not a formalized model in this sense. The term is used by participants in this study and designates a set of flexible, operative, pragmatic and frequently disruptive and person-oriented police methods. These often derive from police organized crime units, which have frequently spearheaded innovative crime-control approaches. One participant summarized the spirit of the OC policing concept as follows:

Our intention is to have a maximal impact on criminals. My experience is that the organized-crime policing concept is to ally with everyone who is willing and able play on your team. Against the wicked [laughs]. There are other factors at play in economic crime investigation teams where you don’t have the same... dynamism. (o46)

Whereas economic crime generally may be understood as constituting predictable offenses given competitive markets, organized crime has more often been considered a threat posed by an external Other (Franko, 2020; Vestby, 2021; Woodiwiss and Hobbs, 2009). This understanding is reflected in OC policing’s



legitimation of anticipatory, disruptive action as well as proactive investigation against the 'usual suspects' (Hestehave, 2021). The person-oriented rather than crime-focused nature of this policing concept is revealed in the statement by one participant:

We aimed to go after the criminal person, rather than getting him for every exact thing he had done. (001)

Economic-crime investigations (like criminal investigations generally) take place within reactive and rule-based conditions; in contrast, OC policing is a locus for innovation in disruptive modes of crime control (Kirby and Snow, 2016; Lomell, 2018; Tilley, 2016). In the Nordic context, a 'redirection of prevention into disruption' has been noted (Hestehave, 2021, p. 59). Disruptive measures used to stop criminal acts from being carried out require both knowledge and discovery (Bjørge, 2016). Disruption has been linked to the application of intelligence-led policing, the result, in part, of its status as an effective alternative to criminal investigation and prosecution (Lomell, 2018). Intelligence provides information and a framework for systematic application of disruption, which offers an alternative to prosecution or reliance on 'softer' or more circumspect forms of crime prevention (Innes and Sheptycki, 2004).

Interagency collaboration and the strategic exchange of expertise and legal tools are mainstays of a dynamic OC policing model. In this way, all 'good' forces unite against criminals, with the precise constellation of contributors varying depending on the situation. Coordination among police, tax and labour and welfare authorities in the context of reactive investigations is common, as are persistent, large and small interventions and penalties by a variety of governmental agencies with the aim of demoralizing individuals and discouraging them from associating with OC groups (Bjelland and Vestby, 2017; Jahnsen, 2018). The anti-WRC initiative is fundamentally defined as an arena for innovation to achieve effective collaborative control practices (Departementene, 2021). Regional interagency WRC task forces conduct inspections to uncover irregularities and disrupt by, among other things, hitting suspect businesses with sanctions against workers based on their immigration status, withholding liquor licenses or seizing

tools and materials necessary to conduct business. Police officers involved in anti-WRC work have said that sometimes they hoped such inspections would not result in criminal investigations ‘as these cases would most likely pile up at the section for economic crime in the police’ (Jahnsen and Rykkja, 2020: 14). One officer interviewed for this study responded to a question about how a team is formed from among the agencies participating in regional effort to conduct a specific intervention:

*Officer:* Typically, the immigration unit is present and they have plans for the whole year, where they’re going to be at. They’re going here and there to have inspections. Then the Labour Inspection Authority perks up and wants to join, maybe the local tax collection office as well. Officials from the municipality and these inspectors think it’s a lot of fun to come along. The Labour and Welfare administration people sometimes join as well. So yes, we agree on who should come, but there’s no formal directive that it should be this way or the other. That gets assessed on a case-by-case basis depending on the tip we’ve received. Like [location] for instance, where many Romanians live, we’re bringing the Fire department. We were there conducting a search earlier and the building looked terrible. I said, ‘You should have a chat with the Fire department as well.’ Lofts that sleep a ton of workers with narrow stairs down — it makes my skin crawl to even think about what could happen if there was a fire. It’s good to connect with more agencies.

*Interviewer:* ‘Cause the fire department has relevant sanctions, or...?

*Officer:* Yes, well they haven’t been on site yet, but I assume that—I would think that they have the relevant tools, wouldn’t you?

*Interviewer:* I’m sure.

*Officer:* If not them, then who? [...] We sure don’t.

(037)

This officer describes the assembly of the team as a pragmatic and opportunistic allocation of resources. This is in line with what Sklansky (2012: 157) terms *ad hoc instrumentalism*: the use of ‘legal rules and legal procedures as interchangeable tools, to be brought to bear pragmatically and instrumentally on an ad hoc basis’. Not only is *criminal* law harnessed in the name of prevention (Lomell, 2012), but all applicable legal jurisdictions—tax law, employment and environmental protection legislation and immigration law, among others—are implicated in the holistic anti-WRC framework (Bjelland and Vestby, 2017; Jahnsen

and Rykkja, 2020). The goal is frequently to strike a particular person or circle of associates by preventing—through disruption— expected future crimes. An investigator in an OC unit described an interagency disruption technique used to bring business owners into compliance with the law::

We go to those who haven't submitted their turnover statements at home and knock on their door. The tax authority, the police, and the Labour and Inspection Authority, and we tell them it's against the law to not submit the statement. To just get it done. Fix it. Most of them do. Ninety percent do it after our visit, or they close down their business. (035)

The OC policing narrative assumes that these disruptive tactics, individually, stop ongoing crimes and that, in the aggregate, they alter the offenders' cost-benefit analysis and thus, to some extent deter and lead to desistance (Jahnsen, 2018). This assumption of prevention, and the acknowledgment that some may doubt this deterrent effect and see disruptive methods as trivial, are evident in the comment of one study participant:

There are different opinions about how disruption tactics work. Some people think it's trivial, to seize a scaffolding [e.g., from a house-painting business]. That it means nothing. You've expelled a worker from a building site and they're back two days later. In and of itself it is very trivial. The OC approach, though, is that down the line these actions will have an effect. Whether that is the case is another matter, but without that knowledge in the other agencies, they'll only see the trivial. (046)

## Discussion

The narrative legitimacy of both these models rests on claims that they prevent crime, are police-initiated and build on the initiatives of police and collaborating agencies to mobilize resources to achieve crime control (Weisburd et al., 2019). Although both frameworks share a vocabulary of crime prevention, they differ greatly in their substantive practices, their resemblance to traditional, non-coercive crime prevention approaches and the extent to which they are perceived as useful in dealing with different groups of victims or offenders. The organisational narratives about both the liaison model and the OC policing concept articulate particular instances of governance within the logic of police

power. The two strategies share key traits that set them apart from traditional post hoc governance through law. One point of resemblance is the commitment to flexibility, pragmatism and discretionary judgment based on the accumulated knowledge of either the police alone or the police as part of an inter-agency constellation. Both models aim to prevent harm to a designated community, first, by bolstering resilience and responsibility among bona fide businesses and thus making them more capable of protecting their own interests, and second, by forcing a halt in suspected criminal activity and having ‘a maximal impact on criminals’.

Neither approach is rule-bound or procedural and both are defined in opposition to reactive crime control. The narrative construction of these strategies shows that a cross-cutting aim is to *prevent prosecution*. The prosecutorial mode is considered expensive, time-consuming and not up to handling the threats currently facing the welfare state and the licit economy (Innes and Sheptycki, 2004; Vestby, 2021). Although the reactive deployment of officers in response to external calls for service is literally termed ‘the standard model of policing’, the police—both as current institutional arrangement and as mode of governance—have always been temporally oriented to the future (Dubber, 2005; Ellefsen, 2021). Undoubtedly, a strong tendency exists within the police and governing structures today toward temporal and autonomous proactivity, risk aversion and security management. However, attention to the concept of police power is essential as it is within this understanding that police have the room to adapt and develop new methods. It is also here, outside the prosecutorial mode, that police exercise the most autonomy, in their discretionary matching of suitable methods to target populations.

The two organisational narratives about proactive police methods conjure up different target populations for the different interventions. I have termed the target population in the narrative understanding of the police-business liaison model the *constituents*. This population is an imagined business community consisting of licit, well-meaning entrepreneurs who require information to protect themselves and guidance in those instances when they wonder if they have overstepped the law. Unless the police strongly suspect wrongdoing, they should

leave the business community alone. The narrative about the OC policing concept, however, conjures up a population of *suspects*. These are criminal Others against whom all good forces should join together to impede them, with the aim of excluding them from at least their current arena of activity.

The features of these imagined target populations are closely intertwined with the narrative descriptions and the methods themselves. If business-owners are well meaning but mistaken, it makes sense to guide them rather than interfere in their businesses. And it makes sense to force an incorrigible offender to desist. The classifications ‘constituents’ and ‘suspects’ that are implied in these narratives coincide with Dubber’s argument that police (as governance) categorize people and things as either resources for or threats to the community. Rather than punish (which, in any case, falls outside the purview of police), police seek to assist the community by taking action based on these classifications (Dubber, 2005). To be recognized as a bona fide business is to be classified as a resource for the community, as a decent employer, taxpayer, provider of goods and services whose activities provide economic and social benefit. Businesses classified as such are thus treated as constituents—as members of a population whose opinion of the police matters, whose business dealings should not be interrupted unnecessarily, who can be guided and informed at the discretion of the police and who can thus be given responsibility for preventing crime within their businesses themselves. Opposed to them are businesses perceived to be illegitimate or downright criminal and thus as threats to community values such as worker safety and dignity; they are tax cheats, fraudulent actors in transactions with customers and threats to the fundamental integrity and wellbeing of the economy and the state. Deployed against them are crime-prevention methods that rely on criminal intelligence work, such as mapping and surveillance, which help determine which sites to target for inspections and (other) disruptions, such as the seizing of equipment or the expulsion of workers. These responses to the two different sets of actors can be characterized, respectively, as *risk management* and *risk control* (Clear and Cadora in Hudson, 2003, p. 50). A key distinction between these two approaches is their relationship to the risk of false positives and false negatives. The risk-management strategy seeks to balance the risk of assigning either false negative or positive status

to offenders, which corresponds with the police-business liaison model wherein an important goal is to facilitate crime prevention but to otherwise leave businesses to their own devices as much as possible. The risk-control strategy involves methods that ‘have as their purpose to take power over situations of risk in an offender’s life such that the offender may not engage in crimes. Their primary intent is thus containment, not change.’ (ibid.) This approach represents a lower tolerance for false negatives; the threshold for perceived risk is low in comparison to that of the risk management approach, which takes into consideration the risk of false positives. At core, these are issues of whether the two narratively-imagined populations which fall within the remit of police power are seen as insiders, resources and people with rights (to privacy and due process, for example), or whether they are viewed as outsiders whose interests are a (potential) threat to the welfare of the community (Hudson, 2003). Insofar as narratives act as sensemaking devices to prepare for action (Presser, 2016; Weick et al., 2005), the way that they categorize enterprises may be consequential.

Empirical reality is more complex than the narratively-imagined ideal types described in this article. For instance, in the Findings section of this article which discusses the OC policing concept, a participant related her experience bringing the Tax Authority and the Labour and Inspection Authority to join her in visiting the homes of business owners who had failed to submit their turnover statements. Such a failure is itself an offense and is considered an indicator of potential non-compliance with other regulations. Although the home visits constituted a disruptive action—halting an unlawful act (Bjørngo, 2016)—it is not unequivocally exclusionary. They can be read as invitations to comply with acceptable business practice; business owners were made aware that they are being watched and given a chance to change their behaviour. Although not coercive in the way some disruptive tactics are (such as seizing tools or expelling workers from a building site), the home visits were a show of force that exposes the paternalism of police as a mode of governance (Dubber, 2005). It may be a surprise to learn that this practice developed at the same time that Norway’s national police organisation, as a result of several reforms over last two decades, had their mandate gradually pared down to only ‘core tasks’ in crime control and emergency preparedness (Gundhus

et al., 2021). However, this conjunction is not puzzling if one understands police as a mode of governance and recognizes that law as a mode of governance has ceded some legitimacy as the pivotal ideological site of crime control to pragmatic and instrumentalist interventions within the domain of police power. Such an understanding makes it possible to gain a fuller appreciation of the flexible nature of the police's manifest institutional arrangements:

[T]o say that anything falls outside police purview is to get policing wrong in principle. The reason why police do so much extraneous *stuff*<sup>5</sup> is that police power is fundamentally malleable, open in both theory and practice. [...] It can be anything, and so is whatever its age requires. (Seigel, 2018: 7–8)

Thus, I consider the proactive policing paradigm to be a particular articulation of police power in our time rather than to represent a substantive shift in either the temporal orientation or the degree of autonomy of policing. Police power has always been both discretionary and prospective. *The* police force has long been a stablemate of prevention. The emphasis on flexible and pragmatic policing to manage risk and achieve control rather than on the criminal justice process may, however, represent a more significant change. Awarding the police primacy in managing crime through prevention deemphasizes their role as gatekeepers to the criminal justice system. It also hides the variation in practices that are lumped together as 'prevention'.

### Concluding remarks

For better and for worse, preventing prosecution is a fundamental goal of the police both as mode of governance and as institutional arrangement. Investigation, prosecution and sentencing are not panaceas against injustice, and preventing victimisation is intuitively superior to having the responsibility for it allocated post hoc, if at all. However, it is still necessary to explore empirically how the discretionary power of the police to prevent is expressed with respect to different populations and (potential) crimes. My findings suggest that proactive, preventive action is understood, and potentially enacted, differently in relation to perceived

---

<sup>5</sup> Extraneous to the enforcement of criminal law (ibid.). Italics in original.

victims and offenders. Despite being future-oriented, proactive police strategies stand in a recursive relationship to reactive policing, implemented to affect an uncertain future based on historical observations (Amoore, 2013; see Weisburd et al., 2019: 3).

The two strategies discussed here are not adequately captured by an inclusionary/exclusionary dichotomy. Rather, what emerges from the police-business liaison and the disruptive OC policing approaches are, respectively, paternalistic and ‘gloves-off’ (Dubber, 2005; Hudson, 2003: 45) modes of crime control. Formal criminal justice procedures are more transparent than policing and other modes of security governance (Zedner, 2003). The flexible, creative and frequently partnered approaches to handling WRC align closely with the remit of police as a mode of governance separate from the strictures of law—the power of the state to govern the people and things within it as a household to achieve a desired order, the *good police* (Dubber, 2005; Ellefsen, 2021). Under this mode of governance, the term prevention can be understood in relation to coercive and disruptive, as well as traditional ‘soft’ prevention, strategies. The narrative refutation of prosecution as a viable option in the anti-WRC initiative may express the preventive ambition of *police* in its classical articulation, but also, and in a more quotidian way, express material organisational incentives to avoid expensive processes of investigation and prosecution.

## References

- Amoore L (2013) *The Politics of Possibility: Risk and Security beyond Probability*. Duke University Press.
- Ashworth A and Zedner L (2008) Defending the criminal law: Reflections on the changing character of crime, procedure, and sanctions. *Criminal Law and Philosophy* 2(1). Springer: 21–51.
- Ashworth A and Zedner L (2014) *Preventive Justice*. Oxford: University Press.
- Bjelland HF and Vestby A (2017) ‘It’s about using the full sanction catalogue’: on boundary negotiations in a multi-agency organised crime investigation. *Policing and Society* 27(6): 1–16. DOI: 10.1080/10439463.2017.1341510.
- Bjørgero T (2016) *Preventing Crime: A Holistic Approach*. Crime prevention and security management. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Brodeur J-P (2010) *The Policing Web*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dahl JY, Fyfe N, Gundhus HOI, et al. (2021) Old, New, Borrowed and Blue – Shifts In Modern Policing. *British Journal Of Criminology*. DOI: 10.1093/bjc/azab085.



- Departementene (2021) *Strategi mot arbeidslivskriminalitet*. Available at: <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/17f35b6ba95f4da2a7ac4682boao52af/no/pdfs/revidert-strategi-mot-arbeidslivskriminalitet-2021.pdf> (accessed 9 April 2021).
- Dubber MD (2005) *The Police Power*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Dubber MD and Valverde M (2006) Perspectives on the Power and Science of Police. In: Dubber MD and Valverde M (eds) *The New Police Science: The Police Power in Domestic and International Governance*. Stanford University Press, pp. 1–16.
- Ellefsen HB (2021) Embetsmannsstatens politipolitikk 1814-1842. *Historisk tidsskrift* 100(02): 101–115. DOI: 10.18261/issn.1504-2944-2021-02-02.
- Ericson RV and Haggerty KD (1997) *Policing the Risk Society*. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.
- Franco K (2020) *The Crimmigrant Other: Migration and Penal Power*. New York: Routledge.
- Fyfe NR, Gundhus HOI and Rønn KV (2018) Introduction. In: Fyfe NR, Gundhus HOI, and Rønn KV (eds) *Moral Issues in Intelligence-Led Policing*. London; New York: Routledge, pp. 1–22.
- Garland D (2001) *The Culture of Control. Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gundhus HO, Talberg N and Wathne CT (2021) From discretion to standardization: Digitalization of the police organization. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*. SAGE Publications Ltd: 1–15. DOI: 10.1177/14613557211036554.
- Hestehave NK (2021) *Coppers Chasing Usual Suspects. An embedded search for a proactive police performance and the detective métier*. PhD Thesis. Aalborg University, Aalborg.
- Hudson B (2003) *Justice in the Risk Society: Challenging and Re-Affirming Justice in Late Modernity*. Sage.
- Hudson B (2012) Punishment, rights and difference: defending justice in the risk society. In: Stenson K and Sullivan RR (eds) *Crime, Risk and Justice*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 144–172.
- Husabø EJ (2013) Counterterrorism and the Expansion of Proactive Police Powers in the Nordic States. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention* 14(1): 3–23. DOI: 10.1080/14043858.2013.773759.
- Innes M and Sheptycki JW (2004) From detection to disruption: Intelligence and the changing logic of police crime control in the United Kingdom. *International Criminal Justice Review* 14(1): 1–24.
- Jahnsen S (2018) In search of bad characters: Banning and banishing outlaw motorcycle gangs. In: Fyfe NR, Gundhus HOI, and Rønn KV (eds) *Moral Issues in Intelligence-Led Policing*. London; New York: Routledge, pp. 283–301.
- Jahnsen SØ and Rykkja LH (2020) Coordinating against work-related crime in Norway. *International Public Management Review* 20(1): 3–22.
- Kirby S and Snow N (2016) Praxis and the disruption of organized crime groups. *Trends in Organized Crime* 19(2): 111–124. DOI: 10.1007/s12117-016-9269-0.
- Lomell HM (2012) Punishing the uncommitted crime: prevention, pre-emption, precaution and the transformation of criminal law. In: *Justice and Security in the 21st Century*. Routledge studies in liberty and security. London: Routledge, pp. 99–116.

- Lomell HM (2018) Investigation or instigation? Enforcing grooming legislation. In: Fyfe N, Gundhus HOI, and Rønn KV (eds) *Moral Issues in Intelligence-Led Policing*. London; New York: Routledge, pp. 43–61.
- Lundgaard JM (2021) *Nød og neppe: Fra anrop til beslutning ved politiets operasjonssentral*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget. DOI: 10.18261/9788215040974-2021.
- Maguire M (2000) Policing by risks and targets: Some dimensions and implications of intelligence-led crime control. *Policing and Society* 9(4): 315–336. DOI: 10.1080/10439463.2000.9964821.
- McCulloch J and Wilson D (2016) *Pre-Crime: Pre-Emption, Precaution and the Future*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Mythen G (2014) *Understanding the Risk Society: Crime, Security and Justice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- NTAES (2020) *Arbeidslivskriminalitet. Situasjonsbeskrivelse 2020*. Oslo: Nasjonalt tverretatlig analyse- og etterretningssenter.
- Politidirektoratet (2017) *Rammer og retningslinjer for etablering av nye politidistrikter*. V1.2. 16 June. Oslo: Politidirektoratet.
- Politidirektoratet (2020) *I forkant av kriminaliteten. Forebygging som politiets hovedstrategi (2021-2025)*. POD publikasjon 2020/10. Oslo: Politidirektoratet. Available at: <https://www.politiet.no/globalassets/05-om-oss/03-strategier-og-planer/i-forkant-av-kriminaliteten.pdf> (accessed 16 June 2021).
- Presser L (2009) The narratives of offenders. *Theoretical Criminology* 13(2): 177–200. DOI: 10.1177/1362480609102878.
- Presser L (2016) Criminology and the narrative turn. *Crime, Media, Culture* 12(2): 137–151.
- Ratcliffe JH (2016) *Intelligence-Led Policing*. Abingdon/New York: Routledge.
- Riksadvokaten (2021) Riksadvokatens mål og prioriteringer for 2021. Available at: <https://www.riksadvokaten.no/document/riksadvokatens-mal-og-prioriteringer-for-2021/> (accessed 28 October 2021).
- Sanders CB, Weston C and Schott N (2015) Police Innovations, ‘Secret Squirrels’ and Accountability: Empirically Studying Intelligence-led Policing in Canada. *British Journal of Criminology* 55(4): 711–729. DOI: 10.1093/bjc/azv008.
- Schuilenburg M (2017) *The Securitization of Society: Crime, Risk, and Social Order*. NYU Press.
- Seigel M (2018) *Violence Work: State Power and the Limits of Police*. Duke University Press.
- Sklansky DA (2012) Crime, immigration, and ad hoc instrumentalism. *New Criminal Law Review: In International and Interdisciplinary Journal* 15(2): 157–223.
- Tilley N (2016) Intelligence-led policing and the disruption of organized crime: motifs, methods and morals. In: *Comparing the Democratic Governance of Police Intelligence*. Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 153–179. DOI: 10.4337/9781785361036.00015.
- Tjora A (2018) *Qualitative Research as Stepwise-Deductive Induction*. Routledge.
- Tognato C (2015) Narratives of Tax Evasion: The Cultural Legitimacy of Harmful Behaviour. In: Presser L and Sandberg S (eds) *Narrative Criminology. Understanding Stories of Crime*. New York and London: New York University Press, pp. 260–286. Available at:

- <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.18574/9781479895731-012/html> (accessed 12 March 2021).
- Ugelvik T (2016) Techniques of legitimation: The narrative construction of legitimacy among immigration detention officers. *Crime, Media, Culture* 12(2): 215–232.
- Vaara E, Sonenshein S and Boje D (2016) Narratives as Sources of Stability and Change in Organizations: Approaches and Directions for Future Research. *The Academy of Management Annals* 10(1): 495–560.
- Van Maanen J (1979) The fact of fiction in organizational ethnography. *Administrative science quarterly* 24(4). JSTOR: 539–550.
- Vestby A (2018) Policy making without politics: Overstating objectivity in intelligence-led policing. In: Gundhus HI, Rønn KV, and Fyfe N (eds) *Moral Issues in Intelligence-Led Policing*. London; New York: Routledge, pp. 265–282.
- Vestby A (2021) Cheats, Threats and Reflexivity: Organizational Narratives on Policing Organized and Economic Crime. *The British Journal of Criminology*: azab054. DOI: 10.1093/bjc/azab054.
- Weick KE, Sutcliffe KM and Obstfeld D (2005) Organizing and the process of sensemaking. *Organization science* 16(4): 409–421.
- Weisburd D, Majmundar MK, Aden H, et al. (2019) Proactive Policing: a Summary of the Report of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. *Asian Journal of Criminology* 14(2): 145–177. DOI: 10.1007/s11417-019-09284-1.
- Woodiwiss M and Hobbs D (2009) Organized Evil and the Atlantic Alliance: Moral Panics and the Rhetoric of Organized Crime Policing in America and Britain. *British Journal of Criminology* 49(1): 106–128. DOI: 10.1093/bjc/azn054.
- Zedner L (2003) Too much security? *International Journal of the Sociology of Law* 31(3): 155–184. DOI: 10.1016/j.ijsl.2003.09.002.
- Zedner L (2007) Pre-crime and post-criminology? *Theoretical Criminology* 11(2): 261–281. DOI: 10.1177/1362480607075851.



## Appendix 1: Topic guide for the Lime project<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction

- Information and introduction. Evaluation of the Lime investigation, our Ph.D. projects, informed consent, our contact information. Tape recording. Confidentiality and anonymity.
- Can you tell us about your role and tasks in the investigation? When/what, role, background.

### 2. The covert investigation – positive and negative experiences, acquired knowledge, regarding:

- Samordningsorganet [an agency that granted money to the investigation and that seeks to strengthen efforts against serious and organized crime at the national level]
- Investigation staff - cooperation between agencies
- Needs for involvement of a Public Prosecutor
- Information sharing between control agencies and the police
- To what extent do the police rely on third parties to detect cases of financial crime and human trafficking? What about this particular case?
- Methodology and professional learning from the covert investigation

### 3. The raid – positive and negative experiences, acquired knowledge based on role/background

### 4. The open part of the investigation - positive and negative experiences, acquired knowledge, regarding:

- Aims and goals, deciding on goals, goal attainment
- Organization of the project group
- Analysis/assessments made ahead of the investigation
- Project management
- Experiences with project scheme and management-level group
- Indicia
- Management of resources/personnel – cooperation with police districts / specialist national investigative bodies
- Priorities within the case – scaling down the case
- Methodology and professional learning from the open investigation
- To what extent do the police utilize available data and registers/analysis?
- International cooperation with police / prosecution authorities

---

<sup>1</sup> Translated from Norwegian by Heidi Fischer-Norman.

- Protection and safeguarding of victims – from the raid and up until court proceedings
- Interpretation/understanding of victims, including potential ‘non-cooperation’ - implications for practice
- Police competence to distinguish between offenders and offended persons
- ‘Crimes without victims’- economic vs. organized crime

#### **5. Culture and strategies**

- Endurance – time-consuming investigation, how to relate to additional cases that appeared during the investigation
- Using the THB [trafficking in human beings] Act vs. using alternative penal/administrative sanctions
- Costs and expenses in large investigations – e.g., possibilities of initiating and investigating new cases
- Important strategic decisions and crossroads
- Why this case? Why now?

#### **6. Methodology and professional learning**

- Ideas about the organization of cases of this scope
- Challenges when facing complex crimes like this – how to adopt their efforts to new and continuously changing crimes
- Cooperation with the business sector
- Final comments on what should have been done / have been done differently?

## Appendix 2: Topic guide for other specialists<sup>2</sup>

### Background

- What was your path to this position?
  - Background
  - Current role in organization
  - Tasks

### WRC

- Can you tell me a bit about the type and amount of WRC cases your district/station sees?
  - Crime types, typical manifestations here.
  - WRC and degree of organization (OC)
  - Differences and similarities in crime types and offenders across the country
- Are these prioritized crime types? Why/why not? Has this changed, in your experience?
- Pros/cons of the WRC term – do you find it helpful or not?
  - Co-ordination?
  - Are there offences that grow less visible in a WRC framework? More?

### Prevention and the police-business liaison model

- Do you experience your liaison work as mostly preventive, investigative, or having to do with intelligence?
  - Gray areas between these?
- Can you tell me a bit about the police's role in crime prevention?
  - Who initiates?
  - Who co-ordinates?
  - Participate in 'flat' structure, or hierarchical?
- Who are the police's most important partners for crime prevention?
  - Tell me more about the collaboration with...
  - What motivates the police to participate? What do you think motivates other agencies?
  - Examples of cases/issues?
  - Are there differences between collaborating on crime prevention with private vs. public partners? Why, why not? How?

---

<sup>2</sup> This is not an interview guide, but a battery of topics and questions from which I drew when interviewing police-business liaisons, managers, investigators, and analysts, depending on their position and expertise.

- Are there any practical implications of professional secrecy for collaboration on projects?
  - Do investigation and prevention differ on this?
  - Private/public?
  - Formal/informal?
- Same or other important partners for WRC investigation?
  - Internally? Externally? Overlapping/adjacent responsibilities with other work units?
- Do you have any expectations for the police reform for collaboration/co-ordination?
- Police or others who discover/suspect WRC? Who reports?
- Do the cases police uncover differ from those reported by partners?
- What makes police suspect WRC in a case/area?
- How would you describe police methods used to target WRC?
- Are any WRC issues particularly challenging to -
  - discover, investigate, prevent?

#### **Pro- vs. reactive methods**

- Would you say WRS is primarily pro-or reactively policed?
- WRC suited for a proactive approach - why/why not?
- What is the role of intelligence in WRC prevention?
- Do analyses have a role in case/issue selection where you work?
- Do you have any expectations for the implemented doctrine in your organizations? Pros and cons?
- NTAES - expectations? Relevance to your job?
- Expectations and needs in terms of intelligence collection on WRC?
- Analytic competence vs. domain expertise. Is one more important than the other?

#### **Intelligence analyst**

- How would you describe the main purpose of your unit? Which types of analysis? What differentiates them?
- Old and new formats in analysis - describe [related to specific report]
  - Relationship between your unit and collection
  - Relationship to other analyst units in org - e.g., crime analysis, strategic analysis in the org? Comments on division of labour, recruitment, traditions?
  - Strategic v. OC intelligence analysis
- Similarities and differences with the scientific research process
  - Purpose?



- Methods?
- Management/steering of the process?
- What does the division between investigation and intelligence mean for your work?
- Case types where proactive approaches are especially well-suited?
- Case types where proactive approaches are less well-suited?
- Recruitment.
  - Who is your dream applicant for positions here?
  - Why? Who do you get?
  - Police/civilian?
- What would you say are the most important/desirable traits and competencies for an analyst here? What would your 'dream team' look like?
- What do the terms pro- and reactive policing signify to you?

### **Organizing and the intelligence doctrine**

- What is the most challenging part of the implementing the doctrine in your org?
  - Rupture with, or formalization of earlier practice? Analysis or collection most changed/similar compared with old model?
  - How will policing be changed post-implementation? Ideally/expected?
- What role does intelligence analysis play as decision support in org today? Is that something you receive feedback on?
  - Does analysis unit have role in case/issue selection? If so, how?
- Top-down-process, cf. the doctrine. Does analysis have a role in identifying 'new' issues, be agenda setting?
- Relationship between ideas - intelligence as top down-process and potential to identify something 'new' Different or similar aims? (Resource management v discovery)
- What is analysis? Do people in org understand it to mean similar or different things? Are there different expectations in org as to what intelligence analysis is supposed to provide?
  - Expectations of objectivity
  - How do you work to maintain/achieve objectivity in collection and communication? What does the term mean to you? Is this something analysts are challenged on?
  - Familiarity with/thoughts about participatory frameworks. Relevance?



## Appendix 3: Information sheet and consent form

### **Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet ”Polisiær innsats mot organisert og økonomisk kriminalitet”?**

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke hvordan politiet møter sammensatte lovbrudd i skjæringspunktet mellom organisert og økonomisk kriminalitet. I dette skrivet får informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

#### **Formål**

Lovbrudd med elementer av både økonomisk og organisert kriminalitet har fått stadig større oppmerksomhet politisk, i media og i politiet. Bruk av legale foretak som ledd i en illegal virksomhet ses som en trussel mot økonomien og arbeidstakere i utsatte bransjer. I dette doktorgradsprosjektet undersøker jeg hvilke utfordringer slik kriminalitet stiller politiet overfor, og hvordan politiets metoder utvikles i tråd med utviklingen på feltet. Prosjektet belyser disse spørsmålene ved å analysere styringsdokumenter og ved å intervju inntil 50 ansatte innen forebygging, etterforskning og etterretning som har befatning med det aktuelle saksområdet. I tillegg gjennomfører jeg noe deltakende observasjon på utvalgte steder i politiet. Jeg rekrutterer deltakere fra både særorganer og politidistrikter. Resultatene vil publiseres fortløpende i vitenskapelige kanaler, og vil samlet utgjøre en doktorgradsavhandling.

#### **Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?**

Politihøgskolen er ansvarlig for prosjektet. Forskningen er finansiert av Norges Forskningsråd. Prosjektet er godkjent av Politidirektoratet og Riksadvokaten. Politidirektoratet har innvilget dispensasjon fra politiansattes taushetsplikt. Mine veiledere for doktorgradsarbeidet er professor Helene O.I. Gundhus og professor Heidi Mork Lomell, begge tilknyttet Universitetet i Oslo og Politihøgskolen.

#### **Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?**

På grunn av dine arbeidsoppgaver, kunnskaper og erfaringer kontaktes du med en forespørsel om å delta i studien. Inntil 50 ansatte innen forebygging, etterforskning og etterretning som har befatning med aktuelle saksområder blir kontaktet med denne henvendelsen. Jeg rekrutterer deltakere til prosjektet fra både særorganer og politidistrikter.

#### **Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?**

Hvis du samtykker til å intervjues, vil spørsmålene dreie seg om dine arbeidsoppgaver, den sammensatte kriminaliteten som fenomen, utfordringer og muligheter innen forebygging og etterforskning, metodebruk, samarbeid internt i politiet og med eksterne kontrolltater, samt organisering og kompetansebehov. Det er fint å ha en times tid til rådighet for intervjuet. Jeg vil dokumentere samtalen ved hjelp av lydopptak og notater. Lydopptaket blir transkribert av meg i etterkant, og notater blir makulert.

#### **Det er frivillig å delta**

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle opplysninger om deg vil da bli anonymisert. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

### **Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger**

Jeg vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene jeg har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Jeg behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Det er bare jeg som har tilgang til det innsamlede materialet. Navnet ditt og kontaktopplysningene dine erstattes med en kode som lagres på en egen navneliste atskilt fra øvrige data. Datamaterialet lagres passordbeskyttet på Politihøgskolens server. Eventuelle utskrifter av ikke-anonymisert materiale oppbevares i låst arkivskap. Deltakerne vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i publiserte arbeider. For å beskrive metoden min vil jeg beskrive hvilke særorganer, distrikter og funksjoner deltakerne som gruppe har blitt rekruttert fra. Enkelt personer er ikke i fokus for analysen.

### **Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når jeg avslutter forskningsprosjektet?**

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 31.12.2022. Da blir personopplysninger anonymisert, og lydopptak blir slettet. Anonymisering innebærer at alle direkte identifiserende personopplysninger (som for eksempel navn og kontaktinformasjon) slettes, og at indirekte identifiserende opplysninger (som for eksempel arbeidssted eller stilling) omarbeides eller slettes.

### **Dine rettigheter**

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og
- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

### **Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?**

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Politihøgskolen har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

### **Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?**

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Politihøgskolen ved Annette Vestby, på epost (anneve@phs.no) eller telefon (47 27 48 51).
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17. NSD fungerer også som Politihøgskolens personvernombud.

Med vennlig hilsen  
Annette Vestby  
Prosjektansvarlig