
Chapter I: Police Science and Research — Introduction

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Police science and research was and still is the core topic and the background of the annual CEPOL research and science conferences. Since the first ideas came up more than ten years ago, basic questions took the floor again and again: Do the police need science? What kind of science and research, what can be called 'applied science'? What do we know about the relationships between the world of policing and the world of researchers? What are shared values and what are differences between the EU Member States related to police research? The idea of 'police science' was promoted and an international working group worked out some ideas within three years. The results were presented at the CEPOL science and research conference 2006 in Bramshill, a book publication followed shortly afterwards. The following meetings focused on selected leading topics, but they also discussed the main basic problems of police science.

This chapter presents five contributions within a time frame of five years: from 2007 to 2012. They all deal with knowledge and information and the way the police are working with these resources. All authors are engaged experts in the field of police science and research, but they take different positions, ranging from a sceptical view on police managers' willingness to cooperate with researchers up to successful experiences of practical teamwork.

Pieter Tops opens with a reflection on knowledge on the one hand and action on the other. The presumption is that daily police work in a 'frontline organisation' (Tops) is

driven by the need for action and reaction, both of them immediately after the case has occurred. Thus, police officers are action-orientated. Generally, reflection and contemplation are the skills of a researcher's working environment, whereas the officers' professional attitudes are much more activity orientated. On the other hand, a detective is 'a researcher' as well — he or she combines different sources of knowledge and information to solve the problem. Following Tops it can be said that the nature of police work is both, action and research orientation. This leads to the performance level as an important and neglected field of police research: 'In brief, police research is characterised by a tension between knowledge kills action and knowledge skills action. The big challenge is to keep balance'.

Monica den Boer highlights communication within the 'narrative' police organisation as a brilliant focus for the reflection of police practice, education, and research. Police research is key to policing, because well-trained and educated officers might be able to develop the organisation. In the police education field research enables students to apply rigid methodological standards, to analyse problems better and draw conclusions. Den Boer then draws attention to the research infrastructure, where a lot of things remain to be worked out: there is a lack of research environments, and only little cross-border cooperation in the field of police research. Networking between police academies, police agencies, industry partners, and governmental and non-governmental organisations could be improved. Den Boer's perspective is an optimistic one,

which believes in cooperation possibilities and the willingness of researchers, police managers and other players in the field to cooperate.

Christian Mouhanna throws a spanner in the works. His outlook is a pessimistic one. He insists on ongoing mistrust and tensions between police managers and researchers when discussing the French case. His starting point is the myth of the police as a homogenous, top-down orientated organisation. Police managers believe deeply in this model, although the reality does not follow. Police research in the field, which discovers that processes are not top-down driven but, to some extent, out of control, may destroy the myth of the homogenous organisation. This is the fear of the managers and this is why they mistrust intellectuals, a group which is above all much less part of the hierarchy and free to criticise the police and which is, from that point of view, a certain risk for the police management and the myth of the homogenous organisation. Police managers tend 'to reject those who pretend to have a more accurate view, and especially when they have relevant analysis. That is why researchers are blamed and denigrated'. After studying Mouhanna's article, which offers a deep view inside the complicated structure of research knowledge and police leadership, many doubts remain: what about constructive cooperation between the police and police research, between managers and intellectuals?

Bernhard Welten and Auke van Dijk give an example of a very fresh and surprising cooperation between the Amsterdam-Amstelland police force and researchers in the 'Juxta' project. Cooperation was built up with academics from unusual backgrounds: no lawyers, no criminologists, no administration experts, but people coming from anthropology, philosophy, artificial intelligence, art or experimental psychology. The police force wanted to have a look inside the organisation from a 'strange' perspective in order to open up new discoveries. Welten and van Dijk describe Juxta as a big success. The researchers named many blind spots that the officers did not notice in their daily practice. They contributed to opening the minds of the officers and instigated many critical reflections. From the police point of view, the authors emphasise 'an intimate relationship with the academic world (which) is necessary for problem solving in a rapidly changing world'.

How does this obviously constructive cooperation experience between Dutch police managers and researchers fit into Mouhanna's sceptical view of mistrust? Comparing the Amsterdam-Amstelland experience with Mouhanna's doubtful, but comprehensible view, offers further questions for discussion: Is Juxta a very single Dutch experience, or can it be generalised? Are Mouhanna's reflections limited to France or must they be taken into account generally?

Peter Neyroud argues from a British point of view; that changing conditions in the development of economy, society and politics are driving a much more systematic approach. The financial crisis and massive cost cuts forced the police to restructure policing, police training and the way the police make use of research. Neyroud identifies a historical situation where the police relationship with science and research needs a radical change. The founding of the new 'College of Policing' in the UK in 2012 should create 'a new partnership relationship with higher education': police training concludes more education items, the establishment of police universities in some countries indicates the adoption of scientific and research issues into professional police education. Neyroud sees the discussion about the professionalisation of policing at the moment 'to test the development of a full-blown professional model — qualification, accreditation, registration and continuous professional development — not just for the senior ranks, but for all those working in policing'.

In summary, some major research dimensions remain open for further discussion. The role of knowledge in practical police performances needs an empirical approach (Tops). The process of setting up research infrastructures is on the political agenda, and the relationships between police, research and education remain on the research agenda (den Boer and Neyroud). Last but not least, we find plausible arguments that deny the willingness of police managers to cooperate with researchers looking inside the organisation (Mouhanna) and at the same time we take note of a remarkable Dutch experience, which gives evidence of a successful cooperation between management and researchers (Welten/van Dijk), an issue for further discussion. Maybe Tops hits on a main point: he believes that the police 'has only relatively recently opened itself to more knowledge-based approaches and reflective processes'.