Article

# Experience or Knowledge? Perspectives on New Knowledge Regimes and Control of Police Professionalism

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**Abstract** Drawing upon ethnographic research, this article explores how implementation and practice of knowledge-based policing are encouraging specific forms of legitimate knowledge in police practices, and how police occupational culture responds to these new knowledge regimes. As in other studies of changes in the police organization, implementation of knowledge-led policing creates resistance by street-level police occupational subculture and facilitates increased differences between management objectives and practitioners views. It is argued that knowledge-based policing in practice promotes a concept of knowledge that indirectly threatens the police officers' traditional experience-based knowledge and professional discretion. To become knowledge-based implies a particular view on knowledge. Knowledge-based policing emphasizes a logic based on evaluation of codified, standardized information-systems, rather than an experience-based, action-oriented, and collegial logic.

## Introduction

The point of departure of this article is to reflect on why reforms towards knowledge-based policing are creating challenges and contradictions between different types of knowledges within the police institution. The article is based on an ethnographic study of knowledge-based policing in Norway (Gundhus, 2005; 2009; 2011). The concept of knowledge is vaguely defined in Norwegian policy documents (Politidirektoratet, 2002; 2007). However, the intention for introducing the concept is to change traditional incident-led policing and make the police better in preventing future crimes. The knowledge reform therefore implies a concept of knowledge founded on evidence-based scientification of knowledge (Politidirektoratet, 2007; see also Sherman *et al.*, 2002).

In this article knowledge-based policing is defined as the extent to which the police use a scientific approach by systematizing their own experiences, and by using other types of knowledge than information generated in the police (Gundhus, 2009). The field work revealed a dichotomy between experience-based and academic knowledge in police practice. Academic knowledge is connected to an understanding of knowledge as abstract, statistical, aggregated, and instrumental, what can be described as 'thin' knowledge, which is useful for managing police organization. Experience-based knowledge was not understood

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as scientific knowledge, but connected to socialization in the police practices, street-level knowledge, and contextual information about identities and environments based on observations and 'thick' intuition. However, from the perspective of a social scientist, this is a rather narrow bifurcated understanding of knowledge (Knorr-Cetina, 1981). Scientific knowledge can be far more flexible and open than, e.g. 'evidence-based policing' are promoting (Moore, 2006).

Because of this lack of clarity, the article will explore how changes in the control of the police are encouraging specific forms of legitimate knowledge in police practices, and how police occupational culture respond to this new knowledge regimes. To what degree can this view on legitimate knowledge be understood as a change from 'occupational-based' to 'organizational-based' control of police professions? As Evetts (2011, p. 411) argues 'occupational'-based control of profession*s* emphasizes autonomy and discretionary judgment as assessment by practitioners in complex cases as essential in defining professions. The contrasting discourse of control is 'organizational professionalism', used increasingly by managers in organization. These two forms of professionalism encourage different forms of occupational values, and in the article it will be discussed in what way this inflect knowledge-based policing and police professionalism.

It will be argued that knowledge-based policing is deeply embedded in two contrasting trends within police innovation. First, it is part of the trend towards educating police officers to become true professionals (Mastrofski and Willis, 2010, p. 75). Secondly, knowledge-based policing may also be understood as part of a trend towards new public management (NPM) that emphasizes management control over police practice, rather than collegial authority responsible to the individual experience-based knowledge and ethic (Evetts, 2009). The thesis is that we increasingly are witnessing a gap in views on police professionalism connected to the introduction of a more standardized and analytical knowledge, emphasizing a particular type of experience that can be measured and compared, and make police organization more manageable, in preference to 'thick' knowledge, leaning on occupational professionalism.

## Knowledge, police professionalism, and police occupational culture

Most definitions of professions include that they are occupational groups that 'apply somewhat abstract knowledge to particular cases' (Abbott, 1988, pp. 8, 318). The concept of profession and professionalism is increasingly used in different occupational groups, work contexts, and social systems (Evetts, 2003). Professional work is often described as based on discretion, which is necessary to apply general knowledge, expressed as rules of action, to individual cases (Molander and Grimen, 2008). Often discretion appear as a non-analysed residual category within theories of professions, in spite of the fact that situational decisions indeterminacy is the basis for a professional requirement of legitimate control over certain tasks (Molander and Grimen, 2008). But there also have to be certain knowledge that qualifies for the performance of those tasks that can be systematized and communicated, and thus learned. As Molander and Grimen (2008, p. 179) put it: 'The requirement for professional status requires both a standardizable and transferable knowledge and indeterminacy in knowledge application', and it is exactly this two-sided dimension of knowledge and profession that will be explored in this article. The concept 'profession' is a disputed term, and implies standards for evaluation (normative connotations)—as 'knowledge', 'truth', 'valid', and more or less 'developed skills' (Molander and Terum, 2008, p. 17). Whether or not policing can be classified as a profession has been addressed by many writers in recent years (Rohl and Barnsley, 1995, p. 237). There is also a debate about the concept of police professionalism, which has contested meaning (Reiner, 1986). For example, Manning (1977) argues that the rhetoric of police professionalism

'is the most important strategy employed by the police to defend their mandate and thereby to build self-esteem, organization autonomy and occupational solidarity and cohesiveness'. Understood in this way police professionalism means the opposite to academization of professions we see in other occupations, it means to reinforce traditional values and practices.[1]

This point illuminates how debates about police occupational culture are interwoven with discussions about police professionalism. Here police culture is variously defined, but central to the understandings 'is the idea that the police hold a distinctive set of norms, beliefs, and values which determines their behavior, both among themselves and operationally out on the street' (Loftus, 2009, p. 3). There have been several important international contributions on the police occupational culture the past decade, in different ways discussing its universal and stable features (see contributions in O'Neil *et al.*, 2007, and also Brown, 2007; Loftus, 2009, Paoline, 2004; Manning, 1989; Waddington, 1999). And there is a growing body of work on the advantages and disadvantages in using the concept as an analytical term, and how to think about it in relation to dominant policies, cultures–subcultures in the police (see, e.g. Waddington, 1999, p. 291), and also the relevance of the concept when studying reforms and change in the police (Chan, 1997; 2007; Loftus, 2009), and police organization (Manning, 2007).

The article will draw on these debates, and particularly how changes in the police organization encourages resistance by street-level police occupational subculture and facilitates increased differences between management objectives and practitioners views (Holdaway, 1983; Reuss-Ianni and Ianni, 1983; Punch, 1983). Reforming Norwegian police towards knowledge-based[2] policing is namely deeply embedded in strategies for reforming police organizations and practices towards performance management and NPM, designed to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of public services (Christensen *et al.*, 2007; Hood, 1991). This has important consequences for other aspects of police professionalism, emphasizing discretion, autonomy, and code of ethics, due to the particular context of control that police professionalism is developed in (Evetts, 2009). Particularly, studying reforms of police work makes it useful for analysing how changes are adopted in the police occupational cultures (Chan, 1997; Marks and Singh, 2007; Waddington, 1999).

However, it is impossible to treat knowledge as independently of other dimensions defining police performance (Gundhus, 2009). While acknowledging the importance of the contributions on police occupational culture, there is a gap in the literature on understanding knowledge-based policing in times of change—particularly how views on knowledge are connected to police occupational culture and control of the police organization—although there are some valuable exceptions (Chan, 1997; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Williamson, 2008) As sociology of knowledge emphasizes, knowledge is not an abstract thing, but integrated in practices, organizations, and discourses (Knorr-Cetina, 1981; Law, 2004; Smith, 2005). And as Manning (2007) rightly points that the organizational and performative aspects of police professions are interwoven in police practice, which make it difficult to analyse police occupational culture separately from the police organizational culture.

## Ethnographic design—two cases

This article is based on ethnographic fieldwork of knowledge-based practices in the police conducted

[1] Marks (2007) explores this in an interesting way discussing the Police Unions' influence on police professionalism and reforms.

[2] In different policy documents knowledge-led and knowledge-based policing are used for the same purpose (Politidirektoratet, 2002, 2007).

from 2001 to 2006. There was accomplished fieldwork in two different police organizations in Oslo, the capital of Norway, a crime-intelligence division and a police station. During the fieldwork it was focused on how knowledge-based police strategies were implemented in practice, and how police occupational culture adopted the reform process. Emphasis was given on how the police officers respond to the new economic, political, cultural, and technological framework; how new knowledge practices is adopted in police occupational culture; how police officers interact with the new demands for accountability; and how new risk tools and management strategies were integrated in the everyday police work.

Both of the cases were strategically selected because they presented themselves as in front of innovative policing in Norway, particularly when it comes to preferred police strategies and use of information and communication technologies.

The first case is a special unit fighting organized crime, such as biker crime, gangs, drugs, trafficking, and economic crime. In 2000, five-month field research (360 h of observation) was conducted in the organization. The unit was established in 1994, and in 2000 it consisted of approximately 100 employees. I interviewed 28 of the employees; 5 of them were civil servants. All the interviewed police officers were male, but four out of five civil servants were female, which reflected the gender balance at the unit. Observations of the activities in the division occurred in various contexts as daily briefings, meetings, various routines, and particularly the work at the communication unit which is supporting police officers on their tasks outside the office.

The second case is a local police station in central Oslo where they have been implementing problem-oriented policing since 2000. I observed the police station from January to July 2004, and conducted 81 h observation in car, meetings, daily briefings, and at the police station's guard. During the fieldwork the total number of employees was 240. I interviewed 16 police officers working at the station, and carried out 12 focus group interviews (29 persons) with police constables working in the patrol unit at the police station. The informants interviewed in focus group were mostly male, which also reflected the gender balance among the patrols.

Summing up the empirical material, 73 employees were interviewed, and 428 h of observation of daily life was conducted in the two police organizations. Document analysis of different kind of policy documents and other reports and evaluations concerning the police organizations was also conducted. The methodological orientation of the project belonged to the tradition of classical police ethnographic studies with roots in police sociology (Manning, 2007; Loftus, 2009; Reuss-Ianni and Ianni, 1983). Ethnography can be described as a study of the socio-cultural contexts, processes, and meanings within cultural systems, and is an interpretive, reflexive, and constructivist process (Smith, 2005; Stewart, 1998). One of the primary reasons for fieldwork in ethnography is to achieve the emic perspective that ethnography promises, which focus upon understanding issues from the viewpoint of the subjects being studied (Morey and Luthans, 1984). Long-term ethnographic fieldwork is also better when the aim is to capture tacit knowledge (Silverman, 2001). The epistemological view is that meaning is constructed in interaction between the researcher and the researched. However, there are several weaknesses with such an approach. Although ethnography is suitable for context generalization, particularly if the aim is to generalize and get overview of a phenomenon; case studies are too context-sensitive and particular. A more comprehensive problem inherent in ethnographic research, which cannot be solved, is whether the integration of themes emerged from the research settings, or were shaped by theoretical knowledge from research on police culture and the researchers own values (Loftus, 2009). However, ethnographic field studies are embedded in an understanding of the connections between interpretation and data, and is based

on assumptions that there are no such thing as pure and objective data available without interpretation. Although the project was influenced by classic police ethnographies when it started, the main research question was aimed at analysing changes in police practice when new technologies and management strategies are introduced, clearly inspired by Ericson's and Haggerty's (1997) study of policing in the risk society. So the findings of the continuing aspects of police traditional police occupational culture were more striking than expected, and police culture became important when the empirical data about police practice where analysed.

The study is inspired by practice theory, which explore culture as a dynamic between discourse and practice (Schatzki *et al.*, 2001). In line with this theoretical framework, the research design integrated an open and flexible approach during the field work and analyzing process. However, Bourdieu's (1990) conceptualizations of different types of power or capital that are current in different fields in social space were also important in structuring the research design. This theoretical framework emphasizes that although concepts of police culture remain a useful analytical tool, particularly when it comes to analyse reforms in police, culture cannot explain everything the police do (Manning, 2007). Power relations and discursive practices influence police practices long before incidents occur, and this double optic formed the research analytical strategy (Høigård, 2011). As Bourdieu reminds us, power and meaning are related in a two-dimensional system, where structural and agency aspects are in constant interaction (see also Chan, 2007).

## Results

As mentioned in the introduction, the starting point for the study was a broad definition of knowledge-based policing. In the following I will highlight some of the similarities and variations found in the two cases when it comes to knowledge-based police practices, and explore how it is embedded in the organizational structure and police occupational culture.

As a point of departure, let me consider Wright's (2002, p. 97) thoughts about new approaches to police professionalism, where he distinguishes between a 'thick' and a 'thin' professionalism. This is translated into an ideal typical model, a concept developed by Weber (1990), differing between experience-based perception of professionalism and a standardized perception of professionalism, which borrows methods and strategies from science, technology, and organizational theories. This is dichotomized in the model shown in Fig. 1.

This dichotomy tells a story of a professionalism going from individual and subjective decisions and settlements to a more externally controlled process. Being implicit in the model we see a shift towards a more scientific way to make good decisions in policing. In that way it is a normative model. However, an ideal type does not portray reality, but is a cultivation of certain aspects of reality. It is constructed to develop tools to structure the given phenomenon. The aim is to generate questions and theses, it is not meant to correspond to all the characteristics of any particular case (Molander and Terum, 2008, p. 17; Weber, 1990, p. 199). However, it is meant to stress certain elements common to most cases of the given phenomenon. And how the process of police professionalism is played out in the two cases is an empirical question, and what I will discuss in the following part.

### Intelligence-led policing and knowledge practices

At the special unit, the knowledge practices are clearly focused on the use of crime intelligence to achieve prosecution and getting control over the most criminally active—the so-called prolific offenders and multi-criminals. The preventive measure is deterrence and incapacitation, and there has been a clear shift in the aim of the unit; from being an information centre delivering information to

| Experience based (thick professionalism) | Standardised (thin professionalism) |
|---|---|
| • Gut feeling | • Formal competance |
| • Sudden impulses | • Standards |
| • Intuition | • Use of technology |
| • Loyality to colleagues | • Loyality to truth and science |
| • Normative affinity with crime control | • Principles of due process |

**Figure 1:** Ideal types describing police perceptions of professionalism.

other departments, at the start, to becoming a unit producing criminal proceedings. At the beginning in 1994, the unit was presented as an information centre for Oslo police district and the goal was to prevent crime among children and the youth. In 2003 it presented itself as a 'clenched fist against organized crime'. The organization never became the intelligence centre it was meant to be from the start; there was huge resistance for it to become an 'information feeder', or to be 'agency for obtaining' information. Characteristic features of police occupational culture, as 'sense of mission', 'preoccupation with crime', 'suspicious disposition', 'conservatism', and obsession of achieving results, were clearly obstacles for change (Loftus, 2009; Waddington, 1999). Meaningful police work was e.g. connected to risky enterprise, the unexpected, and key terms for describing fun work was related to the chasing and the excitement in the hunting (see also Loftus, 2009). It was also highly recognized to be mobile, working out in the field and streets, being productive and making results in 'bandit--catching'. It is important to be active and not passive paper-movers, which is clearly in line with ethnographic research on police occupational culture.

'Proactivity' is central in the crime intelligence approach to policing, and methods in use are police informers, intelligence gathering, surveillance of communication, information exchange, provocation, and undercover police work (Ratcliffe, 2008). However, the most widespread tool is cultivation of police informers, in addition to surveillance devices such as wiretapping and technical tracing. At the special unit, intelligence-led policing is translated into 'rounding up the drug-trafficker'. What are selected as risk objects tend not to be discussed, in spite of the fact that the strategic analysis group is employed to challenge the traditional picture of organized crime. One reason for the focus on drugs may be that the unit is a result of restructuring of the Drug Department. The Drug Department was split in two in 1994 in order to cultivate crime intelligence in the district, and the police officers' 'tool kit', including experience, knowledge, and contacts, are strongly concentrated on this field, making drug control the dominant target. At the same time there are signs that the priority put on drugs is challenged internally, especially from the before-mentioned strategic analysis, which has the responsibility for the trend reports according to all types of organized crime and strategical analysis. However, mainly, the activities and priorities in the unit are pointed towards drug control. To a lesser degree, the intelligence unit made partnerships with other external partners than customs. However, good results are understood as 'producing prisoners with long sentences', although short-term operations' apprehensions were also highly valued due to the good statistical results they produced. These norms and values obviously connected to the value of crime control so strongly emphasized in studies of police occupational culture. For example, the police officers are still seeing themselves as experts in crime fighting, in contrast to 'knowledge workers' and information brokers. They spend time in cultivating their own skills and qualifications, and are oriented towards what I will call smarter, 'bandit-catching'. The following citations are typical when it comes to sentiments expressed about new knowledge strategies:

> I am critical to not produce prisoners or just do surveillance work here at the

> section, and only feed other units with information. We can't sit 60 men and only analyse and feed the people with information. I think that is waste of resources.
>
> Information handler, Special Unit

> We know how to do this, with head and heart, and do not need new words to continue to do the same. We are not going to change the way we now are working, even though we are told to work after new visions. The fact that we are to work long term, does not mean we change our way of working.
>
> Information handler, Special Unit

So, the mode of ordering practices at the special unit is an illustration of the marshalling of the security services in the fight against serious crime that has established intelligence departments in the ordinary police organizations. They are encouraging 'smarter enforcement' tactics, targeting career criminals, trying to destabilize criminal markets—all elements, paraphrasing Bayley and Shearing (1996, p. 588), in an effort to strengthen the 'scarecrow' function of the police. In this context, useful information is 'thick' and based on informants, and is not supporting decision-making processes with systematized information and standardized prospectives on risk analysis. Hence, in that way it fits to the 'thick professionalism' dimensions in Fig. 1 referred above.

Technology is used in order to strengthen experience-based knowledge. The police officers dedicated to collection and communication of information have high competence in interpretations of the intelligence information. They work with knowledge about persons in criminal surrounding for several years, and have experience from undercover operations. A dividing line is also made between so-called dead and live material, and 'the valley of death' is a turn of phrase that is used about police officers who are working with surveillance technologies, and not police informers.

In this social and cultural setting, the employees expressed difficulty in sharing information outside the little group—which, in line with the membership metaphors, can be called 'the hunting party'. Because of the competition—the internal struggles, it is difficult to predict what the police officers will be doing when they make plans for the day and make decisions in concrete situations. The traditional police occupational culture is carrying important ideals to obtain recognition and acknowledgement. However, because of the competition, career planning, internal contests, and battles, it is difficult to work together beyond the small teams. Tendencies for a macho culture can be seen as generating unhealthy competition, as the following quote from a police officer illustrates:

> You might call it an internal struggle—for that's what it is—and that is making it difficult to govern the organization. It is a macho system making people keep their cards close to themselves.
>
> Strategic analyser, Special Unit

Few of employees at the special unit had completed the Norwegian Police University College, and the average age was high, in the middle of the 40s, and there were not any females working as police officers in the unit. Management by objectives and other performance indicators other than the number of convicted and time of case processing were also absent. However, there were obvious conflicts between the opponents and few supporters of the new knowledge regimes, particularly among employees working with strategical analysis and civilians with academic background. In fact, they represented a subculture to the dominant police culture at the special unit, sharing norms, values, and practices different from the hegemonic traditional police occupational culture. The vertical structure in the unit made the professional struggle more present, because there was an absence of management governing and facilitating the new

knowledge-based police work. Other obstacles to the future-oriented proactive policing were the prominence of clear-up rates and counting convictions, both performance indicators structuring the daily practice.

## Knowledge practices at the problem-oriented policing station

At the central Oslo police station the analytical approach to police work is intended to change traditional police patrolling by intervening on the basis of knowledge about what causes crime and what the possible future risks are. The knowledge reform was clearly inspired by Herman Goldstein's (1979) seminal thoughts on how problem-oriented policing (POP) can make the policing more effective. As Scott (2000) argues, analyzing community problems, proactively trying to solve problems, collaborating with other agencies than criminal justice in the responses, and evaluating the effectiveness of the responses to systemically learn what does and what does not work, will contribute to make the police better in crime prevention (see also Eck, 2006). Goldstein's ambition is also that POP 'contribute to building a body of knowledge that supports the further professionalization of the police' (Goldstein, 2012). The aim is to widen the traditional knowledge base in policing, which is built on individual police officers' experiences and so-called street knowledge produced by observation during patrols. In this understanding, experiences are seen as raw data to more statistical and analytical knowledge. Knowledge-led policing at the police station is a strategy for managing potential risks more effectively, by governing the police officers' tasks more in detail, and by managing the police organization directly through the POP process (Politidirektoratet, 2002). By introducing analytical responses to a problem, the objective is to ensure that the problem is effectively identified and tackled in such a way that even future risk can be reduced. The intention is namely to target future risks, more serious and more covert crimes. It offers an opportunity for the police to extend the background for better prioritizing, and become more just by moving 'beyond traditional narrow focus upon highly "visible", but in many cases relatively minor, delinquent and anti-social behaviour of the poorest and most marginalized members of society' (Maguire, 2000, p. 329). The problem, however, is that there is no guarantee that the system will operate in this way.

## Resistance to POP

The police officers at the ground level were rather sceptical to the POP version at the station. Most of them were in their 20s, early 30s, and had learned about POP at the Norwegian Police University College. In spite of the claim that POP is a change towards 'true professionalism' (Mastrofski and Willis, 2010, p. 75), independent of what they wanted to prioritize, all of them complained about POP restricting their autonomy. The police officers experienced POP as a top-down strategy where they had to follow a plan prescribed in the POP manual, and that they to a lesser degree could autonomously decide what to do during patrolling. The officers at the station responded to what they talked about as management-driven targets and the use of analytical knowledge as a threat to professional judgment, experiencing management's message as a signal of distrust. At the same time, the analytical knowledge challenged their view of 'real' policing. In the new management strategies there is, according to Kemshall (2003, p. 58), 'also skepticism in the professionalism and expertise of criminal justice personnel, and a lack of trust that front-line workers could manage risk appropriately if left to their own devices'. This points to the obstacles for implementing 'new' knowledge discourses in police practice, as this quotation also emphasizes:

> We must after all be out working. It is not something like 'find prisoner button'. Or 'problem button' on your PC. So we feel there is a battle here, between those who have the analysis,

> which is more rooted in the management and the theory in a way. It is sometimes too theoretical. We see it, and it is clear. [...] [Either you are the PC-police, or you are the enforcement police, of the operative type.
>
> Operative Manager, Police Station

The findings also indicate that there is dissonance between management objectives and practitioners' views on valuing standardized knowledge, since the groups draw on different concepts of knowledge. Reuss-Ianna and Ianna's (1983) groundbreaking observation, is that where management are concerned with perpetuating an image of professionalism and efficiency, street-level resist to conform to what they perceive as too restrictive organizational directives 'Management cops' and 'street cops' belong to different subcultures within the police organization. This also supports Kemshall's (2003, p. 23) argument that: 'managers and policy-makers valu[e] actuarially based knowledge for its consistency and accountability, and practioners valu[e] professional, individualized judgment for its flexibility and responsiveness to individual factors'. There appear to be tensions and dilemmas between, on one hand, street knowledge, information about persons, experience and intuition, and on the other hand, the analytical, abstract, and aggregated analysis promoted by the management and analysts.

## Competence hierarchy

Different concepts of knowledge were circulating in both organizations, shaped by the employees' position in the structure of the organization. Knowledge types at the ground level are evaluated differently from management's evaluations. It is based on face-to-face interaction, 'street sense', and it is contextual, particularly to places and time, and intuitive, rather than of more abstract and principal types of knowledge valued by management. Interestingly, personal knowledge about criminals was seen as important in daily work among the police officers in both cases, and it was talked about as an assumption to enhance their prestige in the future.

Knowledge types recognized as giving high status in the two police organizations can be divided into four types. These four types are reflected in four types of knowledge ranked low at the section (Fig. 2).

The types of knowledge that are highly ranked have connections to what earlier in Fig. 1 have been described as 'experiential professionalism'. It is characterized by gut feelings, hunches, intuition (rather than analysis) loyalty to colleagues, and attitudes aimed at crime control, all characteristic features essential in describing police occupational culture (Loftus, 2009). This is in contrast to a 'standardized' and the instrumental sense of professionalism in the police practice which is characterized by the adaptation of skills and standards, more transparency and 'science'. The 'standardized' forms that are based on theoretical knowledge, are all being regarded with scepticism: '[S]tatistics is static knowledge', and to analyse are devaluated as police work. Work standardization, forms to fill in and make the reports are met with resistance. Useful information is information that is practical and useful for incident-led and short-term police work. This makes the knowledge practices less concerned with quality assurance. The focus on short-term experience-based knowledge, goes also at the expense of aggregate knowledge and in-depth and causal understanding useful in long-term processes. However, in contrast to thick knowledge in social science, the experience-based knowledge is not systematized and brought in contact with theoretical perspective. This makes experience-based knowledge less useful beyond case-to-case solving, and indicates absence of a systematic approach to experience-based knowledge. This is in line with Finstads (NOU, 2009, p. 12) evaluation of the control mechanism in the police, where a lack of control mechanism promoting experience-based learning is emphasized.

**High, experience based**
- Brand-new information
- Concrete and individual knowledge
- 'Vivid' information from informants
- Experience – gut feeling and data

**Low, standardised**
- Analysis
- Statistics
- Procure information
- Theoretical knowledge

**Figure 2:** Ranking of types of knowledge.

## Discussion

One central question raised by this research is why knowledge-led policing paradoxically becomes more law and order oriented in spite of its connection to the analytical preventive turn within criminal justice. One way to interpret the findings is to look at the before-mentioned research on police occupational culture. As in other studies of changes in the police organization, this study confirms that implementation of knowledge-led policing encourages resistance by street-level police occupational subculture and facilitates increased differences between management objectives and practitioners views (Holdaway, 1983; Reuss-Ianni and Ianni, 1983; Punch, 1983). Particularly, the preoccupation with crime, making officers seek out work which is considered to be thrilling and action packed, the emphasis on being efficient, 'sense of mission', and getting results (Loftus, 2009, pp. 8–9) becomes prominent in findings from Oslo, and may explain why knowledge-led policing becomes more traditional in its outlook. However, the aim of the discussion will further be to use profession theory to explain why police occupational culture resists the new knowledge regimes. Secondly, two different forms of professionalism developed by Evetts (2009) will be put to work: occupational professionalism and organizational aspects of professionalism.

### Back to basic?

In the context of the field work, professional autonomy was translated into resistance to be governed, or maybe better, resistance to not be assigned a role where it is possible to define tasks. In the practice field both the old and young police officers are critical to organizational professionalism and the so-called instrumental 'thin' knowledge. They rather encourage a form of autonomy based on professionalism, emphasizing status, power, dominance, prestige, discretion to deal with complex cases, authority, and legitimacy. However, lacking that type of autonomy, since the police to a high degree is a politically governed profession, external form of regulation, organizational control of the work priorities, work standardization, audit and measurements, and targets and performance indicators, are carried in to make the police efficient and improve (Granér, 2004; Petersson, 2011). Standardized knowledge and numbers are knowledge that facilitates external forms of regulation and performance measurements (Lomell, 2010).

In this context the value of scientific knowledge can potentially become useful. It focuses on improving and developing the profession using new analysis, standards, procedures, and evaluations. Accountability and rationalization are the keywords. Scientification is a child of modernity, and as Eriksen suggests:

> The logic seems to be as if only the scientific foundation for action is better, only the regulation of the competence is becoming clearer, only any lack of the professions action basis is complemented by the rules and regulations, we will achieve a good practice. (Eriksen, 2001, p. 98)

The problem with this strategy is that it ignores the unique and not quantifiable within the professional practice (Eriksen, 2001). Research has pointed to

that insecurity with managing professions, creates need for more and more audits functioning as rituals of trust (Power, 1997). Scientification may build a profession as the expert, which often produces distance to both citizens and to other professions (Brodeur, 2007). It also ignores that knowledge is not neutral and apolitical (Haggerty, 2004; Smith, 2005). As Eriksen (2001) observes, the strategy is based on a mistaken positivistic scientific ideal. It is supposed that challenges with discretion can be solved by refined scientific methods. But this is only capturing the 'cognitive-instrumental aspects of the foundation skills, not their normative and value' (Eriksen, 2001, p. 98).

The coolness of science may be perceived as a degradation of traditional values in police work. The resistance may have originated in a need to protect the professional autonomy and professional judgment. In professional theory this resistance has been conceptualized as a reparation strategy called back-to-basics, based on an occupational ethics marked with re-moralism (Eriksen, 2001, p. 99). The strategy is intended to revitalize the 'original competence', the authentic profession, and invoke the original values of the profession. 'Back to basics' refers to the 'values that once gave unity, strength and motivation' (Eriksen, 2001, p. 99). Here the problem is the assumption that there is a fall of the good norms in policing, and a suppression of the negative aspects of traditional police work; strong power hierarchies, from above-downward posture and arrogance towards others perspectives on knowledge. Protecting 'real police work' can be understood in light of such a back-to-basics-strategy. To a high degree, this back-to-basic strategy is similar to the early professional model linked to Vollmer, Police Chief of Berkley, California from 1905 to 1932, which 'contained a conflict between the detached stance of the professional and the continuing need for policing to adjust to social flux within the community' (Rohl and Barnsley, 1995, p. 238). Here professionalism is linked to greater aloofness from the citizenry, to prevent crime through more effective detection, radio-equipped patrol cars, and better crime analysis techniques (Herbert, 2001, p. 447). However, the aloofness was an obstacle to information from the citizens, and the early model was criticized for creating distance to the public and weakening the police– community relations.

## Occupational professionalism versus organizational professionalism

There is a growing body of work exploring how the traditional vertical organization of police organization is an obstacle to carrying out knowledge-based policing (Lemieux, 2008, p. 230). Although the findings from these two cases indicate resistance from the bottom, resistance to reform may come both from the top and bottom. Managers may be command- and control-oriented and feel most comfortable when police work is done by the rule book. And looking inside a police organization, the police culture seems rather fragmented, defined by the career fields constituting the organization, 'where the diversification of expertise/statuses often generates internal dialectics which oppose occupational culture of managers and police officers, investigators and patrol officers, civilian members and police officers' (Lemieux, 2008, p. 230).

However, since the cultural traits of the police organization is full 'of values such as trust, secrecy, solidarity, the [over] protection of assets and occupational autonomy' (Lemieux, 2008, p. 230), this makes external forms of regulation, audits, and measurements into technologies of distrust since it constrain discretionary and autonomy. In theories of professions, autonomy means freedom to take disciplinary decisions, because of trust in education, internal control of practice and competence. Autonomy is a key-term in defining professions. However, since the police to a high degree are politically governed, the possibility to take decisions about what to do is increasingly becoming restricted (Petersson, 2011). The transition can be described as a change from trust in the professional to trust in quality assurance routines, or from the

professional responsibility to organizational accountability.

To a remarkable extent, police strategies like POP and intelligence-led policing focus on how statistics and aggregate data can make policing proactive and future-oriented (Maguire, 2000). In these knowledge discourses, traditional police practices are described as passive and managing incidents in a reactive way (see e.g. Goldstein, 1990). The police officers are considered to be biased by particular experience and human weaknesses (Kemshall, 2003). The aim of becoming less incident-led and more knowledge-led is to become more rational in decision-making processes through knowledge management, thus making police practice more predictable and effective (Manning, 2010; Ericson and Shearing, 1986). Since the late 1980s, performance indicators, management measures, financial auditing, and accountability have been tightly integrated within the mentioned police reform projects (see also Garland, 2001; Johnston, 2000).[3]

By the use of profession theory, the findings point to the fact that new knowledge regimes are met with resistance, not only because the stubbornness of police occupational culture, but also because they threaten what is perceived as meaningful professional practices. This is mobilizing the classical discussion concerning the opposition between profession and bureaucracy, raised by the principals in NPM (Christensen *et al.*, 2007). NPM, originally introduced to solve challenges in responsibility between politics and profession, emphasizes external control and results, and challenges collegiality as a form of organization (Svensson and Karlsson, 2008).[4]

In the past 10 years there has been a significant change in the way the professional practices are controlled, and particularly the emphasis on post-control has increased. New forms of governance and management are based on a legal-rational and hierarchical authority, different from occupational collegiate authority. Both target setting and requirements of results are situated outside the professions control. This has resulted in new forms of professionalism with a stronger emphasis on individual self-discipline in the work and also achievements of goals and results. These are changes that weaken the collegial organizational structure (Evetts, 2009).

Professionals therefore have to make more direct account of their results to the employers and clients than they have to be collegiate and responsible, based on their knowledge and their ethics. This represents a shift from occupational to organizational professionalism, which Evetts (2009; 2011) recently has identified as two different ideal types of professionalism, and are useful in the discussion of the findings. In an attempt to theorize organizational contexts for professionalism, Evetts (2009) namely point to two forms of professionalism in knowledge-based work, 'occupational' and

[3] The introduction of national police performance indicators that can measure crime prevention and community safety, is relatively new in the Norwegian context, especially compared to UK. Performance contracts have first and almost been connected to the Director General of Public Prosecutions clear-up rate, detection rate, and crime reduction statistics. However, since the new public management ideology is result-oriented, outcomes for crime prevention and safety have to be assessed through quantifiable management measures. Crime statistics become useful for this purpose, also for different types of incident data and customer satisfaction (Lomell, 2010).

[4] In profession theory it is common to distinguish between two types of control: internal and external control. Internal control is usually a pro-control, made beforehand, through the combination of education and socialization into the profession. Collegial self-control is complemented by its own self-regulation and professional ethics. Control can also occur after the evaluation of work performed in conjunction with various responsibilization strategies. Internal pro-control is also checking by rules and procedures, knowledge and skills, and socialization through professional training and work experience. Trust in internal control means that a certain education and preparation practices are believed to guarantee the quality of work. Professional exercise can also be held external accountable through manuals, collegial monitoring, and internal self--control and tested afterwards through evaluation of results. However, responsibility requires independence and latitude to exercise discretion in the conduct of the profession (Svensson and Karlsson, 2008).

'organizational' professionalism. These two forms are linked to different discourses concerning occupational values (Evetts, 2011, p. 411). According to Evetts (2009, p. 248) 'occupational professionalism' emphasizes autonomy and discretionary judgment as assessment by practitioners in complex cases as essential in defining professions. It depends on common and lengthy systems of education, vocational training and socialization, and the development of strong occupational identities and work cultures. It also involves relations of trust towards practitioners from both employers and clients. As Evetts (2009, p. 248) argues the discourse is constructed within professional occupational groups and incorporates collegial authority. Controls are operationalized by practitioners themselves, guided by codes of professional ethics, which are monitored by professional institutes and associations. The contrasting ideal-type in Evetts (2009, p. 263) model is 'organizational professionalism', a discourse of control used increasingly by managers in organization. It relies on externalized forms of regulation and accountability measures as target-setting and performance review. It incorporates rational-legal forms of authority and hierarchical structures of responsibility and decision-making. It also involves the increased standardization of work procedures and practices and managerialist controls. Put simply this can be analysed as a tension between 'responsibility' and 'accountability' when it comes to control professions (see also Svensson and Karlsson, 2008). It can also be analysed as a transition from taking responsibility under trust (responsibility), to taking responsibility through accounting for the activities (accountability). It thus creates a new kind of responsibility that is a hybrid of traditional bureaucratic rationality and an individualized and strong organization-based professionalism. According to Svensson and Karlsson (2008), it may be called individual-focused collective responsibility.

The governance logic put efficiency, management control, and choice in front of professional competence as a legitimate justification. This also affects what is considered usable knowledge. There is a tendency that complex assessments within the professional practice are replaced by evidence-based packages (Svensson and Karlsson, 2008). Evaluations also tend to move the focus from the professional knowledge, independent judgment, and ethics, to results and rules in the form of standardized procedures and routines. These forms of external control challenge and renegotiate the politically formulated social mandate and professional ethics. The professional experience-based, action-oriented, and collegial logic transforms into a logic based on evaluations of codified, standardized, and tightly packed information (Svensson and Karlsson, 2008, p. 271).

## Conclusion

As Mastrofski and Willis argue, the true professionalism model includes models as problem-oriented policing and community policing, which both embrace:

> The adoption of a model of true professionalism (e.g. requiring knowledge and skill in a body of expertise, commitment to an ethical code of how to practice, and a significant degree of autonomy from those outside the profession) rather than be associated with the being a 'snappy, low-level, soldier-bureaucrat'. (Bittner, 1990: 260)
>
> (Mastrofski and Willis, 2010, p. 75)

However, the ranking of experience-based knowledge as more important led to some paradoxical findings in the process of implementing innovative knowledge strategies grounded on true professionalism. The process is characterized by resistance from both the front-line support at the police station and experts in criminal intelligence department. What was meant to be a preventive, smart, rational, and strategic policing, ended up with becoming even more reactive and traditional in law enforcement than the starting point. As

Reiner (2000, p. 77) has shown, measuring police work is not a unilateral process, because '. . .police effectiveness is a notoriously slippery concept to define or measure'.

The practice of new knowledge discourses is to a large degree shaped by bottom-up perspectives, not only by top-down management. And since the reform is top-down, it means less participating and exchange of views between different segments in the police organization (Manning, 2007). Here, the concept of domestication, developed in the field of science and technology studies, may be helpful in theorizing this change since it points out that it is not enough to make the technology and science available to users in order to make the intended difference. Rather, it is the interaction between availability and use that can tell us something about practice (Silverstone *et al.*, 1992; Lie and Sørensen, 1996). Tools and strategies are domesticated, shaped, and adapted in occupational cultures and practices.

The findings point to that knowledge-based policing is deeply embedded in two contrasting trends within police innovation. First, it is part of the trend towards educating police officers to become 'true professionals' (Hove, 2012; Mastrofski and Willis, 2010; The Norwegian Police University College, 2007). As Goldstein (1990) observes, professionalism assume that decisions are not automated. Secondly, knowledge-led policing may also be understood as part of trend towards NPM that emphasizes management control over police practice, rather than collegial authority responsible to the individual experience-based knowledge and ethic. As argued, it promotes a concept of knowledge that indirectly threatens traditional experience-based knowledge and professional discretion. Knowledge-led policing implies a particular view on knowledge. It emphasizes a logic based on evaluation of codified, standardized information-systems, rather than an experience-based, action-oriented, and collegial logic. Accountability constructs tension with professional responsibility. The trend towards becoming knowledge-based expresses an alteration towards a new type of responsibility which is a hybrid between traditional bureaucracy rationality and an individualized and organizational-based professionalism (Svensson and Karlssen, 2008).

Scientification of knowledge challenges both ethics and collegial relationships. There is tension between autonomy and control, between political control and administrative procedures, the management objectives of efficiency and professional collegial and ethical standards. Where professional expertise serves as a pre-control, through measures such as standardized training, expertise is questioned through control of the ongoing work and results in a new control regime, at a distance. What makes the picture even more complicated is that the two processes to a certain degree runs counter to each other; tightening up of management control is opposed to calling for more operational and street-level discretion. In this way the article confirms that meaningful cultural change at a deeper level, also assuming rewriting of what gets valued (Loftus 2009, p. 196).

Obviously, the distinction between knowledge producers and users is in transition, and has consequences for police professionalism. Knowledge-based policing is a many-sided phenomenon, and understood differently in policy-documents, among managers, and practicians. The concept has 'multiple aims', and may therefore be differently put into practice in different cultures and organizational structures. However, the complicated setting requires a wider concept of knowledge than the dichotomy between standardized, statistical and abstract knowledge and experience-based knowledge. As Moore put it:

> Focusing too much on the experience that can be captured in quantitative observational studies and controlled experiments, by assuming that these methods can stand alone, and that they are the only ones that can provide a relatively firm basis for action – we

> will end up, paradoxically, both reducing the amount of experience that is available to us, and slowing the rate at which the field as a whole can learn about what works in policing. (Moore, 2006, p. 322)

The challenge is how to facilitate knowledge management from above and knowledge generation from below? What becomes clear is that performance management strategies like NPM generate dilemmas when it comes to Weber's (1990) distinction between 'purposive/instrumental rationality' and 'value/belief oriented rationality'. Analysed in this way it seems like the Norwegian Police University College draws on the value-oriented discourse while the National Police Directorate draws on the purposive instrumental rationality discourse. The police service is therefore an arena where both rationalities are articulated.

When the purposive rationality and becoming effective are the overall objectives, it may go beyond the police's role as a value-based social institution in society, based on a social mandate. The education and academization of the police is therefore a vital element in conveying this perspective on knowledge in the police service. Scientification that does not value experience-based knowledge can cover knowledge generation from the bottom in police organizations, because it is perceived as distrust of individual discretion. Loose observations of experiences are not very useful beyond the subjective level. The fact that street level has the latitude for reflection, may lead to new areas of achievement and that the police become better in self-regulation. The goal is that experience-based knowledge is systematized and become useful beyond case-to-case.

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