

4. From personal archives to intelligence: visibility and ignorance in forecasting “youth at risk”

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INTRODUCTION

Predictive policing is concerned with the identification (or forecasting) of likely targets for police intervention and measures to prevent, reduce, or disrupt criminal activity (Hamilton, 2021). Central to this work is the use of (quantitative) analytical techniques and historical data (Perry et al., 2013). Operationalizing human action and behavior into data that can be tracked, analyzed, and managed makes possible “policing through data”, an approach that fits under the umbrella of intelligence-led policing where “objective” information guides decision-making and police action (Hamilton, 2021).

In this chapter, we analyze predictive policing through the lens of a crime prevention project targeting youth crime. In 2018, one of the preventive units in Oslo began to order reports on youth crime from the local intelligence unit, the Crime Preventive Effort for Children and Young People, known as the KIBU project, which ran from January 2019 to December 2021. The objective was to identify vulnerable youth and important influencers on whom to target preventive measures. The intelligence unit conducted systematic assessments based on data from police systems and produced a social network analysis to get a picture of young people at an early stage in their potential criminal career. The aim was to share information about these young people and their social network with local crime prevention officers, and information about their role models and youth at high risk with the local patrols and investigators, so that measures could be implemented in a more systematic way.

Drawing on the concept of *ignorance*, which can be produced consciously, unconsciously, and structurally (Proctor, 2008), we illuminate how some information is overlooked or ignored in knowledge production while other information is made visible. Following Bowker and Star, we argue that processes of

classification and standardization are associated with politics and prioritization, both “arriving at categories and standards, and, along the way, deciding what will be visible or invisible within the system” (Bowker & Star, 1999, p. 44). The use of intelligence to prevent youth crime is unusual in Norway (Gundhus et al., 2023). The KIBU project thus represents a novel effort where intelligence analysts systematically identify “candidates” for early intervention based on police database information. First, we examine how risk factors related to young people’s social activity and behavior are operationalized by the intelligence unit and how the intelligence reports are made. Then we examine how new intervention routines are implemented by the crime prevention unit. We conclude by discussing the implications of increased assessment of young people and their associates in the police systems, and the preventive measures taken. We problematize how the project led to increased control practices in what was considered a low-risk group. Interviews also reveal how established practices in the unit were largely informal and “invisible” because assessments and follow-ups were either unrecorded or stored in personal archives. We therefore also address the absence of internal transparency and accountability in traditional preventive police work.

KNOWLEDGE AND IGNORANCE IN THE CRIME INTELLIGENCE PROCESS

Hamilton (2021) identifies three main types of predictive policing: (i) forecasting hot spots, (ii) predicting victimization, and (iii) predicting likely offenders. Identifying individuals who seem likely to carry out a criminal offense is described as a newer approach than identifying hot spots, which means far less is known about type iii (Hamilton, 2021). Both intelligence-led policing and crime prevention are future-oriented, and the term “prediction” is used several times in the Norwegian Police Intelligence doctrine (Police Directorate, 2020). The KIBU project aimed to identify the likelihood of future criminal offenses and, therefore, relates to Hamilton’s third category.

Intelligence, as a form of knowledge of crime, is shaped by processes and political mechanisms of framing, selection, and non-knowledge (Chan et al., 2022), that is, how questions are asked, what theories are used, and how some topics attract attention, while others are overlooked, together with reliance on what is known while ignoring what is not yet known (Chan et al., 2022, p. 3). Chan and colleagues (2022) discuss a shift from the current case-based intelligence to data-driven intelligence, with the latter calling for increased attention to the veil of neutrality and supposedly value-free judgments. As things stand, current intelligence practices include many framing, selection, and non-knowledge processes that may corrupt knowledge production and possibly lack rigorous self-criticism. Such effects can be seen, for example, in law and order

politics, resource constraints and prioritizations, and the neglect of family violence (Chan et al., 2022). The aims and processes of operationalizing human action and behavior into data can be described as *datafication*. Datafication refers to “the transformation of material or information into data that can be recorded, quantified, and analyzed” (Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013, p. 83, cited in Chan et al., 2022, p. 2). Datafication therefore means quantifying qualitative information and generating valuable insights in order to improve decision-making and is central to the move from current intelligence practices to the ideal of a data-driven approach (Chan et al., 2022). Although datafication calls for standardized processes, we will show that these processes are highly discretionary and selective, rather than being data-driven.

Drawing on Foucauldian scholarship, Flyverbom and Garsten (2021) explore feedback loops of knowledge production in organizations and the way knowledge processes shape futures. They note how “knowledge production involves processes of refining, selecting, reducing, and integrating different kinds of resources with the goal of creating the foundations for decisions or other actions to be taken” (Flyverbom & Garsten, 2021, p. 4). Emphasizing practice and process, knowledge production is an activity at the intersection between what we can see or sense, what we can know or produce knowledge about, and what we can govern or consider important and act upon. The same is true of the “sensemaking” that criminal analysts seek to do, so as to identify what is important and to make actionable recommendations (Chan et al., 2022). Flyverbom and Garsten’s (2021) discussion implies that knowledge may be overlooked, but this is not discussed explicitly. However, Flyverbom (2022) shows that generating new ways of seeing, knowing, and governing organizational matters makes what we do more visible than ever. The concept of visibility also points to the need to decide what should be disclosed or kept secret, and what should be monitored or ignored (Flyverbom, 2022, p. 2).

From a Foucauldian perspective, different forms of ignorance are necessarily part of knowledge production. Even though Foucault himself does not speak explicitly of ignorance or non-knowledge, his archeologies and genealogies describe things, bodies, and identities that are tacitly formed by epistemological formations (Croissant, 2018, pp. 335–336). The research field of ignorance, or agnotology (from the Greek word *agnosis*),¹ is concerned with the many forms of ignorance and non-knowledge and has similarities to the study of absence (Croissant, 2018). As McGoey points out, “In many ways, ignorance has been a central, though under-emphasized, focus of social scientists who

¹ For a description of the making of the term *agnotology* and the fact that the term *agnoiology* already existed, see Proctor (2008, p. 27).

have explored the uses of selective knowledge in justifying decisions in social life” (McGoey, 2012, p. 557).

A key point in this chapter is that ignorance can be recognized as a methodological and epistemic challenge, as the process of intelligence gathering is inevitably limited by human and technical factors that may lead to blind spots (Rappert & Balmer, 2022). This is in line with ignorance as a *selective choice* (or passive construct) as suggested by Proctor (2008). As Proctor (2008, p. 7) notes, “*ignorance is a product of inattention, and since we cannot study all things, some by necessity—almost all, in fact—must be left out*” (Proctor, 2008, p. 7). Ignorance as “missing matter” can be understood as a selective choice, as inquiry is always selective in that we “look here rather than there” (ibid.). Thus, in this chapter, we are concerned with the ignorance that comes with the necessary decisions and limitations in the work we study. We will therefore unpack the ambiguity and lack of transparency built into discretionary and expert judgments. Ignorance can be explored through mistakes, misconduct, or failures (Croissant, 2018). For instance, it can be manifested in internal communication practices, whereby ignorance may result from compartmentalization and structural factors, or from trade-offs in centralization processes. Organizational cultures can also be used as a framework for understanding ignorance by looking at their blind spots and prioritization of data (or nearsightedness, as noted by Proctor (2008)), or at how, for instance, intra-organizational competition for resources and prestige may cause their mission to be ignored or distorted (Croissant, 2018). We also pay attention to how ignorance can serve as a means of resistance to knowledge, for instance, as a limiting or selective approach in making use of information or information-based outputs. A deliberate refusal of knowledge or technology may occur due to understandings of the costs of certain kinds of knowledge, e.g., ethical issues (Proctor, 2008, p. 22). Approaching ignorance as a methodological problem (rather than just a lack of understanding or data) means that ignorance can be understood in more relational and graded terms. This enables us to study the interplay of what is produced and maintained as known, and unknowns and silences (Rappert & Balmer, 2022, p. 350).

METHODOLOGY

The empirical data underlying this study consist of 14 semi-structured interviews with a total of 18 informants, of whom five were women. In addition, we draw on an internal evaluation of KIBU carried out in 2019, along with personal notes taken at KIBU presentations in October 2019 and May and June 2021. We also draw on approximately 17 hours of observation during the final KIBU round in November 2021.

Seven of the interviews are key informant interviews with police officers who participated in the KIBU project and form the main body of reference data used for analysis in this chapter. In the quotations used below, respondents from the crime prevention unit are referred to as CPO, and those from the intelligence unit are referred to as IA. We also conducted interviews with five crime prevention specialists in the Oslo Police District (referred to as WG in quotations). Two interviews with legal professionals and a group interview with five officials at the Norwegian Police Directorate provided contextual information on crime prevention strategies.

The interviews were conducted between late autumn 2021 and late summer 2023 by either the first or the second author and transcribed verbatim. The interviews were semi-directive, allowing informants to talk spontaneously and cover as many points as they wished. They were initially coded and analyzed using a thematic analysis inspired by Braun and Clarke (2006). Codes and themes across the material were identified inductively, supported by a subsequent abductive process addressing theory. All quotes and documents were translated from Norwegian to English by the authors.

The research received special approval from the Police Directorate to observe the police. Interviews and observations of people were conducted after approval had been obtained from the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (SIKT), which is responsible for enforcing ethical guidelines, and after the chiefs of the police districts and the Police Directorate had given the go-ahead. Each participant, recruited on a voluntary basis, received and signed an information sheet that outlined the aims, methods, and implications of the research, its anonymization process, ethical guidelines and data management, and the freedom to withdraw from the project at any point.

ANALYSIS

Youth crime has long been high on the agenda in Norway and has been prioritized both nationally and in the Oslo Police District, where there are approximately 2,300 police officers,² of whom 100–120 work in designated crime prevention units in various police stations. These units and the crime prevention officers (hereafter referred to as CP units and CP officers) have traditionally worked with children and adolescents. CP officers rely on a community-oriented logic emphasizing personal relations, trust-building, direct information, craftsmanship, tacit knowledge, involvement, discretion, and experience (Terpstra & Salet, 2019, p. 244). CP officers have a large and varied

² Only counting police officers, the number is approximately 2,300. Counting all employees, the number is approximately 3,400.

portfolio of tasks and pursue universal, selective, and indicative prevention strategies. In Norwegian policing, the term “person-oriented crime prevention” is often used to describe work that aims to identify individuals “at risk” in order to implement measures to prevent further undesired developments or (re)offending. Often this means informing other stakeholders, such as child protection services, of concerns and incidents. But the police may also conduct formal conversations with young people and their parents, make informal contact, or monitor developments over time.

In 2014, the first version of the Norwegian Intelligence Doctrine³ was implemented in the Norwegian police, replacing the National Strategy for Intelligence and Analysis (Police Directorate, 2007). An important catalyst for the new intelligence logic and risk-based approach was the desire to improve crisis management and emergency policing, following criticism of the police after the 2011 terrorist attack (Christensen et al., 2018). The Norwegian Intelligence Doctrine (Police Directorate, 2014, 2020), aimed to change the established notion of intelligence being primarily linked to serious organized crime (Gundhus, Talberg & Wathne 2022). Emphasizing intelligence as decision-making support, the doctrine aimed to establish a common understanding of intelligence, define key concepts, and describe a procedure for decision-making (Police Directorate, 2014, 2020). When the Norwegian Intelligence Doctrine was implemented in 2014, CP officers were not actively involved in its implementation or trained in intelligence-led policing (Gundhus et al., 2023). Although both intelligence and crime prevention are future-oriented, the association of intelligence with risk assessment and the military led to skepticism among CP officers (Gundhus et al., 2023). However, in 2018, some CP officers in a central unit grew weary of working mainly with young repeat offenders and commissioned an intelligence report to identify young people at risk of committing crime at an earlier stage; this led to the KIBU project.

KIBU’s main aim was to provide the crime prevention unit with an intelligence report that would identify vulnerable young people and important influencers so that targeted preventive measures could be taken at an early stage. In line with the above-mentioned intelligence doctrine, the heads of the crime prevention and intelligence units agreed to operationalize the information needed for early intervention with the following three questions:

1. Which children and young people were involved in a recent negative incident?
2. Which children and young people exert the most negative influence on other children and young people?

³ A second version was published in 2020.

3. Who appears to be criminal role models for the children and young people?

These three target groups, all of whom were to reside within the area of the local police station, were categorized into green, yellow, and red candidates. The main goal of the KIBU project was to identify the green candidates, as explained by an intelligence analyst:

(...) we were unsure of the extent to which the CP unit managed to catch all young people logged in the police registers. Or if there were young people out there who might be repeatedly involved in incidents, which were questionable, but not criminal cases, right? Young people that were always there or nearby but weren't caught. (IA3, 2023)

The first phase of the project included the heads of the units agreeing on a plan for data collection from three police registers, which we will look at in more detail below.

Identifying “Candidates”

In accordance with the intelligence doctrine, the project aimed to be what was described as an analytical and objective approach to identifying young people who perhaps needed to be subject to preventive measures at an early stage. The use of the word “objective” indicated that selection was not to be based on police officers’ own preferences and personal knowledge. Nonetheless, what has already been registered in police records is necessarily selective and biased (Kaufmann, 2018; Lundgaard & Gundhus, 2024). The registrations are outcomes of sorting things out, and each registration “valorizes some point of view and silences another” (Bowker & Star, 1999, p. 5).

The three police registers that were used provide (i) information on criminal cases, including data on those convicted or accused, suspects, witnesses, and victims (*PAL STRASAK*), (ii) reports of incidents recorded by the command center and the patrols (*PAL PO*), and (iii) information in the intelligence register (*Indicia*). The primary system searches included all offenses or disturbances in the previous 12 months involving persons under the age of 18 with a registered address within the geographical unit. Further system searches were performed by searching for all persons mentioned in the registered offenses or disturbances. The results from *PAL PO* included all incidents recorded in the previous year in which young people residing in the geographical unit were involved, a description of the neighborhood they belonged to, and other people involved and their roles. The results from *PAL STRASAK* showed all criminal cases in the previous year in which young people residing in the geographical

unit were involved, together with other people involved and their roles. Indicia provided all registered information on young people living within the geographical unit for the previous six months. This means that people over the age of 18 linked to an offense or disturbance from the primary searches were included. The aim was to get more information about role models for the green candidates, and thus answer the information need.

Police systems (such as Indicia) have limitations regarding handling large data analysis, and the analysis was therefore conducted in Analyst's Notebook (ANB). The data could not be transferred directly to the data analysis program that the intelligence analysts used due to privacy regulations. The extracts were therefore first imported into Excel to be structured and categorized as part of cleaning the data to prepare it for further analysis. This was described as "*making the information the same from system to system*" (IA3, 2023). After this, the data was imported into ANB, a software tool used to compile, process, and visualize information based on the entity-link-property methodology. An entity can be a person, a criminal case, an event, or a piece of information. The links are the roles the person has in the criminal case, event, or piece of information. Once the data was collected and visualized in ANB, an analyst went through the system-generated clusters and zoomed in on individuals to see details of the relationships between an entity and the links. One of the analysts described the work as very time-consuming and manual:

It is very manual work, there is little automation in it. ... I think a lot of people would probably expect tools that were smarter, which certainly exist, but that was not what we had available. The data you get in Analyst doesn't really represent anything other than what you put in, it's just a system that helps you put it together. (IA3, 2023)

The cleaning process is based not only on selective information already recorded in the police register, but also on a significant element of discretionary judgment in the structuring and processing of the extracts.

Here we touch upon the use of discretion again. Because ending up in the police register is not necessarily a negative incident. One may have been accidentally involved in a major incident. Say you're out walking, and something happens on the road near where you are. Then a police patrol comes to the scene and registers potential witnesses who are entered into a log. It is not necessarily a negative event. It [the term "negative incidents"] was probably more used as a term to describe a situation where the person concerned was to some extent involved in an incident, such as being in a place where a crime was committed. Or that you were present or with people who were otherwise very well known for crime. Beyond that, I'm not sure if I had a definition of a negative event ... It is, after all, an assessment based on discretion, no matter how precisely you define it. Considering the situation, it can be about how close you are to the event. Were you 100 or 10 meters away? Did the person in question know the person who committed the crime or was it a complete

stranger, and a pure coincidence that you just happened to be near? The assessment was made by the person who worked on the extracts and went through the information. Then you have cases where, like, I think there would be a consensus that it is a negative incident. We can interpret it as a negative incident. Or on the other hand, a consensus that this was completely coincidental. It could have been anyone. There are no registered connections between the person and the situation. (IA3, 2023)

Discretionary decisions are an inevitable part of how information is interpreted and given meaning, and context is often left out when entering information into the system. We will now look at how this affects the techno-social processes in the co-production of risk assessments, focusing on how ignorance influences individual and collective knowledge processes.

Discretion in Categorizing and Labeling “Candidates”

Due to the considerable amount of information about young people at risk, there was a need to prioritize who should be followed up as “candidates.” To do this, the project used selected crime indicators to classify the likelihood that someone would develop a criminal career. In the following quote, an intelligence analyst described this prediction process:

In intelligence, we are keen to clarify the premises we use to make assessments. We are dependent on visualizing this because intelligence is basically future-oriented in the interests of supporting decision-making. When you are forward-looking, you have to make some analytical leaps. You start from what has happened or what is happening, and then you can make a few assumptions. This is, of course, what you do to move forward or to look ahead. ... By good assessments I mean visualizing the premises on which the assessments are based. These premises can often be part of a recipe or so-called indicators. Some indicators have been selected in advance as supports for an assessment. They will vary from assessment to assessment, depending on which assessments are to be made, the topic being assessed, and a number of other factors. However, the use of indicators or criteria is a minimum requirement. It has some advantages. One is that you can make visible what you have based the assessment on, and the other is that if you need to make the same assessment of another person or another situation in the future, you can use the same set of indicators. (IA3, 2023)

The analyst emphasized the need to make the premises for the forecasts transparent, which the risk indicators will help with. The indicators applied draw on factors gathered from selected literature. A Norwegian qualitative study of youth- and gang-related crime (Lien, 2011) was particularly mentioned, as was a Danish study of “street boys” (Wellendorf & Cakmak, 2007) together with an enquiry into an open drug scene conducted by Oslo Municipality (Oslo Kommune, 2017). This selection indicates that indicators related to street gang- and drug-related offenses are weighted and thus implies how other types

of youth crime are ignored. The operationalization of the crime indicators varied somewhat between the green, yellow, and red groups, as will be described below. As the risk indicators were not built into the analysis program, this work was done manually by going through all the entities in the network map. This manual and discretionary work was described as time-consuming.

... if the systems had talked more to each other, then... A concrete example... If only it were possible, for example, to directly import from all systems straight into Analyst's Notebook, and at just the touch of a button, bring up criminal cases against parents and family and the like. ... We have that information available, but it takes time to go through it. (IA1, 2021)

The green group was the most important target group for the crime prevention unit. As mentioned, the green group consisted of children and young people who had been involved in a *negative incident*. However, what was meant by a negative incident differed between cases and was determined by judgment, as shown above in the quote about discretion and the "cleaning" process. A majority of the green candidates had criminal records. If the analyst thought a person might be seen as a candidate, further searches were made in the police systems to see if there was more information available or if there were reasons why the person should not be included further. It could be that the person was already being followed up or did not actually belong to this geographical unit. If no such information was uncovered, the analyst proceeded to search the registers to find answers to the following eight risk indicators for the green candidates: (i) parents not living together, (ii) signs of drug use in the household, (iii) signs of mental health problems at home, (iv) family members with a criminal record (and of what kind?), (v) association with other people linked to crime, (vi) use of alcohol, (vii) use of other drugs, and (viii) being the victim of violence/abuse at home. The indicators were rated "no" or "yes", with yes giving one point per indicator and a potential top score of eight. This would predict an increased risk of criminal behavior and is thus the predictive element in intelligence analysis. In 2019, 66 individuals were included in the green category, and of these, 16 scored four points or higher on the selected criteria, indicating that these should be prioritized. What these 16 had in common was that they were registered as having family members involved in criminal cases. They also had high scores on association with people who commit crimes and having parents who do not live together.

The interviewees said the process involved great uncertainty. They first identified a person in the extracts who they thought had been part of a negative situation or who might have committed a crime. Then they did further searches, and based on the information available at the time, checked if the person met these criteria. The person was therefore identified and assessed in

light of the indicators. This process can lead to multiple confirmation biases, as the analyst is looking for these predefined risk indicators. The working process also systematically ignores protective factors that may reduce crime risk, as this data is not available in police records.

In October 2019, the participants presented the KIBU project at the Norwegian Police University College. The use of risk indicators for sorting young people was problematized by several of those attending, which, according to the internal evaluation and our observations, led to certain risk indicators, such as parental divorce, being given less weight. The use of alcohol as an indicator was abandoned, as the police did not have information on this for all candidates.

... we see that we are not able to answer all the risks. We don't know if they drink alcohol when they are with their friends at a party, unless the police have been there and seen it, and recorded it in the systems. There is certainly information that this or that person has been found extremely drunk in the center of Oslo. Okay—check, then we know he drinks, but we don't have that on everyone. For that reason, little weight will be put on this. (IA1, 2021)

This argument can be seen as “availability sampling” (Hamilton, 2021). Recorded data produces knowledge that is later used for knowledge production (e.g., intelligence) in projects such as KIBU, which affects which indicator values can be provided for individuals, and by extension, the framing of the project. This illustrates the dual effect of ignorance or non-knowledge as a methodological problem: limitation by what is available. Field notes from our observation of the project in 2021 show that the event(s) the young person was linked to in the systems weighed most heavily in the analysts' assessments, rather than information about childhood conditions that was also available. However, domestic violence was strongly emphasized as a factor that could lead to the need for further intervention.

Another aim of KIBU was to highlight individuals who seemed to influence children and young people in a negative way. This is in line with social learning theory, which argues that persons exposed to criminal definitions and social reinforcements rewarding criminal behavior are more likely to become involved in crime (Akers, 1977). These “influencers” were divided into two categories: yellow if they were under 18, and red if they were older. The yellow group includes children and young people who, through their active criminal role, are able to influence other children and young people to commit offenses. They were identified using built-in analyses in ANB to identify the most central or “active” individuals. The yellow group largely overlaps with the group the crime prevention unit usually works with (young repeat offenders), and in 2019, there were 20 young people aged 14–17 in it. The red group comprises those who appear to be criminal role models. They are over the age of 18 but

are linked to minors in the police registers and can encourage children and young people to commit criminal offenses. In 2019, there were 19 of them on the red list.

The criminal role models are the same target group as the most quantitatively active criminals. For example, 10 of the 14 most active individuals, who were involved in many criminal cases, are included in the list as yellow or red candidates. KIBU is thus a prioritization method less heavily based on “objective” data points. However, the interpretation of these is associated with a theoretical understanding of the causes of crime. The list of green candidates labeled with risk indicators was then sent to the CP unit, which was able to comment on it (so-called “tech-washing”). Meanwhile, the analysts would work on a thematic report on certain categories of young people, for instance, on girls committing violent acts. Once the CP unit had commented on the list of candidates, the analysts finalized the thematic report and the candidate report and sent them to the CP unit to help decide interventions. The risk assessments of green candidates are therefore important for visualizing young people who may develop criminal careers. The young people were visible in the police registers since they had registered incidents, relationships, and risk factors in the database, while protective factors that were not visible were ignored. For CP officers, the yellow and red target groups are just “nice to know” information providing an overview of the green candidates’ network, but information about them is passed over to the police patrols and youth crime investigators. The interviews indicate that this information was neither requested nor acted upon by these units.

Actionable Intelligence?

The goal of the intelligence cycle is twofold—to produce actionable intelligence and to be forward-looking. In line with the intelligence doctrine, the intelligence report is handed over to the manager, who decides what action to take in light of the report, resources, and ideas on what works best. What was important for the CP unit was the green candidate list and initiating early intervention. One of the interviewees described this as necessary because the green candidates were “untouched”:

Yes, they have appeared in the police systems, but no action has been taken, there have been no conversations with the parents, no child protection notices have been sent, they have just been left there, untouched. (CPO1, 2023)

In such cases, the manager of the CP unit decided to make home visits, combined with police conversation interventions, at an early stage. Police conversation interventions (in Norwegian “betyringsamtaler”, which translates

as “conversation of concern”) are formal conversations, regulated by law, between police officers, parents/guardians, and their child regarding concerns about the child’s activities. According to Section 13 of the Police Act, children and young people “at risk” can be *invited* to voluntary conversations, but cannot be summoned to attend conversations, as this requires *reason to believe that a child has committed an offense*.

Police conversation interventions are frequently used in person-oriented prevention, but little is known about how they are practiced or their effects (however, a recent study provides valuable insights; see Gashi, 2024). One of our informants described why the head of the CP unit considered police conversation interventions valuable:

... Our statistics are very low for police intervention conversations, compared with [unit] and [unit] in Oslo. They have carried out many more than us ... And then it was my manager who said that we should at least do police conversation interventions. And I’d always been skeptical about that, ever since I started working in the police. And that’s when I thought that we could do them, and we’d find out if they worked. (CPO1, 2023)

Several analysts and CP officers said in interviews that they considered it questionable and resource-intensive to conduct home visits at such an early stage in young people’s lives. One of the analysts thought it preferable to pass on significant information about young people to social services. Whether anyone declined the home visits and conversation interventions was neither problematized nor discussed explicitly in the internal evaluation, indicating that ethical considerations related to the voluntariness of home visits and conversation interventions were ignored.

As mentioned, in 2019, 66 young people with varying risk scores were included in KIBU as green candidates by intelligence analysts. The majority, 50, received home visits/conversation interventions, and this even included one additional young person. This indicates that the CP units not only ignored the prioritization and assessment based on the indicators suggested by the analysts but were also open to adding individuals not on the list. There was therefore a strong focus on police measures, which were almost automatically implemented across the whole list, regardless of the risk score. This was criticized by the analysts:

Because I completely agree that the danger here is that intelligence agencies, by using indicators, contribute to further stigmatization: if, say, you deliver the product to the CP unit, and they take it at face value and just go straight to the young person, showing up at the door, in uniform, for example, and talk to them. But we didn’t necessarily think of measures in that way, and I understand that there is a lot of concern about that part. How the police choose who to target is one thing, what they do with that information is another. (IA3, 2023)

In the conversations, the CP officers focused on matters such as significant milieus and/or rules in the home. So-called family agreements (informal “contracts”) could also be made, in which it was laid down what children should do themselves and the parents’ responsibilities, such as agreeing on what time children should get home (like a curfew). It could also mean that parents allowed the police to talk to representatives of the child’s school.

After the home visit, there might be other preventive measures, such as notifying child protection services. KIBU set out to monitor candidates and register undesirable incidents for 12 months after the report and to take appropriate measures promptly. It was up to each individual CP officer to assess what he or she considered to be an unwanted incident for the person they were monitoring. Various teams in the unit were responsible for this work. Since adverse events were interpreted in different ways, there were also variations in follow-up, with some being monitored more closely than others. One goal was to evaluate the effect of the follow-up, but several factors made this difficult. For example, the CP unit which initiated the project had no control over how the patrols followed up with the young people on the yellow and red lists.

It was desirable that the effects of KIBU should be measured, but this variation in the practice and recording of the follow-up reduced the value of the evaluation. The internal evaluation even concluded that follow-up work after the first home visit did not fulfill its purpose, as there was great variation in how this was coordinated and implemented.

More systematic use of databases and data analysis means that young people who are registered in police systems are seen, assessed, and dealt with. This was described as a “safety net” by CP officers. To some extent, this safety net may appear to have acted as a reassessment or “second opinion”, as the selection included young people from one year ago. However, the starting point for rapid intervention was when the CP unit received the report, which did not help achieve a rapid response, as the report was delivered quarterly.

The project was deemed successful in the evaluation report in that 91 percent of the candidates had not previously been subject to assessments or preventive measures, and that the ability to identify and work with vulnerable young people had increased considerably. The year 2019 also saw a sharp increase in the number of police conversation interventions. Enthusiasm was also expressed in interviews regarding the way the system made “unknown young people” visible.

When the first report came, we had a child protection consultant working with us, and she looked at the green [candidates] and said, we don’t know 80 percent of those. So it was like a hallelujah atmosphere. Now we have done something, now we have been really clever. Same with these yellow candidates, the young people who were most active, we knew them. But with intelligence making a report on them, we got an overview of how active they actually were, and where they were active and

things like that. And then there were these red candidates, we also knew them, but there were several of them that we didn't know that like "wow, you obviously spend a lot of time with kids." We were not aware of the extent. (CPO1, 2023)

However, the evaluation also shows that some of the young people (six out of 67) had already had follow-up interventions, suggesting that the young people identified in the project (especially in the first year) may have already been assessed by CP officers. This was also confirmed in the interviews:

Yes, what we experienced, or at least the way I experienced it when it started, was that we already had a lot of contact out in society, compared to what the intelligence in the office had. So, intelligence obtained information based on systems, while we obtained information based on what came in from various partners. And we saw that we were often already taking measures against the individuals who had been selected by KIBU. So that was why, in a way, it just confirmed that we were monitoring the right people from a system-based perspective. But often we already had measures in place, or had already assessed many of those [candidates], which we did not prioritize on the basis of age and such. (CPO3, 2022)

Three points can be drawn from how the CP unit interpreted the KIBU report as actionable intelligence. First, it is possible that the visibility of the green candidates made some CP officers eager to follow them up, or to increase the "statistics." Intelligence aims to be action-oriented, and action was taken, but without considering its negative effects. Secondly, this action-oriented reaction was reinforced by the strong propensity of police culture to react fast. In its evaluation, the CP unit is primarily concerned with counting the number of home visits/conversation interventions and assessing how quickly these were completed. The average completion time is thus divided by the number of home visits to "see which team has worked most efficiently." Home visits with conversation interventions became a proxy for effective prevention work in the project, in line with the traditional view that rapid responses reduce repeat crimes. The interventions became ends rather than means. Thirdly, having a list of targets may also have triggered a precautionary approach by CP officers (Flyverbom, 2022).

From Personal Archives to Accountability

As part of a police reform, there was major centralization and reorganization of work in the Oslo Police District in 2016: some police stations were merged, as were two crime prevention units. Because of its central location, one of these units had previously focused on nightlife, violence, pickpocketing, and robbery, rather than on young people. The other unit, also centrally located, did more traditional work with young people, focusing on establishing trust,

dialogue, and prevention of substance abuse. The interviews reveal how this difference in institutional crime prevention logic led to disagreement in the merged CP unit. Some of the officers feared that the KIBU project would lead to less autonomy and discretion in prevention work.

And in fact, it didn't go completely smoothly. There was a lot of professional pride, which led to a few collisions. But it worked out, when I look back. So, I think many mergers have actually worked worse. But there was great professional disagreement, I remember, about what should be done and how to prevent crime. (CPO1, 2023)

We can also see these changes in institutional logics (see Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury, 2012); in research on community policing—in, for instance, Terpstra and Salet's (2019) description of the introduction of management control over community policing in the Netherlands police. They found that all kinds of new measures had been introduced to formalize and standardize work processes, leading to internal conflicts between different approaches to prevention. Community police officers were expected to stop using informal methods and instead use “a formal computer program, controlled by a coordinator in the team, to set up an assignment” (Terpstra & Salet 2019, p. 250). This instrumentalization of the work has led to conflict between different institutional logics.

After the merging of the two units, doubts were raised about the traditional way of working and whether the use of resources was appropriate, as it seemed to target young repeat offenders. The Norwegian Intelligence Doctrine also required more documentation and sharing of information than the old-fashioned, individualistic, and more tacit way of preventing crime. This “old-school” approach, which emphasized experience and autonomy, was criticized for systematically neglecting to record information and make assessments.

... some people believed that working for 15 years in the preventive field, in the same area, and with all the experiences you get, made them better suited to make judgments about whether someone was in trouble, than these cold computers in the analysis office. ... those who had been working for a long time were very negative about KIBU. They thought it was painful and difficult and they were not used to registering their information. After all, these were people who kept things in binders, or in their own folders on their computer. ... I remember asking if I could access their folder and just look at the ones I was researching. And I remember I was told no, that I wasn't welcome to do that. (CPO1, 2023)

Before the KIBU project, CP officers stored information about young people in their personal archives, and it was not available to colleagues. Even if the young people were assessed or followed up, these assessments were private and not shared. Much of the CP officers' knowledge was invisible, as one

interviewee put it: “The CP officers keep it in folders and on post-it notes, like ... or in some cases, just in their heads” (WG1, 2022). The established way of working was also criticized for arbitrary use of information recorded in police systems, depending on what officers chose to bring to parole meetings, for example:

So, in 2018, when this started, we did not use the police systems available. Or we did not exploit the potential of the systems. ... It was completely arbitrary how it was done. Yes, we probably uncovered a lot there. But we didn’t do much more with that information. (WG2, 2022)

They may have uncovered a lot, but it was arbitrary how this knowledge led to intervention. This “old-school” practice differs not only from the analytical approach of the intelligence unit, but also from the new institutional logic adopted by certain crime prevention officers, which led to the move of information from personal files to the police crime intelligence system.⁴

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION: IGNORANCE AND ACTIONABLE KNOWLEDGE

KIBU was a new approach that used intelligence to decide priorities in youth crime prevention, in the interest of early intervention and implementation of preventive measures for those at risk of developing a criminal career. Our analysis shows how the need for KIBU arose from the lack of systematic work in the CP unit. Collaboration with intelligence helps structure person-oriented work and record assessments that facilitate evaluation and control and increase accountability of assessments of young people. However, CP officers also experienced that the increased documentation led to a loss of autonomy and what they perceived as the deprivation of discretion. As Bowker and Star (1999, p. 30) argue, “[l]ike any other classification scheme that renders work visible, it can also render surveillance easier.” The analysis has also highlighted ignorance, in the form of contradictions and blind spots, in several steps of the intelligence process. This is revealed in both individual and collective practice due to the intelligence doctrine’s requirement that previously tacit knowledge should be codified.

Hamilton (2021) discusses several sources of bias regarding what is visible in predictive police models for assessing people “at risk”, and these are also evident in the case of KIBU. Sampling bias can arise from the use of (non-representative and potentially discriminatory) historical data as well as

⁴ There is no “preventive system,” and thus CP officers use systems meant for intelligence, operational work, or investigation.

convenience sampling (readily available rather than “ideal” data). In addition, proxies for crime (e.g., peers, reports, arrests) and failure to address errors or inaccuracies (e.g., the misrecording of persons involved) can lead to erroneous assessments. Another source is feedback loops: a rise in recorded incidents in areas after the police have increased their efforts, for example, may increase intervention in the area. All these biases are relevant to the case at hand. We have also shown the importance of the existence of ignorance at various levels, due to differences in occupational cultures, institutional logics, and values.

When using (selected) indicators associated with crime, many people will have risk factors in their lives without committing a crime—a point that was discussed by interviewees but not recognized as having much importance. What was ignored is that classifications are powerful technologies, and “classification should be recognized as the significant site of political and ethical work that they are” (Bowker & Star, 1999, p. 319). Instead, emphasis was placed on identifying green candidates, all of whom were perceived as “suitable” for early intervention. The CP officers, therefore, ignored the risk scores and (alleged) likelihood of developing a criminal career and overlooked the risk assessments found in intelligence reports. Indicators associated with crime were used loosely and emerged as elusive concepts interpreted in varying ways, or even ignored or overlooked, sometimes due to a lack of data. There is a general lack of data on alcohol, but no corresponding lack regarding drug use, which shows how police data is biased. While there was skepticism about the use of formal intervention conversations, they are the kind of “countable” measure favored by management. In the absence of proportionality assessments, the KIBU project meant preventive measures targeted more individuals than necessary, in what was a “low-risk” group.

Because CP officers traditionally lacked a culture of sharing assessments and decisions, concerns have been raised about the subsequent use of interventions. The fact that they had not known about a large proportion of the “green candidates” one year previously may result from a lack of documentation or assessment sharing (the “old school”), rather than from assessments never being made. The lack of documentation of assessments in the unit, making them “invisible”, may make it seem that many young people were “undetected”. This might happen in two ways. One possibility is that they were assessed but that no preventive measures were considered necessary (e.g., because they were “too young or old”, as mentioned in one of the quotes) and this was not documented. On the other hand, some preventive measures will be “visible” (for example, reports to child welfare services sent by a system), while such measures as home visits or informal conversations with parents, or conversations with child welfare services, may have been carried out but not documented. The candidates subject to the latter measures might appear “untouched” in the system and appear (by KIBU’s definition) suitable for preventive measures.

Young people who may have been assessed at an earlier stage as not needing follow-up were now receiving home visits through KIBU. The project's effectiveness was largely measured by and made visible through the number of home visits/conversations that took place and how quickly these were carried out, as well as by whether any subsequent undesirable incidents were detected and acted upon. This focus on measurement and desire to manage visibility effectively has led to a disregard of uncertainty about the effects of the measures or who they may be suitable for (despite informants expressing skepticism about police conversation interventions), as well as uncertainty about whether the "candidates" have actually been assessed in the past (although this has not been documented). This can be described as "known unknowns" and thus what we refer to here as ignorance. Several young people might have been overlit or overexposed by the new practice (Flyverbom, 2022).

In addition to a "predetermined" approach to home visits, the plan to follow up on each candidate for 12 months was not carried out. Of the 50 young people who received home visits, 16 were registered as involved in "undesirable incidents" after the home visit in 2019. This means that around two-thirds of the green candidates have not been registered as associated with new incidents, while around one-third have been linked to new "negative incidents." This may partly be due to inadequate registration. Five of these 16 were then followed up, but it seems unclear why these young people were selected. A possible reason could be resistance from police officers due to disagreement about the use of resources and whether the project was worthwhile. We have also shown how ignorance can appear in the form of resistance to, or limits placed on, knowledge (Proctor, 2008). For instance, a selective approach is taken to making use of information or information-based outputs.

The risk of labeling and stigmatizing, together with inevitable uncertainty, points to a need for ethical considerations and proportionality assessments. The latter has not been an explicit part of the police culture regarding preventive work. Intelligence, as a standardized process, aims to make visible the premises of assessments and recommendations. Subjective assessments of "negative incidents" become crucial. This is important since assessments of (real-life) individuals as potential offenders can be identified based on officers' ideas, perceptions, experiences, or what's recorded. Local knowledge is important in the first case, and it was prominent in KIBU. However, no more data was collected on what was left unanswered by the available data or knowledge.

Our analysis points to an increased emphasis on the police record in preventive policing. Science and technology studies, in which objects or non-human things are assumed to "make a difference in the course of some other agent's actions", suggest that the perspective on discretion goes beyond the classically discussed human factors of police decision-making (Dymond, 2020). Marciniak (2023, p. 453) contends that "artifacts do not determine their use

through some inherent properties, nor do their uses depend solely on the users' interpretation of the object." Aradau and Blanke (2017) argue that the digital prediction method redirects the police's preventive work from an emphasis on long-term effort to one more about short-term decision-making in near real time. In this case, the registration and visibility of data clearly led to an urge for action and concern that the intelligence needed to be followed up. On the other hand, this urge to act was perceived as problematic by the old-school CP officers. The findings highlight how technological resources are crucial to the co-constructive production of risk. Other software packages will work differently, and other prediction algorithms will be more automated. Similarly, other sociopolitical contexts will present different problematizations. This provides ample scope for studying person-based predictive policing as a situated practice.

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