

Windows into Silos and Skybridges in between - Efforts towards a European Police Science

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Introduction

The existence and availability of police in case of need is an apparently self-evident social fact in the life of every citizen of the European Union. Uniformed police officers on the beat or in patrol cars are probably the most tangible element of the European Commission's all-round commitment towards "a Europe that protects" under the objectives

- To create an area of free movement where the rights and security of both EU citizens and non-EU nationals are guaranteed.
- To ensure that people may undertake in a stable, lawful and secure environment all activities (cultural, social and economic) that further the EU's growth.

(European Commission 2023).

At the same time, the availability of services and mediating effects through (public) police forces is highly conditional and primarily linked to the historical development of modern nation-states and their constitutional resources and arrangements. While policing as a form of organised social control was invented long ago (Grutzpalk et al. 2009), the modern type of police force to which we have become accustomed first emerged in the major capitals of the late 19th century (Fijnaut 1980, Emsley 2016), as a novel tool of government attempting to adapt to the rapidly increasing social dynamics

of the industrial age. In the almost two-century history of the development of police organisation in modern states, the form, character and impact of this social institution have changed and undergone many transformations. Whereas in the past the authoritarian and repressive aspects of the police stood out as dominant feature, in the later second half of the twentieth century, as a result of a process of increasing political democratisation, a more preventive and citizen-oriented interpretation of the police role in society came to the fore. Although there is still a view that the police are there as a forceful arm of the executive in a “law and order” sense to push through certain government agendas, if necessary, repressively against the resistance of parts of the population, this perspective is now ever more overlaid in rhetoric as well as in public anticipation by an image as helpers, protectors against criminal victimisation and, finally, guardians of civic peace. In modern democracies, and with particular reference to fundamental human rights enshrined in EU law, ‘fighting crime’ and ‘catching criminals’ has become just a necessary, but no longer sufficient element of the role assignment to the police institution in society.

As we enter the second quarter of the 21st century, the general state of the world seems not the best, with news headlines about crises of various kinds (climate, extinction of species, war, poverty, migration, the banking system, social cohesion etc.) constantly being delivered to our multimedia doorsteps. These fundamental societal uncertainties do not make it any easier for the police and the individual police officers to fulfil their actual tasks, namely to protect citizens from crime, violence and threats and to maintain law and order in the interest of public safety. In addition, the spread and availability of the Internet has opened up a new opportunity structure for criminal activity, creating a wide range of trivial as well as monumental cyber threads, and thus adding a vast additional dimension to the territory to be policed.

In recent years, not only have certain scandalous police actions, mostly in connection with demonstrations and protests, been increasingly picked up and critically commented on in the international (free) media, but also the fundamental suitability of the institution of the police as such has been questioned, not only by journalists (Vitale 2017; Loick 2018). The reasons for this are manifold and range from occasionally (racist) police violence to corruption and abuse to a lack of effectiveness and legitimacy. Criticism of the police is not only a phenomenon of the present, but has a long history linked to the emergence and development of the police as an institution of the state’s monopoly of force. Any modern police organisation that is

democratically oriented and committed cannot simply ignore such criticism in an international context, if it is to meet the challenges of the present and the emerging future.

To put it in a nutshell: As the world has become more complex in the course of progressive processes of globalisation and digitalised networking, as criminal activities have become more widespread and virtual, and as traditional processes of socialisation have become more fragile, the risks to stable order have increased accordingly, and thus the fulfilment of tasks for the police as an institution and for individual police officers has likewise become more complicated and demanding. Old-style, traditional hands-on policing models seem to be not fit for future use in democracies anymore¹.

Method

This paper² is based on about 40 years of scientific engagement with the police, about half of which could be classified as ‘participant observation’ in the canon of social science research methods, primarily through my

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- 1 In this regard, Bonner’s (2019) reference to a differentiation of policing models within formally democratic structures is noteworthy. Along the weighting of the categories of equality, violence and community participation, four basic types of policing in democracies – in other words, democratic policing - are identified, each of which can be located on the usual political spectrum of right and left:
1. Right (neo-populist): Stresses the importance of law and order and takes a more conservative approach to police reform. It prioritises crime control and focuses on increasing police presence and enforcement.
 2. Centre-right (conservative): similar to the first typology, but with a greater emphasis on democratic principles and human rights. It seeks to balance crime control with respect for human rights and the rule of law.
 3. Centre-left (social democratic/liberal socialist): places emphasis on community policing and the importance of working with the community to identify and address problems, as well as the role of accountability and transparency.
 4. Left (populist): takes a more radical approach to police reform and seeks to challenge structures that appear to encourage police abuse of power. It highlights the importance of addressing underlying social and economic inequalities.
- 2 This paper is a thoroughly revised and expanded version of an oral presentation given at a conference in Lisbon on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of police science in Portugal on 18 January 2023. The author would like to thank the organisers, in particular Intendent Roberto Narciso Andrade Fernandes, for this great opportunity and the invitation to prepare this paper. In this context, it is also worth mentioning the particularly active participation and support of Portuguese representatives in the development of European police science within the context of CEPOL, which has been demonstrated by the secondment of experts, contributions to the Bulletin and the organisation of two CEPOL Research and Science Conferences in 2005 and 2015.

initial work at the European Police College as a scientific advisor, which then recently came to an end as the officer responsible for research and knowledge management. One of the guiding principles of this activity was to promote the idea and implementation of police science at the European level. This paper is based on about 40 years of scientific engagement with the police, about half of which could be classified as ‘participant observation’ in the canon of social science research methods, primarily through my initial work at the European Police College as a scientific advisor, which then recently came to an end as the officer responsible for research and knowledge management. One of the guiding principles of this activity was to promote the idea and implementation of police science at the European level. The experience and insights gathered in this context are related to the development of modern international police science and the associated achievements and identifiable deficits, with particular attention being paid to the grounding of police activity in categories of reason and the embedding of police models in democratic structures.

Police and Reason

As diverse and complex as life and conditions are in a global context, so too is the subject of policing in an international context. In addition to the general assertion that the police can be described as an indispensable mechanism in modern complex societies for dealing with and processing intra-societal conflicts, three important qualifications must be taken into account:

— Territorial Layers and Functional Differentiation

Because the police are concerned with territoriality and social space, we find a spatially stratified system of police organisation at the local, regional, national, transnational and global levels. Jurisdiction extends from municipalities or cities to countries, entire continents (e.g. Europol) or almost the entire globe (Interpol). Each of these concrete organisational forms will have been assigned specific tasks and target groups in both the preventive and repressive spectrum, and even within each organisation functional differentiations can be identified.

— Historical Determination of Police Formats

Since the configuration of specific police apparatuses is fundamentally linked to the genesis and development of the respective nation-state, attention must be paid to the wide variance in the legal and administrative

characteristics of country-specific police formations in concrete cases. In the case of the countries of the European Union, for example, a specific historical sequence of development could be traced for each country, influenced not least by political upheavals, which determines the current shape of the respective police forces.

— Interests and Expectations

At the present time in democratically constituted modern societies, it can be assumed that the actual activities and possibilities of action of the respective police forces can be derived from at least four horizons of interest and expectation:

- the law
- government policy
- the demands of the (critical) public (including the media)
- internal professional standards and ambitions

Ideally, those responsible for setting up and directing policing institutions should keep each of these centres of interest in mind and take them into account, and be able to reconcile their (occasionally irreconcilable) demands into results of ‘good policing’ (Brodeur 1998).

To reiterate, if policing is to be successful in modern democracy, it must be able to meet the diverse expectations of political and institutional actors in an increasingly technically and socially complex and dynamic environment, without losing sight of its own mission and capacities. All stakeholders in policing would probably be in favour of the maxim that the police have a duty to act efficiently, with reason and fairness in all situations. Such a challenging undertaking requires rational thought and the ability to reflect and contemplate.

Even if there were a social consensus on the principled rational basis of the police as an institution of a well-governed state, very few observers of concrete police action, even those responsible for the police, would claim that the specific approaches and actions can be judged as rationality guided in every case. After all, police organisations, in particular the big ones, are intricate bureaucracies and police officers are emotional human beings.

But let’s stay for a moment with the assumption of the basic rationality and reasonableness of the police institution itself and its observers and critics. At this point, it is worthwhile to address the distinction between

instrumental and reflective reason, which also has relevance for the orientation and sub-areas of police science as a whole.

Instrumental vs. Reflective Reason

The need to distinguish between instrumental and reflective reason stems from the philosophical debate on the effects and aberrations of modernity (Horkheimer 1947/1985, Beck et al. 1994) and also plays a role in the debate on methodology in the natural and social sciences.

Instrumental reason and reflective reason are two different ways of approaching practical problems. Instrumental reason is concerned with finding the most efficient means to achieve a given end, without questioning the value or validity of that end. Reflective reason, on the other hand, is concerned with critically examining the ends themselves, and whether they are worth pursuing.

Instrumental reason is often associated with a naturalistic and scientific view of the world, where facts and causal relations are the primary objects of inquiry. Reflective reason is often associated with a normative and moral view of the world, where values and principles are the primary objects of inquiry. From the perspective of the police, who are focused on pragmatic action in a complex and problematic environment, the two ways of rational thinking are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, a balanced combination is in most cases the ideal way to arrive at informed decisions and correct courses of action.

Optimists might now argue, with Immanuel Kant, that a rational and self-reflective police force of the 21st century can be seen as a (late) result of the Enlightenment, insofar as it liberates itself through the active use of reason from a self-chosen immaturity that has kept it trapped in an immature state of error and ignorance.

As is well known, reflection and questioning in the Age of Enlightenment was the birth of science in the modern form we know and it didn't take long for the police to discover its potentials and to seize them for their own purposes.

Police, Knowledge, and Science

To act successfully in the world, one must first recognise and understand its elements and their interrelationship or interaction. The next step is to

match one's purposes and intentions with the possibilities of the physical and social environment and to steer them in the desired direction, taking into account the available instruments. If this negotiation is successful, an action concept has been learned. The accumulation of such cognitive events leads to knowledge, which in turn is the basic element of any rationally directed action.

This is the essential sequence of problem-solving thinking that applies to police organisations as a whole as well as to individual police officers.

Police work has always been characterised by the search for and processing of information. The spectrum ranges from simple personal data ("name, address, please?") to complex facts and their relevance in the perspective of a potential comprehensive knowledge of the world (which may well be very locally focused). In this context, the qualitative gradation from data to information to knowledge is important to be aware of, because knowledge is the core component of police resources for action. Even in our digital age of huge computerised and networked databases, policing is very much about collecting, processing and interpretation of information. Ericson and Haggerty have interestingly highlighted the aspect of 'police as knowledge workers' (1997, p.19), as the majority of police time is spent processing information rather than actually apprehending criminals. However, the most important qualitative difference between information and knowledge is to be observed here (see also Brodeur & Dupont 2006), because they are related, but not the same thing: Information can be defined as data that has been processed, organized, or structured in some way and can be reproduced easily and at low cost. Knowledge, on the other hand, is usually understood as justified true belief, or the ability to apply information in a meaningful way. It is the ability to understand the how and why of a subject through experience and/or education - and that is why knowledge is the key currency of police work.

In retrospect, it may seem like a small step, but it was a giant leap for mankind when the purposefully organised accumulation of knowledge became what we call today "science": a systematic and organised way of understanding and explaining the natural and social phenomena that surround us. Science is based on empirical evidence, logical reasoning and rigorous testing of hypotheses and theories. Science is not a static set of facts, but a dynamic and evolving process of inquiry and discovery.

It was not long before the police, in search of problem-solving tools, discovered what scientific methods and applications had to offer. In addition

to the use of major inventions such as telegraphy and telephony for faster and more long-distance communication, the use of automobiles for greater mobility, bertillonage (measuring body features) and fingerprint analysis for identifying suspects are early examples of the adoption of scientific inventions for police purposes (Cole 2001). Since then, there has been a dynamic historical line of ‘scientification of policing’, as Ericson & Shearing (1986) have noted (see also Nogala 2023).

Here we have arrived at the point, where and why police organisations worldwide took an interest in science and its handy, most technical, applications. But before we will arrive at the subject of police science, another important differentiation has to be introduced, which is related to the separation between instrumental and reflective reasoning mentioned in the previous chapter: there are natural and social sciences.

Science - the Natural and the Social

Natural science and social science are two branches of science that differ in their focus and methods and deal with different aspects of the world.

- Natural science is concerned with the natural phenomena and objects of nature and the physical world and uses ‘hard’ scientific methods such as experimentation, observation and prediction to understand biological and physical phenomena.
- Social science is concerned with human society and social relations, specifically with the structures and functions of social interdependencies of institutions and systems as well as their interaction with the processes of action and behaviour of individuals. For this, ‘hard’ as well as interpretative and heuristic scientific methods such as surveys, interviews and case studies are used to understand social issues.

Natural science is based on empirical and observable evidence, and hypotheses about relationships must be testable and falsifiable to be considered scientifically valid. In contrast, hypotheses and theories in the social sciences are more difficult to test and falsify because they depend on many factors, often subjective and qualitative.

Since scientificness is usually associated with a claim to truth, there is occasionally a dispute about the scientific nature of the methods used in the social sciences, especially when specific findings are perceived as

inconvenient. At the heart of such a debate is the respective conception of science and the acceptance of its findings and recommendations for action. Since the so-called “Positivist Dispute”³ in the later 60ties however (Adorno et al. 1976; Reynolds 2023), the debate on methods has evolved and it has become abundantly clear that critical questioning and ongoing dialogue are indispensable elements of scholarship for the further development of scientific disciplines of both kinds.

Police as subject of academic study

Looking back at the historical development, it can be argued that police organisations, which traditionally tend more towards the instrumental version of the rational mindset, have been much more open to the fruits of knowledge delivered by the natural sciences and being translated into technology. A long line of technological innovations, ranging from data centres, DNA analysis, GPS tracking, video surveillance to body cams, automated facial recognition, the use of drones and artificial intelligence applications, bear witness to this (Nogala 1995; 202). Still, contemporary policing organisations are also increasingly using social science knowledge and methods for their various purposes, because there is a growing understanding among police leaders and reformers that their organisation can benefit from cooperation between police and academia to improve police effectiveness, professionalism and legitimacy. However, the relationship between police and academia has not always been smooth and unproblematic. In the past, there used to be various challenges and obstacles, driven by different, logics, expectations, or interests, the institutional conditions and structures that have hindered or prevented communication and exchange, and the possible challenges that could arise from the application of academic scientific knowledge to police practice.

3 The “Positivist Dispute” was a controversy about methods and value judgements in the social sciences that was fought out in the 1960s, especially in the German-speaking world. The main opponents were the representatives of Critical Rationalism such as Karl Popper and Hans Albert, who strived for a value-free, empirical and falsifiable science, and the representatives of the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School such as Theodor W. Adorno and Jürgen Habermas, who advocated a dialectical, socially critical and normative science. The debate had a major impact on the development of the social sciences in Germany and beyond. It stimulated critical reflection on the role of value judgements, ideologies, interests and social references in scientific knowledge. It also revealed the limits and possibilities of different research approaches and promoted a pluralistic and dialogical approach to them.

In the history of academic research, the academic study of the police and their actions is a relatively recent phenomenon. Although there were some earlier attempts to examine the role and function of law enforcement agencies, such as the work of August Vollmer and O.W. Wilson in the early 20th century (Bittner 1970; Manning 1977), it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that police studies became a more prominent and systematic field of inquiry. This was partly due to the social and political changes that occurred in the United States and other Western countries during this period, such as the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, urban riots, mass political demonstrations and the rise of new social movements (Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993). These events challenged the legitimacy and authority of the police and exposed their problems and shortcomings, as scholars tended to question the police critically when they were found to be deviating from their professional standards or legal norms. This led a growing number of scholars from a variety of disciplines, including sociology, criminology, psychology, political science and public administration, to conduct empirical research on various aspects of policing, such as police behaviour, culture, organisation, effectiveness, community relations, discretion, ethics, corruption, use of force, accountability and procedural justice (Bayley and Bittner 1984; Reiss Jr. 1992; Klockars et al., 2006). Since then, academic police research has expanded and diversified in terms of topics, methods, theories and perspectives and it has also become more interdisciplinary and international (Weisburd and Braga 2006; Reiner 2007; Punch 2010).

Since the turn of the century, there has been a growing acceptance within the international law enforcement community that academic police research has contributed to the development of knowledge and understanding of the nature and challenges of policing in modern societies, even when there are still pockets of alienation and tension, particularly as some academics continue to question police strategies and actions radically, claiming that they have been found to cause or even exacerbate social problems rather than solve them (Vitale 2017; Loick 2019). Considering that, over the course of almost 50 years, the shouting across occasionally burning barricades has given way to 'a dialogue of the deaf' (Bradley and Nixon 2009; Johnston and Shearing 2009, Fyfe 2017), the relationship between police leaders and strategists and the academic community of police researchers has become considerably more civil and constructive. Several factors have contributed to this change for the better.

On the part of the police organisation, these include: the opening up of police training to social science insights and training units (first in Western

countries); the academisation of police training (in Europe as the Bologna process; the recognition among police leaders that critical social science is essential for a better understanding of the causes and consequences of crime, for prevention, and for the qualities necessary for modern policing, such as critical and problem-solving thinking and the ability to work in teams. On the academic side, in addition to the traditional branch of a fundamentally critical attitude towards the police as such, there is a growing tendency to take the police as well as their tasks and problems seriously under the circumstances of democratic conditions and to contribute to solutions and reforms in a critical-constructive way.

This development, particularly over the last 30 years, has resulted in a huge international pool of accessible police research, which can be broadly categorised as research by, for, about and (occasionally) with the police. Altogether, this is the large body of knowledge that is contemporary police science.

Exploring Contemporary Police Science

First of all, police science is not just a term for police using science. Nor should it be limited to the forensic work of the relevant laboratories and departments within the police organisation. In fact, the term has a rather encompassing meaning and has changed over time.

For example, ‘Policywissenschaft’, first invented in Germany in the early eighteenth century with the creation of the first university chairs in Halle and Frankfurt/Oder, was closely linked to the formation of the modern nation state and encompassed various aspects of administration, economics and constitutional law. In the absolutist sense of the time, policing had a much broader meaning, and the historic ‘policywissenschaftliche” approach referred to almost all measures taken to establish and maintain the common good - as it was understood at the time. In the course of the 19th century, this early variation of police science lost importance and was replaced by other academic disciplines such as sociology, political science and criminology. It is only in recent decades that the term has experienced a revival as a designation for a science of the police in the narrower, institutional sense⁴. Police Science in our times is best understood as a collective

4 A good piece of evidence to support this assertion is the increase in the number of entries in the “Encyclopedia of Police Science”, which started, edited by William G. Bailey, in 1989 with 143 entries, grew to over 200 in the second edition, and, with the latest third edition in 2012, has grown to 380 entries in two volumes (Green 2012).

term for all disciplines that are relevant in the field of police tasks and as an independent science of the police and their actions, which in an interdisciplinary fashion deals with a broad variety of topics at national and international level. Alternatively, one can stick to the still useful working definition arrived at by a six-member European working group of the European Police College (CEPOL) after extensive discussions:

“Police science is the scientific study of the police as an institution and of policing as a process. As an applied discipline, it combines methods and subjects of other neighbouring disciplines within the field of policing. *It includes all of what the police do and all aspects from outside that have an impact on policing and public order.* Police science tries to explain facts and acquire knowledge about the reality of policing in order to generalise and be able to predict possible scenarios” (del Barrio et al. 2007, p. 30, author’s emphasis).

CEPOL’s endeavour and contribution

When, at the turn of the century, the idea of establishing a European Police College for the training of senior police officers had matured and gained sufficient political acceptance, driven by the increasing demand for cross-border police cooperation, the Spanish government took the initiative to propose the creation of a “European Institute of Police Studies” - apparently the time had come to seriously consider the proper institutionalisation of “police science” in a dedicated European setting. However, the official proposal was soon withdrawn and CEPOL became the next best choice to take this project forward institutionally (for this and more details on this paragraph, see Fehervary 2007). In its early days, the European Police College was organised and financed as an intergovernmental body, established for the purpose of improving cross-border police cooperation through the training of senior police officers from the Member States. To push for such an institution was the brainchild of the heads of national police colleges of some of the then 15 EU Member States, who were convinced that modern policing - and for that matter police training at senior level - could not function well without recourse to a range of up-to-date scientific knowledge. In its first phase, the College was a network of national bodies involved in the training of senior police officers, and the strategic planning of the work programme was organised through committees. In this context, emphasis was placed on the role and provision of new science-based

knowledge in the interests of effective police cooperation across Europe. The original “Science and Research Committee” became the “Training and Research Committee” and was tasked with implementing the ideas from its programmatic list:

- to compile an inventory of existing police research projects and results in the Member States
- to initiate joint comparative research projects
- to organise an annual conference
- to establish an expert group on the development, implementation and evaluation of police science

All these steps should lead to high quality training programmes and ultimately foster better and more effective cross-border police cooperation in Europe.

However, as is often the case with ambitious programmes, their realisation and impact depend on the funds and resources available - which do not always match the initial aspirations. Despite scarce financial and human resources, over a period of 20 years CEPOL⁵ has been able to take some steps in the right direction and implement some projects, at least in part:

- *Pooling and dissemination of scientific knowledge*

The collection of available knowledge at European level began with two rounds of paper-based surveys in 2001-2002 and 2003-2004, followed by the establishment of ‘CEPOL-eDOC’, a tailored database of scientific material and projects in the field of police science (see Nogala 2006). This database was merged in 2008 with another, EPLN, run by the Dutch Police Academy for the storage and distribution of internal documents and the exchange of ‘good practices’, into a single system, CEPOL e-Net, which was then replaced in 2020 by LEEed, the Agency’s electronic law enforcement training platform. Part of the current electronic service for registered users (any law enforcement officer in the European Union can apply via their national or organisational CEPOL Contact Point) is free access to an extensive list of current international e-journals and e-books.

Another important product for the dissemination of contributions to police science at the European level is the publication of a journal, which was

5 CEPOL was initially an intergovernmental body, as mentioned above, and became an agency of the European Union in 2006, retaining its name as the European Police College. With the renewal and extension of its mandate in 2016, it continued its work as the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement.

launched in 2009 as the “European Police Science and Research Bulletin” and is now in its 22nd year as the “European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin”. It is published as a peer-reviewed, open access e-journal and around four hundred articles are available via its website <https://bulletin.cepola.europa.eu>.

- *CEPOL Research and Science Conferences*

Since 2003, CEPOL has endeavoured to organise an annual European conference bringing together police practitioners, trainers and academics. Over the years, this event has been one of the rare occasions when practitioners and academics with a scientific interest in police matters could meet and discuss new research findings in a specifically European context. Recent conference topics have included innovation, the pandemic and preparing for the digital age. Selected papers from these conferences are published in a special conference edition of the Bulletin, while presentation slides and video recordings are available on the dedicated section of the CEPOL website (www.cepola.europa.eu).

- *Network of “National Research & Science Correspondents”*

The vision of creating a European police science project obviously had to be based on the contributions of Member States, i.e. all EU Member States, regardless of their own national level of academic development and output in this particular field of knowledge. Each country was therefore encouraged to nominate a person to act as a liaison between national police research and the European Forum, and to feed back the most useful findings to the national level. In particular, it was hoped that this network would provide a fertile ground for the establishment of specific joint research projects. The Swedish-initiated GODIAC project on protest policing is one of the rare realisations of this objective (Polisen, 2013). The network of correspondents meets annually and its members play an active role in the preparation and organisation of CEPOL’s Research & Science Conferences.

- *Project Group “European Approach to Police Science”*

The Project Group on a European Approach to Police Science was established in 2005 with the aim of developing a common understanding of police science in Europe. The group focused on applied research and the development of a European approach to police science. The findings of the group were presented in a report which aimed to influence thinking within the profession and develop a common understanding of police

science in Europe. An extended version of the report, including expert commentaries, ventured to answer questions such as why senior police officers need research and science, what kind of scientific knowledge fits their professional framework and how they use it (del Barrio et al. 2009). The main recommendations of the group were to focus strategically more on

- the need for a common understanding of police science in Europe;
- the need for not just senior police officers to have access to relevant research and scientific knowledge;
- the need for police forces across Europe to cooperate and share scientific knowledge;
- the need for a profound reform of the role of science in policing to become an arena for evidence-based policy.

Overall, the recommendations focused on the value of scientific knowledge and research in policing and the need for police forces across Europe to cooperate and share knowledge.

Unfortunately, as a relatively small and modestly funded EU agency, CEPOL has had limited opportunities to support these recommendations and to promote, through its network of Member States, the approach of integrating research findings and scientific knowledge more fully into national law enforcement training systems. With no funding available for independent research by the agency (apart from conducting some surveys on the state of national police training systems (Konze & Nogala 2018)), encouraging, facilitating and promoting the further development and application of police science in Europe has been the remaining option for more than two decades. However, the consistently positive feedback on the organisation of the CEPOL Research and Science Conferences, the satisfactory number of downloads and citations of articles from the European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin, as well as the considerable use of the range of scientific journals and books on the Agency's electronic learning platform, indicate that these efforts have had some measure of success.

An abundance of available knowledge

When one takes a look at the variety of publications in the broad field of police science and its neighbouring and related disciplines, one cannot help but notice a pleasingly vital and dynamic production of findings, knowledge and reflection in an international context.

CEPOL provides access to more than 30 relevant journals, some of which are published on a monthly basis, and has in the past made available an average of one hundred new titles of electronic books on the LEEd learning platform. Interest in police science topics has a long historical precedent, but it is fair to say that the volume of articles published has boomed over the last quarter of a century⁶. A look at the first year of publication of specialised journals in the field of police science in the narrower sense of the term might underline this observation:

Table 1: The “new wave” of scientific police journals

JOURNAL TITLE	Year of Launch	Main Language of Publication	Country of Publication
POLICING & SOCIETY	1990	English	United Kingdom
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF POLICE SCIENCE & MANAGEMENT	1998	English	United Kingdom
POLICE QUARTERLY	1998	English	United Kingdom
POLIZEI & WISSENSCHAFT	2000	German	Germany
POLICE, PRACTICE & RESEARCH	2001	English	United Kingdom
.SIAK JOURNAL	2004	German	Austria
POLITEIA	2004	Portuguese	Portugal
CAHIERS POLITIESTUDIES	2006	Flemish	Belgium
POLICING	2007	English	United Kingdom
PROCEEDINGS OF THE ESTONIAN ACADEMY OF SECURITY SCIENCES	2008	English	Estonia
EUROPEAN POLICE SCIENCE AND RESEARCH/LAW ENFORCEMENT BULLETIN	2009	English	Luxembourg
INTERNAL SECURITY	2009	English	Poland
VARSTVOSLOVJE – JOURNAL OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY	2010	English	Slovenia
EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF POLICE STUDIES	2012	English	Belgium
NORDIC JOURNAL OF STUDIES IN POLICING	2014	English	Norway

6 There are several possible reasons for this astonishing wave of publications: the compulsion to publish as much and as often as possible for academic careers, the increasing academisation of police training and qualifications, EU and national research funding programmes in in the field of internal security, the ease of digital production and publication of content, and not to forget the demand for transparency and accountability from a critical public.

This list does not even include relevant national-language journals that predate this “new wave” by many years, such as the “REVUE INTERNATIONALE DE CRIMINOLOGIE ET DE POLICE TECHNIQUE ET SCIENTIFIQUE”, which has been published in Switzerland since 1947, the Spanish “CIENCIA POLICIAL”, the Dutch “TIJDSCHRIFT VOOR DE POLITIE” or “DIE POLIZEI” for German-speaking countries. In addition, there are a large number of English and foreign-language journals devoted to specific policing, forensic and criminological issues and which contribute to the body of police science knowledge. One is tempted to assert that there is hardly a specific policing problem that hasn’t been addressed or touched upon in the specialist or general literature, written either by internal or external police experts or university academics. An almost mushrooming of police-led and university-based research projects, together with increasing international academic exchange and cooperation, has indeed produced a solid and impressive body of scientific knowledge about police and policing - almost in a state of abundance, as even specialists will find it difficult to follow and intellectually digest only the most relevant of the published material.

On the basis of these figures alone, one might think that policing in Europe and beyond is flourishing. However, this may be a slight misreading of the real situation, as quantity does not automatically equate to quality or impact, and there are a couple of internal and external issues that may be causing discomfort and dissatisfaction for the committed stakeholder.

On the pitfalls, obstacles and silver linings of multiplicity in police science

There is little doubt that the rise of the academic branch of modern police science can be traced back to the early social science-oriented studies of US researchers. Classic works by Albert J. Reiss Jr, William A. Westley, Jerome H. Skolnick, Egon Bittner, David H. Bayley, Herman Goldstein and Peter K. Manning represent this generation. This was soon followed by major empirical and theoretical contributions from the Anglo-American world by authors such as Jean-Paul Brodeur and Richard Ericson (Canada), Wesley Skogan, Jack Green and Gary T. Marx (USA), Robert Reiner and Clive Emsley (UK) and Clifford Shearing (South Africa). Since then, the international academic debate on policing has been shaped, not to say dominated, by work from this Anglo-American region. This is not only because English has become the lingua franca in the international academic business, but also because the early development and expansion of social science police research in

the university education systems of the United States and the countries of the British Commonwealth has played an essential role. Thinking about the role and activities of the police simply began earlier in these countries and reached an effective critical academic mass earlier than, for example, in the countries of continental Europe. Although some well-known names in police studies emerged early, such as Cyrill Fijnaut in the Belgian-Dutch context, or Dominique Monjardet and René Lévy in France, the echo of their work in terms of citations has been much less frequent in the international literature.

Now, there would be little objection to individual countries or cultural groups being international leaders in research and theory if the resulting potential distortion of theoretical perspectives and empirical data did not carry with it the risk of introducing a degree of bias that could cause some difficulties in the practical application of police research, precisely because police work still takes place largely within a nation-state framework, which, especially in Europe, for historical reasons, can still differ significantly in terms of organisational and operational orientation in the respective countries. Many of the modern policing concepts often discussed - and tried to be implemented - such as 'community policing', 'zero-tolerance policing', 'hotspot policing', 'problem-oriented policing', 'intelligence-led policing', 'evidence-based policing' or 'predictive policing' are ideas that originated in the critical examination of policing styles and policies in the United States and the United Kingdom by authors from those countries (Ferreira et al. 2016, p. 6; Brodeur 2017). It is perhaps neither a stretch nor an exaggeration to say that the most widely discussed and most authoritative concepts in contemporary police science are of Anglo-American origin. This observation, if valid, is not a problem in itself. It does, however, point to the difficulties in formulating a distinctly European version of police science, which can only be hinted at in the context of this paper.

- It is not so much a question of differences in the nature of the legal systems (common law vs. civil law), but rather of the extent and seriousness of the crime problem, especially when compared between the United States and European countries, which are clearly different. It is therefore logical to expect that the respective police systems will differ not only in political-constitutional terms, but also in terms of the strategies and styles associated with them. By the same token, the imprudent transfer of Anglo-Saxon policing models and strategies build on specific experiences and mentalities to other country-specific policing cultures, in this case the European ones, is rather doubtful.

- Although the European Union has already made considerable progress towards a certain degree of political integration, the area of internal security has only come into view relatively late. Although there are institutions such as Europol, Frontex or CEPOL and the topic of cross-border police cooperation has political weight in the discussion, police policy is first and foremost a matter for the states and is largely determined by national priorities, perspectives and preferences. As a result, there is a striking diversity of police policies, practices and experiences across Europe, which can make even comparative research and the possible im- or export of innovative concepts within Europe quite complex (see Roché 2017; Devroe & Ponsaers 2019).
- In addition to the Anglo-American over-representation already mentioned, there is another significant intra-European imbalance and distortion in the production and availability of police science knowledge, which is not only due to the notorious and diminishing language barrier. In my observation, there are countries in the EU that have managed to build up a partially independent police research structure, either within the police or anchored in universities, and have managed to establish a considerable pool of country-specific police science, as I would like to call it here. This includes the countries in the geographical area to the west and north, but also Slovenia and Hungary, for example. In the countries further to the east and south, one tends to find efforts to catch up or police science production on the marginalised fringes. Interestingly, it is precisely the smaller countries in terms of population, such as Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway and Portugal, in which authors sought and found an early connection to the international police science discussion, while in some larger countries, such as Germany, France or Spain, the production of police science tends to focus on the native language. This has led to a curious situation in which the experiences, insights and authors of smaller European countries occasionally receive attention in policing literature, but those of larger countries are disproportionately underrepresented, whether because of the language barrier or simply because there is little internationally oriented research production in some of these countries.

Based on the finding of an impressive amount of internationally produced and accessible police science literature, I have so far pointed out the not

really balanced and unrepresentative composition in relation to the diversity of the diversified European police reality. However, I believe that an equally relevant problem is an observable tendency towards compartmentalisation and self-reference of the various national and linguistic police science production sites and their operators. Imagine a series of storage silos, such as one may have seen in rural areas for storing grain or as constructions in large chemical plants. In each of these silos, something is produced or stored and, in some cases, they are connected to each other by pipes and passages to enable exchange or transfer of the stored substances. This system can prove to be very productive and sustainable as it can store a large amount of material and transport it to where it is needed. The material produced and stored here in this imagination is, of course, police knowledge in the form of ideas, analyses, concepts, empirical findings, so we speak of imaginary knowledge silos. In the field of business management, however, information and knowledge silos are viewed with suspicion, as they are seen as an obstacle to optimal production yield. Omission or clogging of the lines and transitions through professional arrogance, ignorance or forgetfulness are the hallmarks that would successfully undermine any productively promising system of knowledge silos. Risk indicators can be found in the following areas and constellations:

- 1. Language Barriers and Islands:** As mentioned above, while English is the lingua franca of international discussion, a large number of interesting and valuable contributions are virtually lost because they are published in another European language. Efforts must be made to systematically translate and republish outstanding contributions. Recently developed translation tools available on the Internet could be instrumental. There is also the problem of confusing jargon. This can take the form of complicated academic terminology or bureaucratic police jargon. Neither is helpful in overcoming the fallacy of the “dialogue of the deaf” (Fyfe 2017).
- 2. Negative Tribalism:** Here framed as the tendency to put one’s own group perspective above all else, or even wilful ignorance of others. It occurs in two flavours: inter- and intra-professional tribalism. The first version relates to the relation between law enforcement officials and academic researchers. In its simplest form, in a debate, the position or perspective of the other group may be described as uninformed or misleading. In its more severe form, a contribution is qualified as useless or ignored altogether. Remarkably, in both professions a few people still refuse to engage in dialogue at

all. A simple form of the internal tribalism cultivated especially in academic circles can be found in the self-referential circles of quotation, which like to limit themselves to the perception and intellectual processing of the positions and findings of their own theoretical school or orientation.

- 3. Lack of Trust:** An ugly offshoot of the tribalism mentioned above is the occasional lack of trust in the professionalism and integrity of those involved in the triangle of authorising authorities, researchers and researched when it comes to access to the research field, the formulation of research questions and objectives, and the free publication of results. However, fairness and mutual trust are the indispensable basis of any practice-relevant police research (see in this regard from a police practitioners' point of view Welten 2010).
- 4. Territorial Provincialism and Isolationism:** As mentioned above, policing takes place at different territorial and spatial levels, including the virtual level of cyberspace. Policing studies tend to relate empirically to only one of these levels of activity, be it local, regional or national, or be it focused on cross-border cooperation in inter- and transnational space. As a result, the interrelations and connections between these levels can easily be lost from conceptual and theoretical view. There is nothing inherently wrong with developing police knowledge on a small or large scale, from local, regional or national experiences and practices. However, a coherent European vision of policing would benefit from efforts to integrate these different elements at the overarching policy level of European political reality.

The aim of building a European-style police science out of the steadily growing international pool of scientific and organisational knowledge, one that meets the demands and requirements of police practice, the standards of good scholarship, and not to forget, the expectations of a critical public in democratic governance, is highly ambitious and by no means trivial. A number of structural obstacles stand in its way: its necessity and usefulness are not (yet) seen and recognised in some countries and in some places of police and political leadership; moreover, it currently lacks an institutional centre that could intellectually bring together the various national approaches and resources and would bundle their conclusions for Europe-wide implementation. Already, there is a lack of sufficient opportunities to bring the key players and stakeholder together regularly for dialogue.

A realistic and forward-looking approach can therefore only be to continue to work on installing and opening windows in the various nationalised and linguistic silos of scientific knowledge that already exist, in order to improve mutual visibility and perception. The next step would then be to ensure a variety of viable connections between these silos, let us imagine “skybridges” here, because effective and sustainable knowledge progress is still based on lively encounter and exchange, even in a critical dialogue, between real people.

European Police Science: An Optimist’s Conclusion

To stay in the picture: the envisaged complex of interconnected silos of knowledge production has been under construction for some time and considerable progress has already been made. In closer inspection, however, there is still a long way to go before the project part of a European police science can be recommended to practitioners and the interested public for intensive use. As far as the future development of European police science is concerned, there are few reasons to be cheerful, but there are some that give cause for a degree of optimism.

- There has been for some time now a growing understanding of the increasing complexity of police work in the face of new policing problems that require a deeper, more scientific and evidence-based grasp of their nature. The scientification of policing, on the one hand, and the increasing academicisation of police education and training, on the other, are a logical response to this development. As a result, in some EU member states, bachelor’s and master’s degrees have become a prerequisite for becoming a police officer, at least for careers in managerial positions, and a number of universities offer master’s or doctoral programmes in police science (Konze & Nogala 20xx)- the old police college lecturer’s saying that “policemen don’t read” no longer holds true in 21st century Europe.
- The antagonism between the logic of police action and the mentality of a critique of the status quo cultivated in the university milieu, which often resulted from the confrontations of the social conflicts fought out in the streets and squares of the 20th century, has not completely dissolved in view of a new wave of public criticism of the police in certain countries, but has in the meantime weakened. In any case, it no longer stands in the way of

constructive dialogue and science-oriented cooperation between practitioners and researchers.

- Not only is there, as mentioned above, a critical mass of available knowledge, but also the interest in scientific research, monitoring and support of police work has developed significantly over the years, especially in European countries. Over these years, many ears and doors have been opened and a younger generation of police practitioners and researchers are aware of the real value of scientific knowledge and constructive criticism for good policing within a democratic framework.

Police science, as outlined here, is undoubtedly in the European tradition of the Enlightenment, which, as Immanuel Kant explains in his treatise “What is Enlightenment?” (1784/1996), is based on the proper use of private and public reason. As discussed at the beginning, instrumental and reflective parts of reason ideally enter into a symbiosis in the interest of the advancement of knowledge and the common good.

This is the close link between the ideal of the police as an institution of public practical reason, the spirit of the Enlightenment and the project of a democratically structured Europe committed to the security of its citizens in freedom. Policing thus aims to encourage reflection and rethinking - manifested in the visions of the thinking policeman as well as a thinking police organisation:

- Being a police officer requires a lot of thinking and decision making as he or she has to deal with different situations such as crimes, accidents, emergencies, conflicts and public safety issues, thinking quickly and critically and applying the law and ethical principles to each case. An enlightened police officer would strive to think and act with empathy and respect, understanding the perspectives and needs of different people and groups. Because he or she must think constantly and continuously, learning from experience and scholarship will enhance the officer’s skills and knowledge in service and pursuit of the common good.
- A “Thinking Police Organisation” is a notion that refers to a police force that takes a proactive and innovative approach to law enforcement, crime prevention and community engagement. As such, it is not satisfied with the status quo, but seeks to continually improve its performance, efficiency and effectiveness through the

adoption of evidence-based practices and scientifically validated solutions. A thinking police organisation also values the input and feedback of its partners and stakeholders, including the critical public, and fosters a culture of learning, collaboration and accountability by being open to dialogue and engagement with the scientific community.

- It has been almost a century ago, since American police reformer August Vollmer initially came forward with the notion of “The Scientific Policeman” (Vollmer 1930). He probably would be today a keen follower of the future course of police science in Europe.

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