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Pre-crime and policing of migrants: Anticipatory action meets management of concerns¹

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Abstract

In 2015 the Norwegian police initiated its first national intelligence project - Operation Migrant. One central aim was to predict crime challenges related to increased migration to improve future resource allocation. Based on qualitative interviews with those managing the operation, this article foregrounds the question of how attempts to reduce uncertainties and manage what is perceived as migration-related threats and risks, shape not only ideas of risk in policing of migration but also influence the importance of precautionary logic in regular policing. Firstly, we analyse how knowledge production built on risk management and sharing of risk intelligence products are co-produced by intelligence staff and decision makers. Thereafter, we discuss paradoxical outcomes of a calculated and precautionary logic applied to policing migrants. Concretely, it focuses on how anticipatory knowledge practices seem to enlarge the space for probabilities, making it even more complex and contested to reduce and control uncertainty.

In the summer of 2015, nation states in Europe responded to the increase of migrants by developing various interventions to combat irregular mobility, and territorial borders were closed. Talk about a ‘crisis’ raised concerns about the security of nation states, amid increased anxiety about terrorist attacks, and risks related to crime and public safety that might result from the influx and the lack of identity checks. Intra-Schengen control increased, and numerous control measures were more or less permanently introduced, on the basis of risk analysis produced by Frontex, the European External Border and Coast Guard Agency and national

initiatives. Border control practices in Central and Western Europe immediately became more protective and securitized.

This article will analyse how the Norwegian police dealt with the increased number of migrants. This effort coincided with the release of the Norwegian police intelligence doctrine and it was therefore decided that the focus on migration should be guided by the intelligence doctrine and process. In the form of a request from the Police Directorate to the National Crime Investigation Service (KRIPOS), Operation Migrant was launched as the very first national intelligence project. The view that migration was a potential threat and part of a ‘crisis’ encouraged worst-case scenario thinking that generated suspicion and unease, especially among politicians, about potential criminal repercussions of this increase of migration.

Based on interviews with those involved in the intelligence process in Operation Migrant, this article explores policies and practices of the risk management of migration-related threats, including potential crime, and their effect on everyday policing. In the article we explore how the focus on threat perceptions and ‘crisis’ management shaped migration policing, and how it influenced more broadly the importance of precautionary and pre-emptive logic in regular policing (Anderson, 2010). This again ties in very neatly with the central element of the intelligence doctrine, namely the need to support *future* decision-making by reducing decision-makers’ uncertainty about the future. Assessing threats and harms is framed as an objective basis for decision-making (Ratcliffe, 2016), however, as this article shows, advisors make definitions that are negotiated and generated in a political framework which also sees migrants as threats as regards potential crime. This article therefore attempts to respond to the call made by Weber and McCullough (2018) for different theoretical strands to be combined in criminological studies of borders, by emphasizing the importance of using insights from pre-crime literature to highlight shifts in the policing of migrants. A focus of particular interest will be the shift towards anticipatory actions such as precautionary logic, pre-emption and preparedness (Anderson, 2010), arising from the linking of migration to potential crises, disorder and crime.

The article is divided into three sections. We will first briefly sketch the contextual aspects of policing migration in Norway, and our theoretical and methodological approach. Secondly, using material from interviews with those involved in Operation Migrant, we analyse how intelligence products were – for the first time – used to give decision-makers a knowledge base

to help inform their priorities. We explore the difficulties that arise when decision-makers are expected to take into consideration, and trust, intelligence products in which future assessment is based on historical data and on historical data and patterns, and on what was important in the past – how can the future be determined by the past? In the last section we discuss paradoxical outcomes of the precautionary and pre-emptive logic applied to policing migrants, which reinforces a perception that criminality is a marker of the difference between immigrant and native populations.

Policing migration and pre-crime

European discourse on crime and security threats increasingly depicts the mobility of people as security threats. Research done in the past two decades documents the growing salience of immigration control in shaping domestic law enforcement regimes and order-maintenance practices (see inter alia, Leun, 2003; Weber and Bowling, 2008; Weber, 2013; Aas, 2014). This research contends that policing mobility is reinforcing distinctions between members and non-members, which is particularly salient in the Norwegian context (Aas, 2014). The development is partly related to the intensified criminalization of immigration-related conduct (see also Aliverti, 2013), particularly illegal entry and re-entry, as well as the ever-increasing intertwining, mutual reinforcement and even convergence of criminal law and administrative immigration enforcement regimes (Weber, 2013), described by several observers as crimmigration law (Stumpf, 2006; Guia et al., 2012; Vazquez, 2011). Discourse about the ‘dangerous immigrant’ thus provides more general support for policing migrants and is helping to change the traditional system of prevention within the nation state (Bosworth, Franko and Pickering, 2018: 45-46). However, due to the linking of migration to potential crises, disorder and crime, in this article we will use insights from pre-crime literature to highlight shifts in the policing of migrants (Weber and McCullough, 2018). A focus of particular interest will be the shift towards anticipatory actions such as precautionary logic, pre-emption and preparedness (Anderson, 2010).

Around the world, the policing of migrants involves numerous state agencies, an array of service providers, and ‘responsibilized’ members of civil society whose aim is to promote security (Weber, 2013; Gundhus and Franko, 2016). It is shaped not only by the changing nature of migration flows, but also by the changing character of policing and security, which has been a central feature of criminological debate over recent decades (Bayley and Shearing, 1996; Whelan and Dupont, 2017). In Norway, however, we have only one public police service. The task of immigration policing is carried out by local police, governed by the National Police

Directorate. The principle of a unified police organization means that the police are responsible for territorial, border and immigration control, as there is no separate border guard service or immigration control service¹. Nearly all aspects of border control thus come within the remit of the central governmental state police. However, as a Schengen member, and a third-country associate in Europol, Norway's policing of migrants is influenced by European policies and practice, as Operation Migrant illustrates. The Norwegian Criminal Investigation Centre has responsibility for producing intelligence and threat/risk analysis, and works in close collaboration with the Police Immigration Service and the Police Security Service, and with risk- and intelligence- driven agencies such as Frontex and Europol. Combating 'illegal migration' and crime perceived as related to migration is an important area for cooperation between actors on various levels.

Several recent changes create the context for understanding the nexus between migration and precautionary logic. With the introduction of the intelligence doctrine in 2014, intelligence-led policing (ILP) became the dominant police strategy in Norway (Police Directorate, 2014). Proponents of ILP highlight *crime analysis* and *intelligence methods* as key elements in informed, objective decision-making frameworks – both when tactical, targeted, specialized operations are conducted, and when strategic priorities are set. Although it emerged in the regular police context of supporting traditional investigative police-led strategies and specialist police operations, ILP is now usually described in terms of the keywords *strategic*, *future-oriented*, *proactive* and *targeted*, and is one of the main strategies embraced by police services in the western world (Ratcliffe, 2016; Sheptycki 2017a, 2017b). With its emphasis on high policing², pre-emptiveness and military strategies (Diderichsen, 2019), it represents a move away from preventing the occurrence of crime to ensuring public safety by stopping, interrupting or averting dangers, and to becoming more resilient through training and exercises (McCulloch & Wilson, 2016). The public is increasingly perceived as vulnerable to external threats which are difficult to anticipate beforehand, such as terrorism. Particularly since the

¹ The Norwegian Immigration Directorate (NID) is the civil public administration authority responsible for handling immigration cases and collaborates closely with the Norwegian Police Immigration Service (NPIS). The NID relies on the police as its executive organ to exercise control and implement decisions. The NPIS has responsibility for registering asylum seekers and carrying out deportations, including forced returns, and oversees the only closed detention centre in Norway, Trandum (Ugelvik 2016).

² High policing is a concept coined by Brodeur (1983), originally describing police aimed at protecting national security, and framed as the opposite of uniformed and investigative police. In the further development of the typology, Brodeur (2010: 251) emphasizes that it is not only a distinction between different kinds of policing agencies (such as intelligence bureaus and law enforcement), but a distinction between policing practices. A defining aspect of high policing practices is the use of informers, secrecy, deceit and invisible surveillance.

2011 terror attack in Norway³, the unknown and unthinkable have become more important in police practice. One of the lessons learned was that it is essential to be prepared. Recent research on the Norwegian police reforms shows that the measures taken have had consequences for police-citizen encounters because policing is now done at a distance (Gundhus, Talberg and Wathne, 2018). This is in line with studies in the UK, which argue that police intelligence activities may be seen as the opposite of building trust between the police and citizens, and may jeopardise community relations (James, 2017; Millie, 2014).

As Weber and McCulloch (2018) point out, there is a lack of empirical knowledge of how risk and threat definitions are constructed and operationalized in border policing, which is increasingly concerned with the unpredictable and incalculable, and how such considerations determine resource allocation and mark off the 'dangerous other'. Of particular interest therefore, is the literature on pre-crime, risk and pre-emption at the intersection of criminology and critical security studies (Amoore, 2013; Aradau and Munster, 2007; Chamlian, 2016; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Hannah-Moffatt, 1999; Krasmann, 2007; McCulloch and Wilson, 2016; Mythen, 2014; Mythen and Walklate, 2005, 2008). Drawing on this previous research, the article raises important questions about current understandings of migration related concepts of uncertainty and pre-crime, and expands existing insights into risk management by exploring how it influences views on who belongs, and who is dangerous and does not belong in a welfare state.

Methodology

The methodological framework of the project that underpins this article is inspired by situational analysis, which combines mapping, frame analysis and various fieldwork methodologies (Clarke et al., 2015). However, the main empirical data analysed here is based on interviews and document analysis. The Operation Migrant project was led by the Police Directorate, and conducted by the Criminal Investigation Service, in close collaboration with the Police Immigration Service. The empirical data analysed in this paper consists of two key

³ On 22 July 2011, the Norwegian far-right terrorist, Breivik, killed eight people by detonating a van bomb amid Government building in Oslo, and then shot dead 69 participants of a Workers' Youth League (AUF) summer camp on the island of Utøya.

datasets. Firstly, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted in 2017 and 2018 with 16 people involved in the project. Secondly, the authors were granted access to all the intelligence reports, and the strategic and concluding documents describing Operation Migrant, which were used to analyse the production and negotiation of risks and threats.

The project is part of broader research exploring shifts in the understanding of risks and police methods. The empirical data from this wider project includes focus group interviews conducted between 2017 and 2018 with 24 police officers (12 in front line patrols and 12 in front line investigation), and with 16 key informants⁴, following Norwegian police reforms initiated after the terror attacks in Oslo and Utøya on 22 July 2011. This broader project also includes field work and interviews with ordinary patrols and special immigrations unit patrols in the police districts, and a project applying intelligence measures to prevent youth crime in an area of Oslo.⁵ The broader project provides data on how Operation Migrant was operationalized on the ground, through retrospective interviews.

Since qualitative interviews attempt to understand the world from the actors' point of view, they are particularly suitable for exploring narrative styles and logics. The interviewees in the Operation Migrant project were mostly police officers, but also included analysis personnel with academic backgrounds and managers with legal training. They had various roles in the project: among them were contracting entities, intelligence managers, information managers, analysts (operational and strategic) and data collectors. A clear distinction in roles made by the intelligence doctrine is that between decision-makers, who are leaders and commanders with resources which they can decide how to use, and the analysts and intelligence staff who support them (Ratcliffe, 2016: 198). The terms manager/leader/principal are therefore used to designate the group tasked with the project and commissioning the operation. The leaders in the intelligence hub are called intelligence leaders and belong to the intelligence staff, along with operation analysts, collectors etc., who support the decision-makers. We also participated in three process evaluation meetings connected with the implementation of Operation Migrant, which involved various key actors and managers, and added valuable data to that gained from the interviews. The qualitative interviews with those participating in Operation Migrant aimed to understand how the operation was carried out, different ways of understanding risks and

⁴ Conducted by Christin Wathne, Niri Talberg and Helene O. I. Gundhus.

⁵ Conducted by Siri Nesteng Martinsen (autumn 2018), Danel Hammer (autumn 2018) and Pernille Skjevraak Erichsen (May 2019), all supervised by Helene O. I. Gundhus.

threats, how the actors perceived their roles, how daily routines were developed, how well the overall process was coordinated and in what way it supported decision-makers. It was important to gain the trust of those studied. Due to the affiliation of one of the authors with the Defence Intelligence University College and both authors' involvement in education and teaching at the Police University College and participation in process-evaluation, this was easier to achieve. Given confidentiality issues regarding sensitive empirical data, including the intelligence reports, the project had to be authorized by the Norwegian Police Directorate.

An important weakness of the empirical data is that it is retrospective and lacks ethnographic observations of practices. However, the aim was to gain an understanding of the recent changes in the police by asking questions about specific cases and initiatives that led up to the reform in 2015 and how this reform has been managed or implemented. Although this article focuses on the practice of producing risk and threat analysis in the intelligence project, the different data sets offer a broader picture of police governance and practice in this period.

The interviews are examined using a combination of thematic and narrative analysis. When looking at accounts of risks, this is a good combination, since thematic analysis considers 'what' the interviewees are talking about, while narrative analysis considers 'why' and 'how' (Sandberg, 2010). Inspired by Anderson's (2010) seminal article on pre-emption, precaution and preparedness, the analysis of the data explores the styles, logics and talk about practices of anticipatory action. The analysis revealed that the 16 interviewees mentioned a total of 31 different themes related to risks and threats. Since most of the topics were only mentioned by 1-5 people, this added up to a total of 91 threat and risk indicators spoken about in the interviews related to the operation.

Since changes in discourse often go hand in hand with changes in organizational identity, this research design constitutes a promising starting point for capturing changes in institutional logic. Through thematic and narrative analysis we therefore look at how shifts in these policing tasks unfold and interpret forms or constellations of socially meaningful beliefs and values that can be related to cultural performances (Thornton, Ocasio and Lounsbury, 2013: 128).

Forecasting flows, disorder and crime

Since 2007, intelligence has become an increasingly significant part of the police service in Norway, culminating in the implementation of the intelligence doctrine in 2014 (Police Directorate, 2014). Its aim is to give decision-makers a more robust knowledge base to reduce their uncertainty. However, there is of course a challenge here, in that the future cannot be

known and thus an intelligence product should not be considered a ‘truth product’, but rather the best assessment at the time. Decisions on the tactical, operational and strategic levels should therefore be based on a large body of data, which is collected and analysed to produce a more solid and rational prediction about any given topic. It provides knowledge to help decide priorities and how to allocate resources. Intelligence is thus not a purely analytical task, but is directly connected to police management decisions and hence police organization. Standardization is regarded as necessary for threat assessments and analyses to be used in a coherent way, and police patrols and special units are given orders to collect required information (see also Sheptycki, 2017a). The most recent initiative is to govern police patrols throughout the intelligence cycle, introducing the ‘presence of the future’ (Rasmussen, 2001: 286) into everyday policing.

We will now analyse how the police first used the intelligence doctrine in order to produce intelligence products to give decision-makers an informed knowledge base to help set priorities. In this context it is important to stress that intelligence is first and foremost a tool to help decision-makers to manage risk, rather than a scientific method for analysing future risks. Investigating it as a practice will show how police analysts construct a range of information needs and generate broad categories to envision future challenges. Part of this work consists of sorting out and evaluating the potential threat posed by people, incidents and phenomena. The risk concept is rarely used by the Norwegian police, as is emphasized in this quote from one of the information managers in the project:

But what we are good at is threats, but even that ... I just think we do not theorize this very much. It is really about the social mission of the police, who may do something wrong? (Kripos 4)

The core aim of intelligence is to reduce the decision-makers’ uncertainty. Accordingly, the launch Operation Migrant was conceived as a national intelligence project. It was necessary to have a common knowledge base so that resource allocation could be more rational and targeted, as is described by this interviewee:

Preferably, we should contribute to anticipating threats. The Police Directorate wanted some kind of basis they can use to make their decisions and priorities on. And they wanted information about events before things arise, which is not so easy. We also used intelligence reports from the other Nordic countries, and those reports generated from Frontex and Europol. (Kripos 9)

The project was also a good opportunity to try out the intelligence doctrine in a less grave situation and was characterized as being an exercise to increase preparedness for crises. The operation was initiated by the Norwegian Police Directorate and made use of risk assessment products created at the European level by Frontex, which calculated the likelihood of an increase in migrants arriving in Norway. The Police Directorate ordered the operation to seek to render the future more actionable, to guide the allocation and deployment of resources, and to assess the need for anticipatory border control efforts. The two first questions guiding the project concerned this topic and were:

1. What is the number of asylum seekers / migrants arriving in Norway? What nationalities are they, and how are they distributed? What is the percentage of single unaccompanied asylum seekers and what nationality are they? How does this compare with the figures in other European countries?
2. What is the expected number of asylum seekers / migrants that will arrive in Norway? Which border crossings are used at present and which ones are migrants expected to use in the future? (Police Directorate, 2015, translation by the authors)

The third question from the leadership was about anticipating crime and public insecurity arising from migration:

3. Have particular crime problems resulted from increased inflows? Are there effects on public safety? Are the police seeing any trends or phenomena in relation to the flow of migrants, such as disturbances or disturbances in the rest of the population? (Police Directorate 2015, translation by the authors)

While answering these questions, the group was required to report weekly on police resource utilization and resource needs, needs for coordination and the use of police efforts and needs for additional grants to handle the migrant situation.

One could look at these three questions in the light of Treverton's (2010) three categories of questions: puzzles, mysteries and complexities. The first two questions fall into the category that Treverton (2010: 344) calls 'puzzle', which is a type of question to which 'answers exist but may not be known', and where intelligence products are much more fact-based. Several of the analysts described their work as putting together a puzzle – searching for the right pieces available out there. They were also quite familiar with this kind of searching because of past experience of Frontex collaboration, and because they knew where to look by analysing the border control efforts that had been implemented south and east of the Schengen area. However, those in the intelligence hub who were tasked with providing assessments on these questions thought that it was the third that was the most difficult to address, because it was

more open, and couched in vaguer language. It involved a higher degree of uncertainty and there was no information that could be collected to provide an easy answer. One could thus argue that it belongs to Treverton's (2010: 344) category of 'mysteries', defined as: 'answer contingent, cannot be known, but key variables can, along with sense for how they combine'. Here the intelligence products are seen as essentially the best forecast possible, perhaps with an outline of potential scenarios.

In order to provide intelligence product on these matters, the intelligence hub identified a total of 132 information requirements that had to be pursued. Some of this new information was also perceived as quite vague:

In the beginning very much was unclear. There were a lot of information needs that the Police Directorate required intelligence about, which did not necessarily prove to be anything real you could collect. There was no information on it, or one could not be as detailed as they required. (Kripos 9)

Examples of this category included information about unstable people who had the capacity to cause great harm, and specific named terrorist groups. The main sources used were internal information, together with intelligence from police district registers, social media, news and reports from police associates in Europe – particularly Frontex and Europol, but also Interpol – embassies and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The most important data used in the report was obtained from the police district tasked with collecting the specific information required. Information gathering was mainly carried out in a low-tech way. ICT was only used to transfer data into a common project register. Beyond the calculable numbers of migration flow, the information required was marked by the absence of evidence, traces of history or personal data. The information obtained was coordinated by the intelligence project's information manager, quality assured and checked if registered, broken down and then distributed to strategic analysts. To highlight the consequences of potential crime that could be related to migration, weekly reports were requested on various types of crime, such as human smuggling, false ID, drugs and crime among unaccompanied minors, together with information on the prevalence of vigilante groups.

Twelve of the concerns related to risk and threats mentioned during interviews were possible violations of the law involving false IDs, drugs, fires in a detention centre, smuggling, human trafficking, illegal stay etc. Nineteen were vague involving potentially violent or unstable people, xenophobia in the population as a security problem, vigilante groups, vulnerable places,

moral panic, networks of beggars and prostitutes and possible Islamic State-associated terrorists. As explained by one of the participants, some of the threats and risks might change during the operation:

And there were a lot of questions: will the same thing happen in Norway? Fires were started in some reception centres, and one was afraid, thinking "okay, here we've got right-wing extremists, maybe", or "is it that?" That was the question. It also turned out that, in most cases, the fire was related to cooking, or in one district, it was probably insurance fraud, where the owner of the building himself had started a fire, tried to light it so it would look like a fire, and maybe then get some insurance money for it. So, that wasn't a matter for us, really. (Kripas 9)

These uncertainties didn't help the aim of the operation, which was to accumulate intelligence for decision-making. Since most of the information obtained was very vague, and managers could make their own plans out of the strategic reports, an interviewee emphasized that the strategical reports in fact had the opposite effect, resulting in less coordinated and more individual plans. It therefore proved necessary to choose between the uncertainties and often the most concrete and detailed data won out, with it being decided, for instance, to target vigilante groups or visit asylum centres. The analysts had to hold onto concrete facts to avoid being drowned in 'fantasies and imagination', as one interviewee put it. This reasoning also had consequences for the framing of narrative styles and the questions asked.

From 'what was' or 'what is' to 'what if'?

Mythen and Walklate (2008) compellingly argue that there are three types of questions to ask in risk analysis. They involve historical data concerning 'what was', situational pictures of 'what is', or more imaginative and abductive speculations about 'what if'. All these types of questions are present in the interviews. Rather than making calculations aimed at prevention, the people involved were most concerned with the precautionary logic of unknown events. With little to hold onto from the past, it was difficult to ask 'what was?'. Several of the analysts, therefore, held onto questions about 'what is?', trying to get an overview of how the current situation pointed to the future by obtaining more and more data. Here is one illustration of that:

The reports we delivered to POD had a value in the form of decision support. And then, there was no definite value, necessarily in the information we passed on to them: it was not 'arrest this criminal network, so we can prevent the crime in the area'. But we reduced the uncertainty about the situation to a greater extent, so you had a relatively good picture of the present situation. [...] Look at it as a puzzle, the more pieces you get, the more information you get, the clearer the picture becomes. (Kripas 7)

These puzzles, he goes on to say, led in his view to a reduction of the moral panic in the public space and media at the time. Analysts point to the importance of building a situational picture, using data as close as possible to the present 'real time'. Depending on the past or on the unknown future will lead to different ways of anticipating the future. For instance, in the case of the definition of threats, the continuum goes from vagueness to concrete violations of law. Asking 'what if' was tricky when the aim was to gather information about potentially threatening people. A police analyst describes the difficulty in this way:

There were several concerns about who the people coming were. Were they terrorists? The focus for a long time was whether terrorists hide among immigrants. Many of them are traumatized, come from areas where certainly, or at least very probably, they have been involved in a war. There are questions about the person's identity and there is a lack of certainty about it, etc. These were issues that one was supposed to try to include properly in reports. (Kripos 9)

The interviewees' accounts show how they actively shape the topic by assessing likelihoods and possible scenarios. Our study of their practice reveals that, rather than producing facts, they strive to find more rational arguments to support or refute vaguer concerns. It is, therefore, essential for them to capture what they call emerging themes and challenges, bringing to mind Beck's (1999) phrase about the ambiguities of the risk society: 'no-longer-but-not-yet'. It demonstrates how much complexity there is when topics are vague and intangible. This is particularly evident when risk profiles are used to screen asylum seekers on the front line, as this participant observes:

To use a long indicator list on the front line is not easy. In your head you have to scroll through all the indicators on the list. Is this person involved in terror, unstable person, involved in human smuggling, human trafficking, child abuse, etcetera? So, it is better to have some types of hubs for indicators. (PU1)

The difficulties involved became particularly challenging in the case of unaccompanied minors, who at one extreme could be seen as dangerous young men, and on the other as being vulnerable to radicalization and forced labour. A compelling illustration of the diversity in narrative styles is provided by how the future is rendered actionable regarding this group. 'Why are unaccompanied asylum seekers escaping from reception centres?' was a question asked by politicians and answered in one of the thematic reports in Operation Migrant. The report illuminates dilemmas concerning concepts like threats and vulnerability: on the one hand, young boys are seen as threats to public safety, due to their potential to commit sexual harassment, burglary and other types of crime. On the other hand, they are children and vulnerable, with special needs arising from their violent experiences and terrible losses. This

report was commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and ended up changing how the problem was defined. As interviewees said, it is not the youngsters who are the problem, but the way they are treated. The report concludes that the current immigration policy is part of the problem: the introduction of temporary residence permits for unaccompanied minors is what makes them escape from reception centres.

Puzzle-solving meets pre-emptive efforts

The diversity of narrative styles about minors is only one example of differences between the intelligence staff and decision-makers, which lead to quite different knowledge practices. Whereas the intelligence staff favour a factual way of arguing, as if doing a puzzle, which leads to a perception they are reducing management's and politicians' concerns and worries, the perceptions of decision-makers are shaped by a number of external factors, such as the media and direct demands from politicians. Several of those interviewed in the ILP hub strongly perceived their main task as being to 'negate concerns' within the police and elsewhere – among politicians, newspapers and other media. Since public opinion was marked by overblown fears arising from the increased number of migrants, they saw their role as being to explode myths and provide reassurance: to create a sense of reassurance and security. They believe that their reports helped balance and nuance fears and perceptions of crises, including those around youth crime, sexual harassment committed by asylum seekers and offences involving unaccompanied minors escaping from reception centres. The risks posed by large numbers of young men living close together, and the possibility of outbreaks of violence and sexual abuse emerged as particular sources of anxiety. A similar level of threat was associated with the increase of extreme right-wing vigilantes, who might set fire to reception centres. The role of the reports was to support leaders by giving them facts to help them make better decisions. One intelligence manager put it like this:

Exactly, they got a calmer and more balanced and nuanced picture of the situation. We wanted to give a correct picture from the police: how we understood the problem. For instance, there were many concerns about unaccompanied minors – worries that they disappeared from asylum reception centres and got involved in crime. (KRIPOS 8)

As the interviewee goes on to say, in her view they helped reduce fear in the population and lowered anxiety about preparedness for emergencies. They perceived that the intelligence hub enabled those involved in the operation to function as brakes on populist politics and the culture of control engendered by fear. However, as it was also explained, the leaders were only partly convinced by the assessments and favour a more sceptical approach. They may also decide to ignore an intelligence report, as is described in this quote:

No matter what kind of threat assessment you receive [...] Even if the products are great in describing the threats and great in terms of assessments linked to the threats, it is not certain that the decision-makers will use them. (POD1)

The reasons given for being sceptical about the reports related to concerns about how the future was rendered actionable by such calculations. On one side decision-makers want the assessment to be more precise than a certain percentage of probability. However, they also question how possible it is to calculate the future and translate it into figures. As one principal described it, in retrospect it is possible to view many of the intelligence products as assessments of measures implemented in the south and east of Europe, not assessments of threats.

It seems that the assessments did not quite match up with the decision-makers' fear of the unthinkable and surprises in the future. In interviews, principals emphasized shortcomings in the assessments. The leaders' concerns had direct consequences as the operational part of the project was initiated within Kripos. Reading the strategic reports made them concerned about their own responsibility, and it was felt necessary that accountability for decisions should be ensured. In the operational part of the project they did not acquire new data but re-read what had already been gathered and based their reports on the same information requirements as the strategic reports. This was reasonable, since it was indeed the strategic reports that revealed the internal need for more operational and tactical support in decision-making, in the face of concerns about 'potential ticking time bombs they should have acted upon', as it was described in interviews. The operational project therefore supported ongoing strategic operations, but with the particular aim of generating intelligence to enable police districts to make decisions on coordinated tactical efforts. These measures, we were told by interviewees, were primarily border control efforts and led to the initiation of several investigations and criminal cases. The analysts thought the reason for this outcome was that those tasked with taking action mainly had prosecution and legal backgrounds, which gave them a completely different point of view. The array of inter-agency collaborations mobilized in Operation Migrant were thus primarily to do with emergency efforts, law enforcement, the maintenance of order and collaboration with private security to deal with public nuisance. In addition, there was some increase in multi-agency investigations targeting work-related crime involving multiple violations, such as smuggling human beings, human trafficking for forced labour, illegal work, money laundering, benefit fraud, tax evasion, and violations of immigration law (Bjelland and Vestby, 2017).

Increased control of information – reduced uncertainty?

A typical objective assigned to the intelligence function will thus be to uncover facts and then develop forward-looking assessments for use at different levels (Clark, 2016: 19). Although intelligence operations were not originally designed to provide tactical suggestions, this was clearly included in the operational part of the project. As argued, the intelligence hub and the decision-makers have different conceptions of risks and threats, and naturally the responses suggested differed between the two groups. These differences in style also led to variations in intelligence practice and perceptions of relevant measures for managing the future, with decision-makers taking a more risk averse stance than the risk assessments suggested.

We will now turn to discuss the effects of the variations in thinking about anticipatory actions. How do the differences in thinking about possible futures shape interpretation of the present? What responses are the possible futures enabling? And how is this marked by perceptions of migrants as threats to national security? According to an information manager in the hub, the aim was to gain control of the information for decision-making:

Yes. This is two parts of the same thing. As I see it. For it is gaining control of the information, structuring it, linking it to the right information requirements and it is then immaterial whether it is strategic or operational or tactical. (KRIPOS 7)

However, achieving this reduction of uncertainty in the decision-making process depends upon how the problem is approached. As shown in the interviews, there are different styles of reasoning that go along with different problem definitions: decision-makers tend to ask ‘what if?’ more often than the analysts do. Here the distinction made by Prins and Reich (2018: 260) between a more technical perspective on risk and uncertainty is useful: whereas risk connotes incomplete knowledge, ‘uncertainty refers to a future event about which even the probability is unknown’. The narrower technical risk concept, forecasting the empirical probability of events, was hardly ever used. The strategic analysts’ assessments of the flow of migrants were the exception. Most of this work is done by drawing on past experience: for example, border control draws on past experience to calculate future probabilities. In this case, prediction was closer to being a set of relative, statistically controllable certainties (Aradau and Blanke, 2017), indicating that there is a ‘*growing trust* in and use of knowledge generated about the probability of future criminality’ (Prins and Reich, 2018: 260). The decision-makers, on the other side, foster a fundamentally more pre-emptive approach characterized by what Amoore (2013: 12) terms ‘possibilistic’ thinking. In this context, it is possible to argue that, due to the incalculability of the future, the unknown changes the logic: ‘since the past can no longer be

seen as a prologue to future events, speculation about unforeseeable harmful events is required. Here, prediction amounts to ‘conjecture’” (Aradau and van Munster, 2011 in Egbert and Krasman, 2019: 7). This suggests that, unlike intelligence staff, who are attempting to reducing concerns, possibilistic thinking expands the space for probabilities, due to the openness, uncertainty and indeterminacy of the future. As Hildebrandt (2016: 407) argues:

Though much predictive analytics is built around the notion of reducing uncertainty and further increasing the control over future events, the quote highlights the opposite. Since *the present futures* co-determine the *future present*, predictions basically enlarge the probability space we face; they do not reduce but expand both uncertainty and possibility. The question is about the distribution of the uncertainty and the possibility: who gets how much of what?

What is portrayed as a rational decision-making process, therefore operates in the opposite way, due to the complexities characterizing thinking about the future. Decision-making processes do allow brakes to be put on pre-emptive actions, but, to a certain degree, social assumptions, anxieties and myths shape and support police work.

The analysis reveals the importance of bringing in different theoretical positions to understand migration policing. As Weber and McCulloch (2018) argue, the crimmigration thesis answers different questions than the managerial or pre-emptive approaches. Whereas the crimmigration thesis explains how, and the managerial thesis why, the pre-emptive approach brings in temporality and therefore the question of when, which is important for defining deviance and dangerousness (Lianos and Douglas, 2000). Applying a governmental approach, as Mythen and Walklate (2008: 232) argue, will ‘bring into the spotlight both the discursive construction of the terrorist threats and efforts of the state to (re)establish a mandate for social control’. World risk society is haunted by the idea of ‘no-longer-but-not-yet – no longer trust/security, not yet destruction/disaster’ (Beck in Phythian, 2012: 190). This is particularly relevant for understanding how intelligence-led policing contributes to contemporary views of migration as a threat, through trend analysis, scenario planning and forecasting.

The intelligence-driven agencies aim to make a difference not only through institutional arrangements, procedures and law enforcement measures, but also in terms of how notions of security, risk, threats, and solutions are conceptualized. Intelligence as a social practice is, as Diderichsen (2019) observes, intrinsically linked to an antagonistic relation, approaching the other as an enemy. With its roots from military, intelligence activities are then particularly salient when it comes to dispersing an adversarial logic. As Andersson (2014) argues, by means

of this thought-work, Frontex influences EU policy-makers' perceptions (and policies), resource allocation, and member states' access to funding as well as defining the rationale and justifications for its own operations (see also Horii, 2016). Risk and threat analysis is appealing as being part of rational decision-making but it may not be apparent how it is embedded in much wider power relations, with ties to European border control and risk assessments and ideas about national security (Paul, 2017). Risk assessment in a Frontex context aims to collect not only aggregated data, but also more and more personal data, which then feeds back into risk assessment because of the data collected and various types of subsequent evaluation (Gundhus, 2018). Such analysis, therefore, both defines what security is, how it is threatened, and what solutions are necessary and appropriate (Horii, 2016). The task of policing migrants not only serves to define the nature of a polity but also, as Brown (2010: 71) points out, offers a promise of protection and a way of distinguishing between friends and enemies. Pre-emptive logic building on intelligence-led police strategies makes this possible.

Conclusion

Events that have yet to occur will be thought of as something to avoid in intelligence-led strategies; as Phythian (2012: 190) remarks 'risk is by definition situated in the future'. As has been argued, the risk level attached to border security is negotiated in a patchwork of power relations between commissioners, practitioners and politicians. The findings also show how the rationality of probabilities not only produces arguments for management decisions, but also generates more complexity, by producing several possible futures and knowledge that generates further need for accountability in decisions (Hildebrandt, 2016). It is therefore essential to consider border security knowledge as practice, to shed light not only on contemporary problematizations of security but also on practices of securitization by professionals and the construction of experts' epistemic knowledge within different fields and collaborations (Bigo, 2002; Côté-Boucher, Infantino and Salter, 2014). Although the link between security and migration was made long before the introduction of such risk and threat analysis (Horii, 2016), this article highlights how 'it reinforces the political vision of a link between migration and threat' (Bigo, 2002: 63), by introducing the 'when'. Studying actors who implement policy on migration within the police bureaucracy thus provides new insights about the role of the police not only as preservers of social order, but also as producers of social ordering practices which recognize the presence of the future (Weber and McCulloch, 2018).

How this has affected practice is not known, due to gaps between strategy and practice. However, interviews with police officers indicate that the use of immigration control has

increased, as part of order-maintenance operations targeting young offenders with no formal connection to local community (Gundhus, forthcoming). Research on the situation of unaccompanied minors also points to difficulties in treating them as children, due to uncertainties about their age and the fact that their involvement in criminal milieus defines them as adults (Aasen et al., 2016; Lidén and Salvesen, 2016). There have also been orders from the chief of police to prioritize non-citizens reported for shoplifting, as a powerful tool to reveal illegal residence and initiate deportation for minor offences (Lundgaard, 2019). These instances suggest a possible shift in practice, in line with the aim of intelligence-led policing to provide institutional change in the anticipatory action of policing. However, further research is needed to explore how the policing of possible futures also creates changes in police practice, since a mass of research indicates gap between institutional logics and practices (see for instance Sausdal, 2018 for a recent Scandinavian contribution). Although it is clearly the intention, the degree to which front line officers' discretion is controlled through digital surveillance systems is yet to be explored. However, the findings clearly indicate how ideas about national security and vulnerabilities affect knowledge practice and institutional logics not only in the policing of migration, but also in ordinary police work more generally.

When what and who is policed is determined by the effort to control future (in)securities, it is not only responses to crime and insecurities that are involved (Gundhus and Franko, 2016). It also means paying attention to the way possible futures are renegotiated by those implementing the strategies. Anticipatory actions renders, as pointed out above, future actionable by invoking an anticipatory logic to prevent, mitigate, or pre-empt specific futures. These logics are according to Anderson (2010) formalizing, justifying and deploying actions in the present. Approaching migrants as threats and potential criminals, foreground the unpredictability and uncertainty of the future and its indeterminate potential. To identify suspect identities is therefore increasingly becoming a vital object of policing and various strategies of migration policing (Aliverti, 2019; Sklansky, 2012). Moreover, it emphasizes the significance of the pre-emptive logic for legitimizing the action, since it acts over threats that has not emerged. As pointed out by Chamlian (2016: 403): 'Threats lying ahead become the justification for taking action in the present'.

The findings thus underscore the importance of studying how risks and threats are produced and subsequent claim-making and legitimization of the practice. As argued by Lee and McGovern (2016), new forms of communication reduce some risks, but they also create others because they contribute to the production of new risk events. Securing borders more efficiently

might reassert state sovereignty as the afore-mentioned risk indicators imply, but the vulnerabilities and human security of the migrants receive less attention than those of the domestic public.

Within migration control there has been a shift towards interest in the criminal potential of groups and networks rather than in an individual's past and the actual criminal act he or she has carried out: a forward-looking approach has been adopted to grasp uncertainties and the unthinkable. This move in focus away from what someone has actually done is shifting discourses of punishment and moral assessments of legal offences towards the question of who a person is (i.e. their citizenship, nationality, identity issues, moral conduct). The absence of information about the past also makes this shift more prevalent, and opens the way for deploying of anticipatory logics and practices. Issues of belonging thus become particularly conspicuous when the same act is carried out by different people. It is immigrants that are seen as not fitting in that are controlled and reacted upon by the police (Aliverti, 2019). To a certain extent, seeing insecure identity as dangerous paves the way for the use of more coercive methods of securing it: this is the process that has been described as the criminalization of identity (Aas, 2013; Franko, forthcoming). Thus, the distinction between members and non-members is intrinsic to migration policing, a logic that impinges on the relationship of the police with their public in terms of discrimination and legitimacy, and deserves further academic attention. A lesson to be learned from this is that controlling migration as future risk also connects crime and terrorism in ways that may make migrants and asylum seekers into potential criminals or terrorists.

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