

1 Introduction

Improving the ways in which the police make sense of crime is the subject of a growing body of literature that seeks to reform and expand the role of intelligence analysis within the police. Addressing crime more effectively, scholars contend, requires outside expertise in intelligence-led policing, evidence-based policing, hot spot policing, and problem-solving policing, to name only a few of the most notable police reform initiatives.¹ What reformers currently fail to consider, however, is how their proposed improvements mesh (or fail to mesh) with the knowledge work the police are already performing. Nor do existing reform proposals recognize let alone differentiate between the *multiplicity* of knowledge communities within the police – a necessary task if reformers want to tailor their preferred analytical approach to the knowledge community that is most likely to be both suitable and receptive.

This comparative empirical study of policing in the United States and France draws on the authors' ten years of field work (2007 to 2017, see Section 2) to contend that the police in both countries should be thought about as an amalgam of five distinct professional cultures or "intelligence regimes" – each of which can be found in any given police department in both the United States and France. Each of these intelligence regimes, we contend, has its own characteristic interpretive frameworks, time horizons, and ecology of actors, and each feed into different modes of police intervention. Nor is all of this analytical work performed by something called an "intelligence unit"; we found that discrete pockets of dedicated expertise, with their own analytical traditions and tools, can be found at all levels of the police hierarchy, from top leadership, middle management, to detectives investigating crime; partnership liaison officers who deliberate with community stakeholders and residents; and street cops responding to calls for service.

¹ J. Ratcliffe (2016), *Intelligence-Led Policing*, 2nd ed., London: Routledge; J. G. Carter (2013), *Intelligence-Led Policing: A Policing Innovation*, El Paso, TX: LFB Scholarly Publishing; D. Weisburd & A. A. Braga, eds. (2006), *Police Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; H. Goldstein (1990), *Problem-Oriented Policing*, New York: McGraw-Hill; A. Braga (2010), *Problem-Oriented Policing & Crime Prevention*, 2nd ed., Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner; K. Bullock, R. Erol, & N. Tilley (2006), *Problem-Oriented Policing and Partnerships: Implementing an Evidence-Based Approach to Crime Reduction*, Portland, OR: Willan; J. Ratcliffe (2019), *Reducing Crime: A Companion for Police Leaders*, Oxon: Routledge; D. H. Bayley (1994), *Police for the Future*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; D. H. Bayley & P. C. Stenning (2016), *Governing the Police: Experience in Six Democracies*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction; D. Weisburd, J. E. Eck, A. A. Braga et al. (2016), *Place Matters: Criminology for the Twenty-First Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; D. Wisler & I. D. Onwudiwe, eds. (2009), *Community Policing: International Patterns and Comparative Perspectives*, Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

Haggerty and Ericsson have famously characterized police as knowledge workers.² Peter Manning, too, urges readers to “consider the police organization as a context for information processing.”³ But Manning notes that “[t]here are few studies of police management or top command and their work.”⁴ Studies of police as knowledge workers are limited by focusing mainly on street-level actors, particularly patrol, perhaps because studies of patrol lend themselves to ride-alongs that reveal the day-to-day work environment of frontline officers and first responders.⁵ Through field work with middle and upper management as well as frontline officers in both the United States and France, we compared the ways in which distinct pockets within the police of both countries interpret the collective criminal activity of young people, whether gang-related or not. To what extent do different professional subcommunities within the police view membership in a youth gang as useful in explaining collective criminal offending by young people? What difference, we wanted to know, does the institutional vantage point make to the way in which the police explain violence and other collective action by young people? We contend that what police do as knowledge workers and how they make sense of the social problems they are asked to address varies with the professional subcommunities or “intelligence regimes” in which their particular knowledge work is embedded.

Collective juvenile offending, we contend, is particularly apt to look different from multiple vantage points because it brings under one umbrella so many different phenomena whose connections with each other and with gang activity are contested, from loitering, vandalism, and open-air drug trafficking, to aggravated assault and homicide. We focus specifically on *collective* juvenile offending because “adolescent crimes . . . are committed predominantly by groups, not by offenders acting alone.”⁶

Though we deal, in part, with the ways in which police make sense of gangs, we speak of “collective juvenile offending” more generally, as the decision to apply this term to a group of juveniles who are “loitering,” selling drugs, or engaging in violence is itself a part of what we are studying. When do the police in each country find it useful to interpret problem behaviors by groups of young people as gang-related, and what alternative constructions are available to them in their professional routines?

² R. H. Ericson & K. Haggerty (1997), *Policing the Risk Society*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

³ P. K. Manning (2018), Technology, Law, and Policing, in M. den Boer, ed., *Comparative Policing from a Legal Perspective*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 290–305, 291.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 303. ⁵ *Ibid.*, 303.

⁶ D. A. Sklansky (2021), *A Pattern of Violence: How the Law Classifies Crimes and What it Means for Justice*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 174.

Our answers to these questions emerge out of a comparison of two very different policing systems which “form a kind of commentary on one another’s character.”⁷ An “individuating comparison” makes visible features of contrasting systems that might otherwise escape notice. In this case, the juxtaposition of the United States and France reveals deep structural similarities that transcend differences between the underlying criminal phenomena and between law enforcement institutions. Cross-national comparisons across extremely different policing institutions help bring out the defining characteristics of distinct intelligence regimes precisely because, as our research suggests, policing systems as different from each other as those of the United States and France display the same pattern. Indeed, our research reveals striking cross-national affinities between the ways in which the cities of Chicago and Marseille address retaliatory violence by drug trafficking organizations by young people, even though these problems are not considered gang-related in Marseille, as they are in Chicago. Both cities mobilize the same intelligence regime as the primary interpretive lenses for dealing with retaliatory shootings. Similar affinities exist between the approaches of Nantes, in France, and Aurora, Illinois, suggesting the difference the choice of intelligence regime makes to the way in which police from very different legal systems address a given problem.

Section 2 describes our research methodology. Section 3 introduces the concept of an “intelligence regime” and its value to understanding the knowledge work of law enforcement agencies in making sense of a complex phenomenon like that of collective juvenile offending. Section 4 sets out and illustrates the five intelligence regimes with examples from our field work, arguing that these five professional subcultures structure the knowledge work of police in both the United States and France, despite the profound systemic differences between the policing institutions of the two countries. Section 5 explores tensions between distinct intelligence regimes, while Section 6 contends that intelligence regimes mediate and shape intelligence-led approaches to crime and that any given police approach to collective juvenile offending must be designed to further synergies and reduce tensions between distinct intelligence regimes, while matching any given reform initiative with the intelligence regime that has the greatest affinity for its outlook and methods. Section 7 concludes that a city’s approach to the problem of collective youth crime reflects a deeply pragmatic choice between multiple competing analytical frameworks and can best be understood as a function of which intelligence regimes have been chosen to take the lead in addressing the problem, and of how the dominant regime has been coordinated with the others.

⁷ C. J. Geertz (1968), *Islam Observed*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 4.

2 Our Methodology

We propose a framework for distinguishing between what we term “intelligence regimes” within the police, drawing on our own empirical research into French and American policing, from 2007 to 2017. We will draw on our research (a) in presenting our framework for differentiating among intelligence communities and (b) in describing how these distinct professional cultures shape a range of distinct ways in which the police think about collective juvenile delinquency.⁸

Many different forms of police expertise touch on some aspect of juvenile collective offending. Our qualitative interviews and observational data were designed to generate rather than test theories about how distinct knowledge communities within the police are organized to acquire, analyze, and use intelligence about their respective areas of expertise – and how their distinctive characteristics compare with each other.⁹ Our research encompassed ride-alongs with ground-level actors and 500 semistructured, open-ended qualitative interviews with a wide range of knowledge workers within the police, including understudied policing actors such as intelligence analysts, partnership liaisons, as well as middle managers and chiefs of the command hierarchy. We combined the “informal conversational interview” with elements of the “general interview guide approach,” in which the investigator uses a checklist of issues to be explored but adapts the wording and order of questions to the expertise of individual respondents.¹⁰

Our research sites spanned multiple cities in the United States and France, and we illustrate our regimes with interview data and observational data drawn from Marseille, St. Etienne, Cenon, Nantes, Vitry-le-Francois, and Grenoble, in France, and from Aurora, Illinois and Chicago, in the United States. In each country, we chose sites that had tried out a variety of different approaches to persistent crime problems, and we attempted to include both smaller and larger cities in diverse geographical regions of each country. We spent between two and six weeks at each location, usually in one-week stints over the course of several months. Most individual interviews lasted from two to three hours, with some lasting much longer, and we frequently reinterviewed members of the

⁸ All interviews are on file with the authors.

⁹ R. Swedberg (2012), *Theorizing in Sociology and Social Science: Turning to the Context of Discovery*, *Theory and Society* 41:1–40; D. Rueschemeyer (2009), *Usable Theory: Analytic Tools for Social and Political Research*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

¹⁰ See M. Q. Patton (2014), *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, 4th ed., Newbury Park, CA: Sage; Y. S. Lincoln & E. G. Guba (1985), *Naturalistic Inquiry*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage; I. Seidman (1998), *Interviewing as Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed., New York: Teachers' College Press; G. King, R. O. Keohane, & S. Verba (1994), *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; J. Maanen, ed. (1998), *Qualitative Studies of Organizations*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

command hierarchy over the course of our stay at each location. At each site we interviewed the command hierarchy, seeking out supervisors, community policing specialists, and partnership liaisons who relied on intelligence to solve particular crime problems or to address the demands of local stakeholders, and we collected examples of the intelligence products on which they relied. Our interlocutors did not come only from units expressly denominated as intelligence units, though we met with analysts and supervisors from every type of intelligence unit present in each location, along with supervisors at fusion centers in the United States and their counterparts in the Renseignements Territoriaux; the Direction Generale de Securite Interieure; the intelligence cells of the Gendarmerie; the SIRASCO (criminal intelligence units in the National Police); and the SIRASCO's counterparts in the Gendarmerie. We also interviewed local stakeholders (such as prosecutors, municipal officials, political leaders, housing, transportation and school officials, social workers, and a variety of nongovernmental organizations) who played a role in partnership deliberations and problem-solving.

We used our interview and observational data to search for patterns along the dimensions of analysis (time horizons, aims, tools, criteria of validity, etc.). In particular, we focused on the ways in which knowledge workers doing very different kinds of police work collected, analyzed, and used information, and on the ways in which intelligence fed into the decision-making processes of the ecology of actors who generated, evaluated, and used it. We derived our intelligence regimes inductively, through the data we draw on below (a) to illustrate the various categories that make up the regime and (b) to illustrate our cross-national comparison.

3 On the Notion of an Intelligence Regime

Even within the same police department, we contend, intelligence regimes offer distinct perspectives on the complex phenomena that make up “collective juvenile offending.” And each regime may help remedy the blind spots of another. David Sklansky contends, for example, that “the criminal law . . . has come to reflect a view of violence as characterological rather than situational,”¹¹ but one reason why the social and situational context of juvenile delinquency may be ignored by prosecutors and detectives is that this is not what criminal investigation is set up to address. If “criminal law has a long tradition of treating groups of offenders acting together as especially threatening and warranting special sanctions,”¹² other intelligence regimes that are not institutionally invested in building cases for criminal prosecution may be more willing to entertain Sklansky’s “doubt whether many

¹¹ Sklansky, *A Pattern of Violence*, 8. ¹² *Ibid.*, 163.

gangs were as organized or as powerful as law enforcement . . . made them out to be.”¹³ Other institutional actors may be more attentive to contextual factors, including situational triggers, neighborhood characteristics, group dynamics, and opportunity structures (for education, mentoring, recreation, and employment) that make young people vulnerable to recruitment by gangs.

The intelligence regimes we introduce thus capture the differences between five ways of thinking about a problem like collective juvenile disorder in the public realm, whether designated as gang-related or not. Viewed as a crime problem, these phenomena might yield prosecutions of offender groups as racketeering enterprises (in the United States) or as manifestations of organized crime (in France). Viewed as public safety problems, through the lens of social contagion, the same problems might produce efforts to anticipate, predict, de-escalate, and head off future incidents. As an order maintenance problem, collective juvenile offending might be treated as a neighborhood-specific quality of life issue requiring ground-level actors to get to know local schools, local kids, and local hangouts. As a challenge for local security partnerships, collective juvenile offending may invite participants to focus on poorly designed common areas, limited summer jobs, the needs of under-served age groups, and the lack of recreational spaces. And if treated as an occasion for managerial oversight over enforcement strategy, analysis might focus on concerns about the effectiveness of stop-and-frisk strategies and their alienating impact on communities of color, or about the ways in which racketeering prosecutions of large street gangs have fragmented fairly stable street gangs into smaller, more volatile rivals for contested terrain. What sets these regimes apart from each other is the kind of information they value; the ecology of actors who participate in a particular regime; the ways in which members of each regime process and analyze information; the tools and frameworks they use for that purpose; and the ways in which they use the information to guide official action.

We challenge monist generalizations about the professional culture of the police that view the police as generally suspicious of new intelligence techniques¹⁴ or as generally hostile to outsiders.¹⁵ There is no such thing as a monolithic “police culture,” we contend, though some scholars, like Jerome Skolnick, at times speak of typical ways in which police perceive and interpret the world around them.¹⁶ Skolnick, Waddington, and Van Maanen build their

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ J. B. Chan (1997), *Changing Police Culture: Policing in a Multicultural Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁵ R. Reiner (2000), *The Politics of the Police*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁶ J. H. Skolnick (1994), *Justice without Trial: Law Enforcement in a Democratic Society*, 3rd ed., New York: Wiley.

description of the police world and its characteristic outlook around the tendency of many police officers to foreground their crime-fighting functions, even though this is, for most officers, only a small part of what they do.¹⁷ Reiner and Crank in turn speak of an us-against-them mentality toward the poor and toward racial and ethnic minorities.¹⁸ Westley and Jerome Hall, too, viewed the police as a cohesive occupational group acculturated to a shared set of norms,¹⁹ without taking account of the variability of assignments and roles within the police. However, in both the United States and in France, most studies of policing to make these claims have focused on ground-level operational units. With less attention paid to the distinctive tool kits and institutional interests of intelligence analysts, local security partnerships, middle management, or the general staff, it becomes difficult to appreciate the plurality of professional cultures within the police and to determine how differences between professional cultures translate into distinct approaches to problems such as gang crime and other forms of collective offending by young people.

James Q. Wilson, for example, theorized important differences in policing “styles” by distinguishing among the norms and practices peculiar to the *watchman* style (with its characteristic concern with suppression of the visible signs of social disorders), the *service* style (with its emphasis on responding to community complaints and deliberating with outsiders about how to handle local concerns), and the *legalistic* style (with its focus on crime fighting and legal outputs in the form of criminal prosecutions).²⁰ But he confined these observations to ground-level personnel in what we would term the order maintenance regime and attributed the style the at each location to the police organization as a whole, without considering the possibility that multiple “styles” might inhere and coexist in distinct professional subcultures under the umbrella of one institution.

In lieu of policing “styles” that accrue to police departments as a whole, we posit multiple professional cultures that guide the ways in which the police evaluate situations, select a course of action, and justify their actions to other members of the organization.²¹ As early as 1983, in the English-speaking

¹⁷ *Ibid.*; J. Van Maanen (1978), The Asshole, in P. K. Manning & J. Van Maanen, eds., *Policing: A View from the Street*, Santa Monica, CA: Goodyear, 221–237; P. A. J. Waddington (1999), Police (Canteen) Sub-culture: An Appreciation, *British Journal of Criminology* 39(2):287–309.

¹⁸ Reiner, *The Politics of the Police*; J. P. Crank (1994), Watchman and Community: Myth and Institutionalization in Policing, *Law & Society Review* 28(2):325–352.

¹⁹ J. Hall (1953), Police and Law in a Democratic Society, *Indiana Law Journal* 28:133–177; W. Westley (1953), Violence and the Police: A Sociological Study of Law, Custom, and Morality, *American Journal of Sociology* 59:34–41.

²⁰ J. Q. Wilson (1968), *Varieties of Police Behavior*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

²¹ Chan, *Changing Police Culture*; E. A. Paoline (2003), Taking Stock: Towards a Richer Understanding of Police Culture, *Journal of Criminal Justice* 31(3):199–214.

literature, Elizabeth Reuss-Ianni focused on differences between the police cultures of *street cops* and *management cops*, attributing the gulf between them to the increasing desire of the command hierarchy to demonstrate the efficiency and productivity of their work force. Peter Manning in turn differentiates the outlooks and professional cultures of patrol units, first responders (with largely reactive responsibilities), and proactive drug investigators.²²

But while Manning recognizes that “police occupational culture is multifaceted,”²³ he distinguishes between parts of the police apparatus based on activities (like patrol), specialized expertise (detectives, special units), and place in the top-down command hierarchy (middle management, top command), while our ideal-typical intelligence regimes focus on the ecosystem – the knowledge environment – in which officers are embedded. Our evidence suggests that officers from different units or different levels of the command hierarchy may share the same aims, outlook, analytical frameworks, and time horizons with each other when they seek to predict and to forestall retaliatory gang violence, riots, or protests, while two detectives in the same division may belong to different intelligence regimes and function very differently from each other, if one of them is assigned to helping a task force build racketeering cases against gang leaders for past offenses, making the officer part of the criminal intelligence regime, while the other arrests a gang member for a probation violation or technical weapons infraction to stave off retaliatory violence in the immediate aftermath of a gang-related shooting, which in turn makes that officer part of the public safety regime, with its focus on anticipating future “outbreaks” of violence on an “epidemiological” model of gang violence.

In France, Dominique Monjardet, whose work inspired our own typology, differentiated among professional *attitudes* and *modes of production* rather than *styles*,²⁴ categorizing three modes of police work as public safety, order maintenance, and the building of criminal cases, though partnership and managerial decision-making did not figure in the mix. But while Monjardet’s typology focuses primarily on police work, rather than the diverse cognitive frameworks that support these activities and make them meaningful to their protagonists, we have reconfigured our typology into ideal types of conceptually distinct knowledge communities each of which has its own ways of making sense of security problems, its own time horizons, its own ecology of actors, and its own professional routines.

²² P. K. Manning (2008), *The Technology of Policing: Crime Mapping, Information Technology, and the Rationality of Crime Control*, New York: New York University Press.

²³ Manning, *Technology, Law, and Policing*, 302.

²⁴ D. Monjardet (1996), *Ce que fait la police*, Paris: La Découverte.

Monjardet links different types of policing activities closely to their institutional homes, i.e. to the units which perform them; however, we have found that individual units shift back and forth between these different types of activities and that expertise and know-how can migrate across units. Indeed, the same individual within any given unit may shift back and forth between intelligence regimes, depending on whether she is, say, helping detectives and prosecutors to interview a witness about a gang-related shooting that occurred a year earlier (criminal intelligence), dispatching police cars to respond to a gang fight in progress (order maintenance intelligence) or preparing a chart to track the average time emergency units took to respond to calls about gang fights in progress (managerial intelligence).

Fabien Jobard and Jacques de Maillard's account of police work²⁵ in turn differentiates between order maintenance, investigative policing, and policing of crowds.²⁶ But unlike Jobard and de Maillard, who treat information policing as a distinct police activity, we view the collection, analysis, and use of information as integral to all police activities and seek to differentiate the roles information plays across organizational contexts and tasks. Intelligence analysis, we contend, is not unique to intelligence units. Intelligence gathering plays a role in all police activities.²⁷ All knowledge communities within the police develop their own interpretive lenses and analytical tools. Within the police, there are multiple different ways of analyzing phenomena that serve the practical needs of each distinct knowledge community. What sets intelligence regimes apart, we contend, is the way in which their adherents seek out and make sense of information, and the uses for which they develop their analyses.

Accordingly, our ideal types juxtapose the purposes for which members of intelligence regimes pursue information, and the interpretive frameworks they privilege. Attention to the types of information each intelligence regime seeks out can in turn reveal fundamental differences between intelligence regimes that have affinities for open-source over closed-source intelligence; for secret over open exchanges; for bilateral exchanges with privileged sources over multilateral negotiated exchanges with institutional partners; or for observations assessed through situation sense and prior experience in lieu of intelligence

²⁵ F. Jobard & J. de Maillard (2015), *Sociologie de la Police*, Paris: Armand Colin.

²⁶ Sheptycki, too, differentiates between distinct "foci" of police intelligence work, though he, like Manning, sees most of these "foci" as deviations from the dominant *métier* of policing, to which case work and the search for evidence – what we term the criminal intelligence regime – remains central. J. Sheptycki (2017), The Police Intelligence Division of Labour, *Policing and Society* 27(6):620–635.

²⁷ Indeed, the claim of special expertise in intelligence matters is a mode of self-presentation and therefore no less subject to empirical scrutiny than the claim often made by members of the French National Gendarmerie that all of its officers are trained as intelligence captors.

that has been cross-checked, corroborated, and evaluated for its reliability; human intelligence over signals intelligence; and so forth.

In comparison with typologies that focus only on the activities of the police, the focus on professional cultures as cognitive communities can expose the symbiotic relationship between analytical frames and modes of intervention, that is, between ways of seeing and ways of acting. Different cognitive communities have distinctive intelligence tools and develop their own ways of aggregating information and of searching for patterns in the data they collect. For example, an intelligence unit that relies on predictive algorithms of repetitive criminal activity and has access to highly mobile rapid intervention teams may use data about shifting outbreaks of gang violence to implement saturation tactics (as Chicago's intelligence unit did in 2008–2010, in shifting from saturating the neighborhood where violence occurred to suturing the neighborhood where retaliatory violence is expected).

Understanding intelligence regimes is essential to implementing police reforms, we contend, because the impact of any given reform initiative is mediated by the intelligence regimes through which it is routed and implemented. One reason for this is that “the adoption of innovation is determined primarily by the experiences of practitioners and often has little to do with research evidence.”²⁸ Reform strategies stand a better chance of success when they are matched with regimes whose practitioners have a natural affinity for the approach and tactics favored by a given reform strategy, that is, when they mesh with the outlook of participants in the intelligence regime that is given primary responsibility for implementing the initiative. Hot-spot policing, for example, which promotes the efficacy of “concentrating police in a few locations,” depends heavily on crime mapping, which fits easily into the public safety and order maintenance regimes.²⁹ Already during the 1970s, Weisburd and Braga note, “crime analysts looked for patterns in crime by plotting the locations and times at which crimes were committed to direct patrol officers to the most likely targets.”³⁰ Hot spots policing allows police to “continue to do what they do best – undercover and visible enforcement activities – but with greater efficiency and focus on specific locations.”³¹

If the hot-spots approach meshes easily with order maintenance or public safety approaches to crime, which rely heavily on crime-mapping and directed

²⁸ D. Weisburd & A. A. Braga (2006), Hot Spots Policing as a Model for Police Innovation, in Weisburd & Braga, *Police Innovation*, 238.

²⁹ L. W. Sherman & D. Weisburd (1995), General Deterrent Effects of Police Patrol in Crime “Hot Spots”: A Randomized Controlled Trial, *Justice Quarterly* 12:625–648.

³⁰ Weisburd & Braga, Hot Spots Policing, 236.

³¹ D. P. Rosenbaum (2006), The Limits of Hot Spots Policing, in Weisburd & Braga, *Police Innovation*, 245.