**The “Area Security Plan”**

**Comparative Analysis of the Use of a Public Action Instrument**

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1. **Introduction**

Since the introduction of the new Belgian integrated police force, including local and federal police forces[[2]](#footnote-2), the 195 police areas comprised in the local police force have been requested to devise an Area Security Plan (ASP) every four years, with a view to handle the local insecurity phenomenon. I mean to trace the career of the ASP, conceived as a strategic tool enacted in two policy areas with contrasted organisational configurations. I intend to understand how this norm is integrated into the police organisation, particularly the daily management of police work and security. I argue that the introduction of this public action tool in security matters produces specific appropriations by the local police force considered in different areas. These ones transform the constraint into a resource for their respective organisations (Crozier & Friedberg, 1977). Considering the document as a methodological tool and following it (Freeman & Maybin, 2011) is helpful to highlight similarities and differences in the way in which the two studies police areas use the same instrument.

The study relies on two case studies conducted from January 2014 to March 2015 in two police areas in the Walloon Region. Both cases studies focus on the implementation of the ASP 2014-2017. Based on in-depth interviews (N= 33), direct observation and document analysis, this paper provides inductive, qualitative and micro-sociological analyse.

1. **Contextualisation**

The ‘overall integrated security policy’ introduced in the Belgian system since the 1998 Reform (see Box 1) is structured around various plans which play intermediary roles between actors of different levels (local and federal police forces) and sectors (police, politics, and justice) of public action. The system relies on a political framework determining security priorities (the ‘Note-cadre de sécurité intégrale’), that are defined every four years by the Ministers of the Interior and Justice. Based on this framework, the federal and local police forces elaborate respectively a National Security Plan and various Area Security Plans (ASPs). At the local level, the ASP must integrate the crime policy of the public prosecutor as well as the concerns of the mayor(s). To this end, all these actors – the representative of the federal police force (the ‘administrative director-coordinator’), public prosecutor, mayor(s) and local police chief – must meet in a ‘dialogue council’ (the Area Security Council) in order to collectively determine the ASP.

The ASP therefore constitutes a local implementation of a nationwide policy. Concretely, its main function is to manage police activity and capacity in a strategic way for the next four years by defining internal priorities (organisational development such as communications and training) and external priorities (security matters such as theft, illegal drugs and so on). For each priority inscribed into the area security policy, an Action Plan (AP) must be written concerning the operational implementation of the strategic objective (priority) in the police organisation.

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| **Box 1: The New Belgian Police Pattern**  Before 1998, the Belgian police system was comprised of three main autonomous forces with distinct authorities, legislations and organisational principles: the municipal police, the gendarmerie and the judicial police. The police system was extremely decentralised and had multiple command centres (Bayley, 1985), which induced the overlapping of skills and territories and therefore created structural dysfunctions between the different police forces.  The police reform created an integrated police force that joined together the three old forces under the same legislation and the same police status. The new structure is split into two levels, the local and federal, which are functionally linked through various integration mechanisms. Currently, the federal police is responsible for the whole Belgian territory under the authority of the Ministers of the Interior and Justice. It is responsible for specialised and supra-local missions (e.g. organised crime and terrorism) and for giving support to the local police. The local police is divided into 195 areas in the Belgian territory. Each local police force is under the direction of the police chief. Among these 195 local police areas, some are constituted by only one city (‘single city areas’) and are under the sole authority of the local administration authority – the mayor − whereas others are constituted by several cities (‘multi-city areas’) and are under the authority of several local administration authorities. Each local police force is in charge of basic police missions (proximity, intervention, road safety, and so on) as well as some federal missions. For the accomplishment of its tasks, the local police force reports to both the administrative authority (for administrative police tasks such as public order) and the judicial authority, that is to say the public prosecutor (for the judicial police tasks such as crime and penal infractions). |

1. **Empirical Description: The career of a Managerial Tool**

At the scale of the police organisation, the ASP is a management tool of police work and of security in general, that the Police Chief must integrate in his organisation (Law of 1998, art. 44-45).

* 1. **Police Area A**

The police area A is a multi-city area which is composed of 3 rural and semi-rural cities in the Walloon Region. It belongs to the category 4 of the police areas[[3]](#footnote-3). The area is staffed by 80 operational FTE[[4]](#footnote-4) and by 16.5 Calogs[[5]](#footnote-5) FTE and is headed by the same Police Chief since its creation.

* + 1. **A simplified structure**

This police area has a simple organisation chart. Its structure includes 4 operational departments (Intervention – Traffic – Proximity – Research) and 2 administrative departments (Strategy & Development – HRM). These departments are headed by a Department’s chief, under the direction of the Police Chief. All the departments of the area are centralised in a same police station located in the main city of the area, but the two other cities have a police office providing the Reception and Proximity functions for the citizens.

At the managerial level, the police area A can be described as “domestic”. It is headed by a charismatic Police Chief displaying a paternalist leadership, felt as very “human” by the staff: working hours flexibility, attention to well-being and interpersonal trust, accessibility and availability of the management staff, etc. The Police Chief shows a pragmatic vision, shared by the management staff, forming together a strongly united management staff. Beyond a strong discourse, this pragmatic philosophy is visible in the organisation management of the police area, by preferring interpersonal mechanisms of coordination (“direct supervision” within the Department and “mutual adjusting” between the Departments’ chiefs) to formal procedures. The operational management also reflects this pragmatic vision: maximisation of workforce by coupling activities, by taking part in activities organised by others, by focusing on “efficient” judicial files, by creating computer tools which standardise some administrative procedures, etc.

The elaboration and the implementation of the security policy fit in with fall in with this pragmatic vision: since its introduction, the police area A seems to have chosen a simple, realistic and light application of the security policy.

* + 1. **A Pragmatic Application of the Area Security Plan**

The Area Security Plan is mainly written by the chief of the Strategy & Development Department and the Police Chief, with the collaboration of the Functional Manager regarding the statistics. Concretely, the first one methodically fills in the boxes of the outline provided by the Federal Police Force[[6]](#footnote-6), by updating what is needed (notably socio-demographic and statistical data). That is why he has the feeling to “colour without exceeding” and is quite surprised by the congratulations received from the Minister of the Interior. The Police Chief considers not having workforce enough to invest a managerial thought and does not consider it as a real efficient benefit for its organisation. He prefers developing a pragmatic management, by taking the citizens’ needs into account. However, the document shows a real auto-reflection regarding the organisation of the police area, the management of the police work and the security. The opposite or distance discourse refers therefore to the founding of the security policy (in terms of objectification, planning and evaluation of the police work) and, above all, to the management tools embodying it (EFQM Model and statistics).

Concerning the APs – which have to operationally develop the priority phenomenon fixed in the ASP –, the police area A is in line with the pragmatic vision. The police area uses the security policy and its formal constraints as an opportunity to synthesise some initiatives and thoughts previously developed to fight insecurity problems, apart from the political cycle. The APs are thus an official « artefact » (Freeman & Maybin, 2011, p. 159) in which the police area inscribes some knowledge referring to a precise phenomenon. The APs conception is assigned to some officers: for each priority, successively determined in the police area, the Police Chief makes an officer responsible (whom role is linked to the matter of who likes it) for writing the AP. To do so, the writer joins together a great amount of information collected via various means (personal experience, reading, meeting, training, etc.) and formalises them into an operational and technical language. As there is a certain continuity in the priorities fixed along the political cycles, we observe a reutilisation of the APs along the years, except some punctual innovations.

The ASP and the APs is therefore the business of the Police Chief and the management staff. Nonetheless, these documents are available (amongst others) in an electronic version on the internal website of the police area or in a paper version in the Police Chief’s secretarial office. They are however never consulted by the policemen; even the officers never consult them anymore (the officer to whom I asked to show me the documents took a certain time to find them) − except when a new cycle begins and they have to update some data in the APs − because they know them by heart. In a formal way, the elaboration process of the security policy is therefore clearly limited to the management staff, what shows a work division between the conceive-people and the executive-people in the police area – the informatics system of access is very illustrative as it distinguishes those who can modify the files on the internal website from those who can only consult them.

Regarding their content, the APs are more a global project, a guideline for a precise problem than a planning of actions and activities – except the Road Safety AP that consists of a listing of activities with planned frequencies. The police area A gives priority to an involvement as a intent to act, by announcing its will to invest some phenomenon and how, without being locked in a precise planning, what the Police Chief considers unappropriated for a police force subjected to the event (Monjardet, 1996).

The implementation of the APs spread out both across the organisation of the police staff, as every Department contributes to the execution, and through the time. It is indeed quite clear that the police force does not function according to the official political cycle rhythm; the police work is continually enforced and the APs do not really stop. What effectively give rhythm to the police organisation are some big operations or events occurring every year and, above all, the daily and unpredictable demands from the citizens rather than the political cycle provided by the methodological documents. In fact, only the formalisation time of these plans (in terms of writing and evaluation) makes a real break in the working of the organisation.

As they systematise and formalise more than they prescribe, the APs themselves are not the real triggers of a new project to implement. Nonetheless, some actions or procedures inscribed in the APs are already distributed into other media or relayed by some people in the organisation. Indeed, we note the trace of the APs in various supports: text documents (as the “Vehicle Control Form”asking policemen the details of the results), technical tools (as an outline for police reports in “burglaries” matter obliging policemen to write a detailed official report or an outline for auditioning in “domestic violence” matter so the policemen will not forget questions during the complaint). Besides, some people are in charge of specific working procedures inscribed in the APs. They are trained to be a resource for a precise aspect of an AP (techno-prevention advisor, specialised person for the reception and help for victims of domestic violence). In doing so, various trainings are provided when a new procedure is implemented in the police area in order to raise policemen awareness and to explain them the procedure. Moreover, the Department’s chiefs and the Police Chief regularly recall the prescribed actions to the subordinates and consider it as their role, as shown in this dialogue between the Chief of Traffic Department and two Intervention policemen[[7]](#footnote-7):

* “You did not your road control yesterday?”
* “Ah yes, that’s true…”
* “Next time, try to do it; the boss is a stickler for that point!”

This technical or human support materialises, embodies and traces the different actions which have progressively been developed around the project of the police areas, and then formalised in synthetic documents. Therefore, they extend the intentions from the officer staff and allow prescribing some policemen behaviours from a distance. However, whereas some documents, as the “Vehicle Control Form”, clearly mention the statistic objective and in this way act as a recall of the security policy framework[[8]](#footnote-8), most of these prescription supports do not enforce it.

Regarding that matter, the policemen know little about the area security policy; the sole knowledge they have dates back to the Police School or to the statutory trainings and is therefore vague and incomplete[[9]](#footnote-9). Moreover, much procedures or actions inscribed in the APs are now really integrated in the daily work as some “reflexes” or “routines” for the policemen. The prescription has become the ordinary work, by means of some adaptations of the initial norm in accordance to the real practices of the front-line professionals responsible to enact it. The following quote illustrates an *ex post* adaptation of the action plan on domestic violence.

“At the beginning, we had difficulties to convey the message. It’s necessary to distinguish the big quarrel from the man who disappears during 2 hours; this is not a domestic violence. Naturally, you cannot request a police area to train 79 policemen. As some little adjustments must be done, notifications to the Public Prosecutor’s Department should not be done. So to evolve, we told our colleagues to call the guard judicial officer who will decide himself if it necessary to inform the magistrate or not. And since then, it is all fine, and people do not hesitate to call the officer.” (Officer, 13/11/2014)

To conclude, without being aware of it, these policemen daily execute some actions inscribed in the APs of the police area, through all the artefacts mentioned above. The latter make therefore the ASP and APs document “existing” for those who are not formally involved in the conception of these documents.

* 1. **Police Area B**

The police area B shares some similar characteristics with the police area A: it is a multi-city police area, composed of 3 cities in the Walloon Region, and headed by the same Police Chief since the Reform. However, the police area is situated in an urban and semi-urban area; it belongs to the category 2 of the police areas and is larger staffed (243 operational FTE and by 42 FTE Calogs).

* + 1. **A Specific organisation**

The police area B has a central police station and 6 police offices (4 on the territory of the main city and 1 on each other cities’ territory). By contrast with the police area A, B shows a specific organisation chart, continually developed and adapted since its creation. Two interdependent principles found the organisation: the territorialisation and the polyvalence. The police area B tries to reduce the classical horizontal division of the police work around the basic functions, by only keeping the Victim Assistance Department and a part of the Research Department centralised (the administrative and support work is also centralised). The 6 police offices are in charge of all the other basic police functions. Each entity consists of a Support Team (standard workshifts), a Researcher Team and from one to three Proximity Teams composed of polyvalent policemen who are in charge of the Reception, Intervention, Proximity and Traffic functions. The coordination of the operational workforce is ensured by various transversal mechanisms, notably some central missions provided by each police office as well as a system of “monitoring”. This system is designed to stimulate collective reflection about basic police functions or security matter. They are accompanied by a network of people, selected for their expertise or for their territorial belonging (in one of the 6 police offices). In such a territorialised organisation chart (around the police posts), this system of monitoring ensures a certain “transversality” within the police area.

The security policy of the police area B falls within the structural organisation that was gradually developed in the police area.

* + 1. **A Structural Application of the Area Security Plan**

In the police area B, the Area Security Plan is the object of an intense involvement from the strategic analyst who, in dialogue with the Police Chief and some other officers in accordance with the thematic, provides a significant work in terms of thinking, analysis and writing. This certainly conveys the meaning that the Police Chief and his strategic analyst invest in the elaboration of an Area Security Plan. This one is indeed perceived as a reciprocal contract between the Police Chief and his authorities. The police area B seems willing to use the ASP as opportunity to obtain some commitments (in terms of procedures, staff capacity, etc.) from its administrative and judicial authorities for the next four years. The time invested, notably in the important development of the content of the strategic objectives, is planned: this will be used as a negotiation means in further discussions with the judicial and administrative authorities.

Moreover, the ASP is not only used as resource in terms of negotiation by the management staff. A whole system of implementation is indeed structured from the objectives set in the ASP. For each new priority defined in the official document, the management staff implements a workshop or a network, in charge of the elaboration of the AP itself, in which the members are selected to be the experts of the problematic, on one hand, and the representative-people in their own police office, on the other hand. Above the network, there is a strategic committee (Police Chief, analyst strategic, network pilot and other eventual external partners). Its role is to validate the proposals from the network and to make them official. Finally, in each police office, the chiefs of the Proximity teams have to implement a security plan at their district level. By contrast with the police area A, a whole working system is developed from the ASP, for which the strategic analyst plays a key-role.

I attended the implementation of the network created to operationalise the new priority “burglaries” from the ASP 2014-2017. In parallel with the methodological and strategic framework ensured by the attendance of the strategic analyst, the discussions were framed by the document ‘Strategic Objective: Burglaries” written in the ASP. Its normative status for the network members was patent: the directive lines dictated by the Police Chief and the strategic analyst gave prescription for writing the new AP operational objectives and activities.

The AP elaborated within and through the network meetings largely relies on the existing practices in the police area and suggested by the members according to their experiences and functions in the organisations. The burglary problematic obviously already existed in the police areas whereas it was not yet an area priority; therefore, various procedures or activities were already implemented. The first meeting started with a broad brainstorming about what already exists in the police area in burglaries matter.

“At this point it’s a routine, we just need to formalise it on paper” (Network Member, Meeting 18-06-2014)

Members often expressed their knowledge by experienced stories, personal convictions or positions. For example, during the first meeting, people talked a lot about a burglary which had occurred the same morning, to show what had been done right or not. In that sense, the network members often began their speech by locutions like “in my experience” or “experience shows”. Then, various documents that had become obsolete or drafts were recuperated and updated in the framework of the AP.

“I began a note regarding the scrap merchants, but it was never finalised. But I can take it out again…” (Network Member, Meeting – 18/06/2014)

Moreover, because the network members have been selected regarding their expertise in burglaries matter, each one was more sensitive to a particular aspect of the police work, according to ones position in the organisation chart (Research, Victim Assistance, Intervention, etc.). For example, the chief of a Proximity Team often spoke in the name of the policemen of whom he coordinated the daily work.

“It will be difficult for the field men… Obviously it’s better to make the reports quickly, but if it must be done for all the reports, if everything becomes a priority…” (Network Member – Meeting 07/10/2014)

Within the police area B, the elaboration of the APs is therefore largely delegated to some networks which form interactive spaces of knowledge production. The AP document is indeed created by the cooperation of various actors with different missions and, therefore, by different visions. However, the AP allows ensuring the interests of everyone while keeping a common and collective will to fight the burglaries. The AP is also based on a mix between old or classical police practices and innovations, occurring through and thanks to the collective discussions. Such a document is thus a synthetic result putting on paper a new knowledge in the burglaries matter, and becoming in the same way a means to coordinate the police work, as it connects different activities a local police force is entitled to, around a common strategic goal.

Regarding the AP implementation, this essentially relies on the referent-people who have to make the connection from the network and AP document to the policemen in the police stops. Moreover, as in police area A, various intermediary tools are discussed and provided during the meetings of the “Burglary” network in order to operationalise the prescription of the AP by the 6 police offices. Several matters were discussed: a new outline for reporting, a survey form for the neighbourhood of the burglary, a check-list for intervention material, etc. The possibility of accompanying the introduction of the new procedures by a training day was also brought forward in order to raise awareness of the new priorities among the policemen. In doing so, each new tool, document or referent-people produced from the AP conveys the objective to concretise the written intentions of the network, by extending and becoming closer to the policemen, who actually implement it.

“The goal is to have some worksheets that are understandable for the men” (Network Member – Meeting 24/02/2014)

1. **Analytical Discussion**

The empirical description has showed the different uses of the ASP made by the two police areas: opportunity of reflection and formalisation of preceding projects in the APs by reducing the managerial constraints in the Area A; broad involvement in the ASP elaboration and deployment of an organisational system of implementation of the APs in the Area B. These singular appropriations show the openness of the tool (Mélard, 2008) as it allows the police areas to develop their own organisational mechanisms and practices around it. Beyond this, the analysis demonstrates that the technology does not impose itself to the actors (Kuty, 1975); these ones integrate the technology in their work in accordance to the organisational context and to the constraints and resources they are confronted to (Friedberg, 1997) , and according to their vision of the police work and the security management (Akrich & Méadel, 1996).

Beyond the analysis of the ASP uses in the two case studies, we can make some transversal analytical statements from the empirical description.

* **The career of the ASP document in the police organisation and the “intermediaries of prescription”**

From the original ASP document that the police areas have to integrate and implement into their organisation and their work, I firstly observed the cascade of production of various kinds of other documents and artefacts which contribute together to implement it (Freeman & Maybin, 2011): action plans, memorandum, forms, worksheets, outlines for police report, and so on. Paraphrasing Freeman & Maybin, we can say that “we cannot understand police organisations without understanding artefacts” (Freeman & Maybin, 2011, p. 156).

Moreover, all these artefacts produced from the initial ASP play a role of “intermediary object” (Vinck, 1999) in the police organisation, between the different staffers. Initially conceptualised in the conception or innovation sector, this concept of “intermediary object” refers to the “physical entities linking human actors amongst themselves” (Vinck, 1999, p. 392), either they are circulating or immovable. These objects have therefore a coextensive function of the human action, both temporal and spatial. As they allow fixing knowledge, practices, situations, and intentions at a given moment, these intermediary objects play a role of mediator between different actors who are not necessarily in physical interaction. They allow thus deferred and undirected interactions and extend the situated and presence-based framework of the interaction.

Relying on this statement, we can say that these objects are a support and a framework for action. Via the various artefacts operationalizing the ASP and the APs, the actors participating in the elaboration delegate their own power of action to the object itself. These objects become then triggers of action (Freeman & Maybin, 2011) thanks to the agency that actors have previously delegated in them (the sole objects do not have this power of action). In this sense, we can say that the ASP document is a trigger of action or a support of collective action of which the power of action is created through the intermediary of other material supports. In our study, these intermediary objects are “intermediaries of prescription” (Denis, 2007), as they ensure the accomplishment and the availability of the ASP norm into the police organisation.

This ASP norm is available in electronic version on the internal websites or in paper version in some offices, both giving an integral access to the whole police staff. However, these ones are in reality very little consulted. In order to understand how the ASP/AP norm displaces from the integral and written versions to the work places, it is thus necessary to observe the various processes that ground the formalised norm into the police activities. Various kinds of “prescriptive intermediaries” were observed in the two police areas, with a more or less explicit link with the frame rule:

* Posting of prescriptions specific extracts in work offices − “normative summary” (Denis, 2009);
* Oral orders (Chiefs of Department and Chief of Police), informal or given during meetings, from the hierarchy;
* Internal memorandums, forms, worksheets, planning, etc. that put hierarchy orders on paper ;
* Technical machines conceptualised by the officers which integrate the prescriptions into the technic, making them invisible for the policemen − “technical delegation of the rule” (Denis, 2007, p. 508). The rule is thus part of the action as it is a technical tool used by the actors for the daily accomplishment of their work;
* Representative-people or reference-people who recall the procedure or guide the introduction of a new work procedure − “prescriptive relay” (Denis, 2007);

We can also note that the prescriptive tools let a variable room for appropriation (Mélard, 2008) for the front-line professionals: an outline of police report is more locked than a simple demand of controlling during the duty period. Moreover, it is quite clear for the creative-people that users always find a way to get round the rule. This point – the room for manoeuver let to the subordinates − was also very often discussed in the meetings of Burglary Network in the police area B.

* **The prescription as a translation process in the police organisation**

The process operationalizing the prescription that is inscribed in the AP into “prescriptive intermediaries” can be related to a process of “translation”. I don’t specially refer to the Callon’s four phases translation model (“problematisation” - “interessment” – “enrolment” - “mobilisation”) (Callon, 1986). I only want to consider the transfer process of knowledge and the sharing of meaning the idea of translation supposes. In this transfer of knowledge, the artefact (whatever form it may take: document, technical tool, etc.) plays an intermediary role; it is a vehicle or a support for the translation, for the sharing of knowledge. As Freeman states, the translation could be a “new epistemological lubricant, facilitating the dissemination of texts and the application and use of knowledge and information they contain” (Freeman, 2009, p. 430).

In other words, translation allows the switchover from one context to another, during which meaning can be lost, but also created. Notably because of the active role of the reading/using subject who becomes a writing subject (Freeman, 2009, p. 434). Following what Akrich (1998) affirms about innovation process, users are real actors of the translation process. The author only refers to the retroaction effect of the participation (users find another use of the innovation, or change the initial use and this are integrated *a posteriori* by the creative-people), but we can also take anticipation effects into account (creative-people make a representation of the users role and, by anticipating, they create the tool according to this representation). Indeed, “knowledge is inscribed in ways that are relevant to the context in which the knowledge is to be enacted” (Smith-Merry, 2014, p. 29). Observing the conception place of prescription allows understanding the prescriptive work in its extension to the real work. In our study, we effectively note that the AP document is discussed in the light of the opinion of those who will be in charge of its implementation. That is the reason why the networks members develop concrete tools to make the AP operational and understandable for policemen. The AP is therefore transformed in short documents with a small amount of text, operational words (imperative verbs, for example) or tables, or even in technical tools through which the normative text is literally operationalised into actions. This way, users indirectly become a part of the translation process, either through the presence of a spokesperson in the conceptualizing meeting, either through the role the conceive-people give to the users. Moreover, by enacting the prescription, the users irremediably transform it and therefore contribute to the translation process. This sometimes forces the management staff to revise the initial norm. As a policeman told us, the framework for police report is not always appropriated to the real practices, as it is impossible for the conceive-people to predict or prescribe every possible case:

“There are some boxes for which we do not know what to fill in, because it’s unclear. To me, it has been done by people who are not on the field anymore.” (Policeman, Police area B)

This point allows thinking the classical hierarchical division of the police work in a different way: the subordinates indirectly participate in the prescriptive work.

“The work division between who conceives and who uses is not so clear: we note that the retroactive trip between the professional conceive-people and the users are more numerous than we could first think.” (Akrich, 1998, p. 13)

To conclude, we can say that prescription is not clearly delimited to the management staff. Even though the conception is formally assigned to the management staff, the translation process involved in it makes it appearing as a social process, shared in the whole police organisation. As a translation process, prescription is therefore not only a transfer of knowledge, but a construction of meaning, always contingent, interactive and integrative of various forms of knowledge. The study of prescription leads to go beyond the classical distinction between prescribed and real work in order to emphasize the process and interactive dimension of the organisations (Denis, 2007; Rot, Borzeix, & Demazière, 2014).

In this regard, it could be helpful to consider the prescription process in the light of what kind of form the knowledge takes.

**“Embodied, inscribed, enacted knowledge” (Freeman & Sturdy, 2014)**

At first sight, I thought ASP was not effective or implemented in the practice. Policemen to whom I asked if they knew the ASP and if they undertook actions in this framework, nearly always answered that it was an official document without concrete effect on their work, and that they had never heard of it anymore once their initial training was completed. However, when I asked them what concrete tasks they were doing, I noted that those daily actions were provided for and inscribed in the different action plans of the areas. That is to say, whereas policemen do not know it, they actually often act according to the ASP framework. Therefore, I think the absence of “awareness” of this norm does not mean policemen do not have any knowledge of it. Knowledge as we traditionally consider it (in a conscious form) is simply not the good analytical tool.

In this regard, studying the “way the knowledge appears” is a helpful analytical tool to understand the social career of the ASP document in the police organisation; as most of the policemen do not have many ideas of what is the ASP and if what they daily do comes from it or not. The EIE knowledge model may explain the different ways the ASP knowledge circulates in the police organisation and the accumulation process of different knowledge it involves. We effectively note the trace of this ASP knowledge through inscriptions (“inscribed knowledge”), representative-persons (“embodied knowledge”) and daily actions (“enacted knowledge”) which all together realise the prescribed work without people (nearly) knowing it. In other words, policemen often express a knowledge that is such embodied or enacted in the daily tasks (routines) that they do not see them as ASP knowledge (Smith-Merry, 2014).

Moreover, this model helps understanding the circularity and the construction of knowledge in the organisation. In the Burglary Network, the new document “Burglary AP” was devised from both embodied knowledge expressed by the Network’s members during the meetings regarding their own operational experience and belongings into the police organisation, and from inscribed knowledge previously written in the police area. All of this knowledge has been inscribed in a new document (the Burglary AP), which will become a new norm in the organisation in burglary matter. This one will be further enacted by policemen in their daily practices, through various prescriptive intermediaries, and therefore transformed during the enactment. Finally, these new practices – revised through the practical scope − will be embodied by policemen and enforced as work routines, which will further constitute the base of a new prescription to improve the police work. This knowledge cycle refers to some frequent discussions emerging into the Burglary Network regarding what a network member called the “repeated problem of the area: when a problem emerges, many initiatives are taken in response to this problem and many projects are developed, and then, as time goes on, the initiatives are progressively given up or put at the background”.

To conclude, ASP knowledge is not only the hierarchy’s business. Policemen and subordinates also take part in this normative knowledge in different ways that the EIE model may enlighten.

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1. Research realised in the framework of the IAP Project “Justice & Populations″ (PVII/22), Politique scientifique fédérale. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Law of 7 December 1998 organising an integrated police force, structured on two levels, *M.B., 5th January 1999*, p. 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The typology of the police areas consists of 5 categories, according to the urbanisation rate: 1, the big cities; 2, the regional cities and the municipalities of Brussels; 3, the municipalities of urban area or the small well-equipped cities; 4, the small moderately or weakly equipped cities or the greatly urbanised municipalities; 5, the moderately or weakly urbanised municipalities. Direction de l’Information Policière Opérationnelle (2011), *Typologie des zones de police. Explication à propos de la classification. Enquête Locale de Sécurité 2011*, Bruxelles. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Full Time Equivalent [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Logistic and Administrative Staff (Cadre Logistique et Administratif) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Direction des Relations avec la police locale (2007), *Manuel de rédaction pour le PZS 2009-2012*, Bruxelles. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Intervention policemen have to make a road control every morning during their « mobile duty » and then submit a form mentioning the results of the control. This is inscribed in the Road Safety AP. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. “For statistics, it is necessary to fill in this form during every control, notably when no infraction has been noted or when a result of the alcohol test is ‘safe’.” (Vehicle Control Form) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For the policemen belonging to the Traffic Department, we note a quite better knowledge of the priorities, which could be explainable by the quite clear superposition between the Road Safety AP and the daily work of the Traffic Department. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)