

Counter-/Narratives of Punishment and Criminal Justice

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Practical narratives in the criminal law process

A study of the trajectory of the suspect's statement from its elicitation and reporting by the police, its inclusion in the case file and its quoting by the legal professionals in court, reveals that in the course of this process "the suspect's statement" has acquired a thick layer of legal varnish. The differences between the suspect's original story as told to the police and the written version of it that is included in the case file can be attributed to the reporting officer's professional orientation to future readership of the police report, and to the practical circumstances of the construction of the police report.

The statement taking activities of the interrogators involve both the 'typability' and the 'recordability' of the talk. To achieve 'typability' interrogators design their questions for the typing to be practicable and to fit in the ongoing interaction. The police officers' concern for the 'recordability' of the talk involves a prospective orientation to the text of the report to contribute to its legal adequacy and to show procedural correctness. Thus, my presentation does not only explore the interweaving of individual stories and public narratives, but also the practical circumstances that affect both the talk in the interrogation and the emerging text of the police report.