

Purpose of COMPOSITE

Security issues consistently rank among the most pressing concerns of citizens in virtually all European countries. Terrorism, organized crime, drugs, and violence have an impact upon citizens' perception of their immediate surroundings and also shape their attitudes towards the state and its representatives. As favourable as most Europeans view the unification of Europe over the past decades, there is still some scepticism with respect to the (perceived) downside of some of these developments. Open borders, the free flow of people, goods, information, and capital also facilitate the planning and committing of crimes. Politicians and police forces alike are faced with the pressure to address these problems in ways that should alleviate citizen's fears on the one hand, but will not infringe upon civil liberties and human rights on the other hand. These challenges require modern police forces that efficiently cooperate with forces in other countries, and are capable to react flexibly and effectively.

Major societal changes such as the impact of the global economy and far reaching technological developments led to ambitious change programmes aiming at modernizing and rationalizing the way police work is conducted in most European countries. The face of the police slowly changes in a fundamental manner.

In the context of the EU it is relevant to understand the impact of the specific cultural and social contexts of policing and it is vital to consider the sometimes dramatic differences in which current challenges on the one hand and modern policing concepts and instruments on the other hand are interpreted and implemented in the different member states of the EU.

Examples of these changes are:

1. Citizens all over Europe demand a more customer oriented attitude of "their" police officers, they want their police to be more accessible, more citizen oriented and at the same time impartial and immune to corruption. Concepts such as "*Community Policing*" or "*Problem Oriented Policing*" try to address these demands and have been introduced in most police forces in Europe with varying success.
2. Most police forces are faced with increased budget restraints and with a public mood that expects a more efficient use of limited public resources. The introduction of concepts such as "*New Public Management*" and "*Value for Money*" or reforms in HRM systems are on the agenda in most forces.
3. *Demographic* changes within the police forces also trigger change. Police forces recruit their staff out of large segments of society, and social change also affects the thinking patterns of police officers. Women were allowed to serve in uniform in forces that used to be almost exclusively shaped by male perceptions of strength and manhood as a critical factor in day-to-day police work; modern forms of leadership were introduced, education and training models were modernized, academic standards applied, and efforts made to broaden the base for recruitment to get more diversity and higher educational standards into a police force faced with ever more complex challenges and demands.
4. Increased *international cooperation* also changes the way police officers perform their duty. More and more police officers have to know at least one foreign language in order to be able to

communicate with their colleagues across the border and delegations of police officers. Police officers travel abroad to learn how their colleagues in the neighbouring country deal with police issues. External EU operations (e.g. Albania, Afghanistan, Bosnia) bring together police organizations from the whole of Europe and confront them with the cultural, societal and political impact on policing.

5. Developments in the field of *technology* show a major influence upon police work. On the one hand, new technologies provide new opportunities to commit crimes, and the dramatic increase in crimes that are committed using the internet or mobile phones may serve as an illustrating example for this development. But police also use new technologies which have a major impact upon the way police work is conducted in modern societies. The extended use of ICT systems, for example, turns out to be much more than just a technical innovation to make police work easier and more efficient. Technological innovations turn out to change the organisational environment in significant ways. They affect the way officers communicate, how they are led and also what the organisation knows about them.

These and other changes across Europe require systematic comparative research on the manner police forces in the different member states manage these challenges within their specific social and cultural context. So far, scientific evaluation of these change efforts in police forces show mixed results. Some changes are easily accepted in some countries, but others seem to face major obstacles in other countries, and some even turn out to be outright failures, not only in the perception of the police forces, but also in the perception of politicians, the media or the general public.

Especially in the domain of security and policing such comparative research with a focus on the social and cultural context is of high relevance for the field of *technology and engineering*. To benefit from the adoption of technological innovations usually also requires simultaneous change in the social context and organizational structure. Large sums are currently spent on the development and adoption of new technology that could potentially leverage the productivity and overall performance of police forces and other security agencies, but the eventual results of these projects are mixed, and not seldom face resistance in both the police forces and the public. The ultimate effect of the new security technologies currently under development in FP-projects could be increased substantially if their implementation could be supported by a sophisticated theory of overall organizational change in security providing organizations, social and cultural differences between EU-member states.

One important issue in this respect that is also confirmed by previous research shows that large scale change processes in police forces run the risk of being considered as threats to the *organizational identity* and are therefore often resisted by police officers (see e.g. Jacobs et al., 2006; 2008). In organizations such as the police this may lead to a critical decrease in commitment, loyalty, and effectiveness. The majority of European research programmes in police related areas tend to focus on technical aspects of security issues and thereby tend to neglect such social and cultural dynamics. In this proposal we aim at integrating technical and social aspects.

There have been strong calls from police science organisations for a strong integrative theoretical framework and a cross-cultural approach that takes the varying organizational contexts of policing into account (see for an overview Manning, 2005). This proposal brings together a selection of researchers with a broad variety of disciplinary backgrounds (sociology, psychology, economics, engineering, political sciences, business and management studies, police sciences, organizational behaviour) in order to study the underlying social and cultural complexity of the management of European policing in times of rather dramatic changes. It also provides an international network of leading European universities, police academies and police research institutes from different European countries which offers the opportunity of cross-fertilization among research schools in a truly multidisciplinary approach and the opportunity to get a direct impact from practitioners on the relevant research agendas.

The goal of this research project is not restricted to the extension of scientific knowledge and theory building, but also aims at providing valuable insights into the factors that restrict or facilitate change in an organisation that has a major impact upon the perception of good governance in all European societies. A better understanding of risks and opportunities of change processes in the police will contribute to a higher level of acceptance of state institutions among relevant audiences. Extended knowledge of change processes in European police forces as well as the knowledge of the inner workings of these change processes will also improve cooperation, information exchange, and knowledge sharing from one police force to another. It will save public funds by providing benchmarks and learning opportunities, it will increase the performance of police forces across the EU and it will help to deepen existing networks and inter- as well as intra-organisational ties between forces.