International Conference 2012

Policing in a dynamic environment - How much change can a police force take?

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Full details on project partners and results are available on:
www.composite-project.eu

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Preface

Dr Jochen Christe-Zeyse, Stefanie Giljohann, Mario Gruschinske & Nathalie Hirschmann,

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Police forces in modern Europe face various kinds of pressures and have to react to relevant social, political, economic, technological, and legal changes. Citizens demand security, but public funds remain scarce and the demands of police compete with demands from many different sectors in society.

The research project "COMparative Police Studies in the EU (COMPOSITE)" deals with large scale change processes in police forces of ten European countries. The project tries to identify factors that contribute to their success or failure, taking into account the cultural and social context of policing in these countries.

The first COMPOSITE Practitioners Conference took place December 11-12, 2012 in Potsdam (Germany) and addressed the question: "How much change can a police force take?" Risks and challenges, problems and solutions, theories, typologies, and best practices were discussed in several workshops and presentations. Roughly 75 police officers of various hierarchical levels, politicians, researchers, and academics from thirteen EU and non-EU countries participated in this conference.

This booklet contains the main presentations of this two days conference.

The conference was opened by Chief Supervisor of the State Police of Brandenburg (Germany), Jürgen Jakobs, followed by a warm welcoming of a representative of the city council of Potsdam, Elona Müller-Preinesberger. Chief Supervisor Jürgen Jakobs emphasised in his speech the importance of the European Union as a joint region of freedom, security and justice and the necessity of a close cooperation between Europe's security authorities. He also stated that it is time for an interdisciplinary approach and exchange of experiences in order to learn from each other and to increase the adaptability of police organisations due to rapid constant changes in general frameworks and new challenges in a merging Europe without overstraining members of staff. In the long run, constantly updated policing standards and close cooperations are needed. Chief Supervisor Jürgen Jakobs concluded his demonstrations by underlining the importance of the COMPOSITE project and the practitioners' conference in particular as it makes a contribution to the sustainability of Europe's police forces.

Prof Dr Arndt Sorge from the WZB Social Research Centre Berlin began with the provocative question "May too much change kill you?" and presented lessons learned from several decades of change in the private economy. Despite the great emphasis on the ability to change constantly which many authors advocate, companies are well advised to look carefully which management fad to subscribe to and which one to stay away from.

In his presentation, Prof Dr Christoph Reichard from the University of Potsdam (Germany) took stock of 20 years of public sector reforms in Germany and painted a rather differentiated picture of great ambitions, failed "grand scheme" projects, and successful piecemeal improvements with respect to the attempts to modernise the public sector by introducing management philosophies developed in free enterprises. The basic message centred on the finding that public sector organisations follow their own logic, and change attempts need to take this specific logic into account in order to reach their goals.

As project coordinator of COMPOSITE, Dr Gabriele Jacobs from the Erasmus University Rotterdam (the Netherlands) presented the research project and its ambition to combine top academic research and deliver relevant insights that police organisations can utilise to improve their change management.

In addition to research, art is also part of COMPOSITE. Marlijn de Lange from the Erasmus University Rotterdam introduced the COMPOSITE Gallery showing pictures of police officers and police stations from the ten participating countries. Two professional photographers, David Adams and Hans van Rhoon, had travelled to countless police stations all over Europe and captured the colourful facets of police life in a great variety of contexts. All photographs of this booklet are taken from this gallery.

In her presentation, COMPOSITE researcher Melody Barlage from Utrecht University (the Netherlands) spelled out some iron rules of modern stakeholder management. These rules were derived from a part of COMPOSITE research in which police forces of the participating countries were asked how external stakeholders are dealt with and what lessons can be learned from it.

Dr Jochen Christe-Zeyse from the University of Applied Sciences of the Police Force of Brandenburg (Germany) introduced the aspect of organisational culture in his presentation titled: "It's not about management. It's about culture". His suggestions were fairly straightforward: Change processes are likely to fail if they violate relevant cultural issues that are taken for granted by the members of the organisation and constitute a relevant part of their professional identity.

The final presentation was given by Dr Leslie Graham from the Durham Business School (Great Britain) who presented a typology of European police forces concluding "they are all different, but somehow the same".

The conference offered relevant insights into the empirical work of the COMPOSITE project and beyond. Sincere thanks go to the speakers and participants for their input and their vivid and constructive discussions. Special thanks to Police Superintendent Sebastian Krah for his unfailing support and administrative skills in the planning and organisation of this conference.

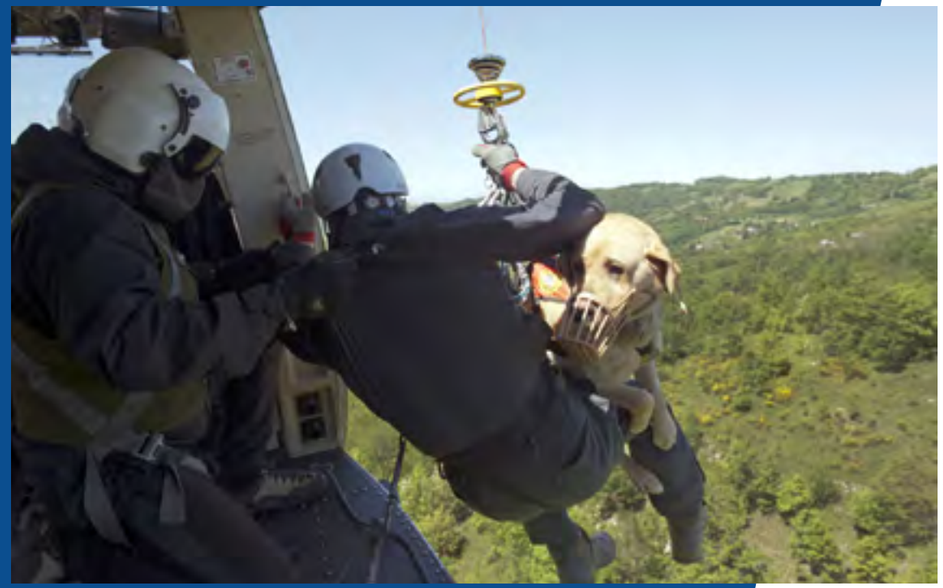

Photo: Hans van Rhoon

May Too Much Change Kill You? Lessons From Organisation Studies

Prof Dr Arndt Sorge

This presentation is mainly about commercial organisations or enterprises in a market economy. Such organisations can indeed die, in the sense of going bankrupt or being dissolved. The death of organisations is not the same as the death of individuals. Still, not many individuals are killed by organisational change, but they may be demotivated, rendered unhealthy or wasted in another way.

The topic is only concerned with organisational change and its effects, but this world is complex and variegated enough already. There are environmental change, goal change, strategic change, change in organisational architecture, change in the structuring of processes, and changes in technical tools and bureaucratic instruments used in the organisation. In addition, we may also look at change in recruitment, training and careers. The core of organisation theory, however, to the extent that negative effects of change need to be considered, is about coordination instruments. Standard theory (for example Henry Mintzberg) distinguishes direct order or supervision, formalised rules and operating procedures, standardisation of skills and knowledge, mutual adjustment and cultural control as coordination instruments. The last two are more personal and pragmatic, whereas the others are either more hierarchical or impersonal. Direct order and supervision are potentially more personal, giving more formal instruments a meaning that actors require to be committed and motivated.

Central organisational problems which organisations have to address are mainly:

- achieving a fit between organisational tools, architectures, process structuring, coordination instruments and human resources on the one hand – and the environment on the other;

- giving individual contributors a meaningful place in the organisation.

Organisational change is a large term and is used with different meanings. The main difference lies between two notions of change: change in strategy (going for a different set of brands and market segments, clients, organisational tools etc.), and less dramatic change in products or services, organisational methods etc.

What change is now bad for the survival of organisations? The more general finding is quite clear: Repeated and inconsistent strategic change does kill organisations! Large organisations have often gone bankrupt by entering into a decline, culminating in frantic but useless strategic changes. Strategic inertia is therefore, on the whole, good for organisations. Notably population ecology studies have pointed this out. Less dramatic changes may however help organisations achieve a fit with their environment. They may do so, but this is not guaranteed. Why is inconsistent strategic change bad for the survival of organisations? Internally, inconsistency is the worst enemy of success, by causing disorientation, lack of realism, lack of motivation, and the departure of well-performing contributors. Externally, lack of legitimacy produced by inconsistent and frequent strategic change is a main cause of declining demand

for products and services. To this extent, the talk about the need to accelerate the rate of change or to "reinvent yourself'" is potentially dangerously misguided, although consultants have helped to spread the idea and made a lot of money on it.

But even in organisations that cannot die, inconsistent and frequent change, not only strategic change, may have deleterious effects, such as the wasting of human resources, through the early departure or retirement of people because of health reasons and demotivation, and a lack of cooperation and dedication in the organisation. Such negative effects are not necessarily deadly in public organisations or administration, but they may indeed be so in the police.

The link between negative effects and organisational change works through the following factors: Inconsistency or bad choice of coordination mechanisms, continuously onerous or stressful work patterns, and bad human resource management. There are a number of lessons that follow from this analysis, and they can be derived from a classic statement made by Warren Bennis, one of the organisational development pioneers, decades ago: Too many organisations are over-managed and under-led, reflecting an over-emphasis on impersonal coordination. The rate of change can be reduced and its quality improved if better leadership is provided and the more personal types of coordination (mentioned above) are emphasized, notably in a professional organisation (with well-trained and competent contributors working to an accepted set of rules) such as the police. More specifically, the lessons are:

Do not change coordination mechanisms or tools too frequently! Only go for change that can be explained and accepted by contributors! Do not go for schematic change but adapted change! In a professional organisation, emphasize mutual adjustment, cultural control, and personally supportive supervision!

Prof Dr Arndt Sorge is acting Director of the completed Research Unit, Internationalisation and Organisation of the Social Science Research Centre Berlin (WZB) and honorary professor of the Faculty of Economics and Social Science of the University of Potsdam (Germany).

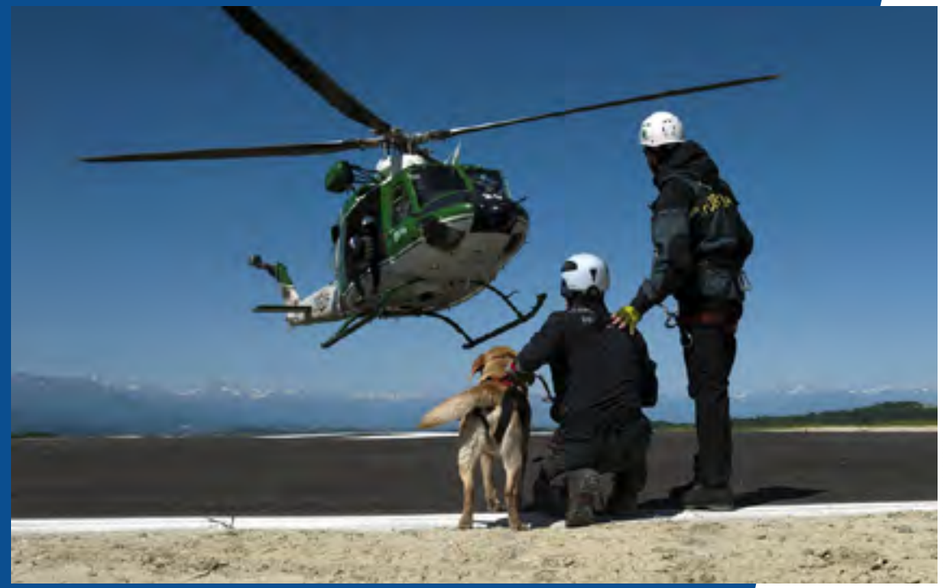

Photo: Hans van Rhoon

Public Management Reforms In Europe – Taking Stock After 20 Years

Prof Dr Christoph Reichard

Public Management reforms took place all over Europe for more than 20 years. To a great extent they followed the concept and doctrine of "new public management" (NPM). This concept evolved in the early 80's of last century, at first in the Anglo-Saxon World, later also in continental Europe (and various other parts of the world).

The concept of NPM can be characterised with the following four major elements:

1. redesigning role and functions of the state (core tasks, perception of "state");

2. internal restructuring of public sector organisations (decentralisation, performance management etc.);

3. strengthening of market mechanisms and of competition („marketisation");

4. enabling and empowering citizens, improving customer orientation, intensifying participation.

While in some countries reform emphasis was on internal managerial reforms (for example in Germany), in some others it was more on marketisation. Generally, the reforms in European states were very diverse and a common pattern of NPM-reforms could by no means be observed. The Nordic countries, for example, were more cautious "Modernisers" while the UK could be called a "Marketiser" and Germany as well as some Southern European countries were "Maintainers" (Pollitt/Bouckaert 2011[1]). In Germany, the NPM-reforms concentrated on the local level where municipalities in the early 90's established the "New Steering Model" (Reichard 2003[2]). NPM-reforms took place in various policy fields, for example in education (for example universities), in health care and also to some extent in the police administration.

1 Pollitt, Christopher & Bouckaert, Geert (2011): Public Management Reform. Oxford.

2 Reichard, Christoph (2003): Local Public Management Reforms in Germany. In: Public Administration, Vol. 81, no. 2: 345-363.

If we take stock after two decades of such reforms, we can observe some institutional changes within public sector organisations: more emphasis on performance, new institutional arrangements (for example agencification, PPP, contracting-out), new HRM- and financial management tools and concepts (for example performance budgeting or performance pay). With regard to the public sector, there are some indications for modest positive effects, for example higher efficiency and maintained quality. However, also some unintended critical effects could be observed, for example an enlarged corruption risk, a decreasing "public interest" focus of the actors and quite huge coordination deficits. The effects of NPM-reforms on the constituencies and society at large are difficult to measure and to attribute.

There are several lessons with regard to the change processes: Several reform projects (partly) failed because the concept was not adapted to the needs and context of the respective government institutions, the timing was too ambitious and the support from political leaders, unions etc. lacked. Generally, the high tide of NPM-

reforms is over. Although some positive results were achieved, also various deficits and unrealistic expectations came up. NPM proved to be a too one-sidedly managerial concept with unrealistic assumptions on the rationalities of (political) actors and with partly inappropriate reform targets and elements. It was only focused on single organisations and did not take networks and other forms and modes of "governance" into account. For the future, the vision of the "Neo-Weberian State" (Pollitt-Bouckaert 2011) can be discussed, i.e. a mix of traditional bureaucratic elements of public administration and of more "modern" concepts of performance-based and contractual steering and controlling of the public sector.

Further readings:

- OECD (2005): Modernizing Government: The Way Forward. Paris.

- OECD (2010): Making Reform Happen: Lessons from OECD Countries. Paris.

- Reichard, Christoph (2010): New Public Management. In: Anheier, Helmut K. & Toepler, Stefan (Eds): International Encyclopedia of Civil Society. Berlin: 1030-1034.

- Schiavo-Campo, Salvatore & McFerson, Hazel M. (2008): Public Management in Global Perspective. Armong-London.

Prof Dr Christoph Reichard was holding a chair for business administration focussing on public management at the University of Potsdam (Germany) between 1997 and 2006.

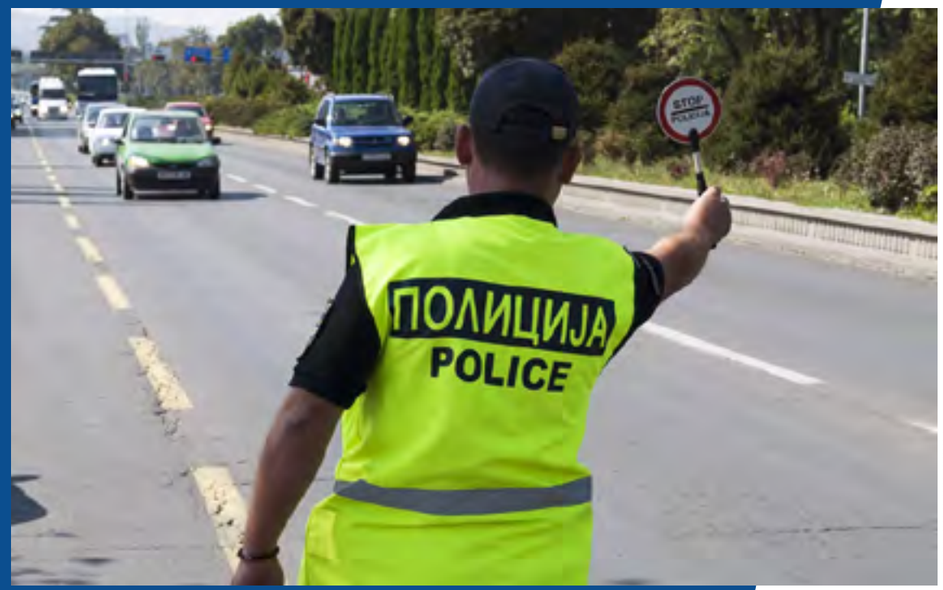

Photo: Hans van Rhoon

Understanding Organisational Change: COMPOSITE In A Nutshell

Dr Gabriele Jacobs

COMPOSITE aims to enrich existing approaches to European policing by offering an integrative response to the study of police organisational change. In particular, COMPOSITE responds to calls for a more rigorous and comprehensive research platform, by offering a long-term (4 years), multi-disciplinary, European-wide research project. In so doing, COMPOSITE unites researchers and practitioners from ten European countries and 15 institutions to research complex issues regarding organisational change. The project includes psychologists, sociologists, economists and engineers, academics, consultants and technicians, police scientists and police officers of every rank and position. A unique characteristic of COMPOSITE is the ongoing dialogue between police and science representatives that is built into the project's structure, including the direct involvement of police officers in strategic advisory and end user boards. COMPOSITE is divided into 3 constituents (labelled action lines), which each offer a different perspective on the topic of change.

The first action line, which was completed in August 2012, takes a global perspective, providing an extensive comparative analysis of police forces in the ten COMPOSITE countries. This constituent combines an analysis of external context features with an investigation of internal climate and resources, in each of the ten countries. In addition, it incorporates a focus on the two key topics of knowledge sharing and technology. The second action line provides a closer analysis of three focal topics; namely leadership, identity and societal/cultural issues, which are expected to be critical to the execution and planning of organisational change processes. Initial insights from action line 1 also inform a second and more focused investigation of police related technologies in action line 2. Finally, the third action line turns attention to the practical and tangible outcomes of COMPOSITE in terms of the dissemination of project findings, the development of a managerial toolbox, containing training and consultancy materials and best practices and an annual police monitor to track trends in European policing.

COMPOSITE has the ambition to combine top academic research with meaningful answers to practitioners in the field of policing. After a bit more than two years into the project the pluralistic methodological set-up proved to be fruitful. COMPOSITE is characterised by two main components, firstly by highly qualified academic research teams in each of its ten countries and second by a close cooperation with practitioners from the police in each of these countries. Both components are vital for the success COMPOSITE has so far in terms of academic output and dissemination activities. The research activities are characterised by an intensive mutual learning process between practitioners and academics. Based on the strong links between the interdisciplinary and international research group and the practitioners which have been established in the first two years of the project the perspective on the next two years is very optimistic. The insights on the policing context, the role of internal capabilities and external challenges, technology and knowledge sharing are now systematically used to

further develop the understanding of change and identity in policing. So far the project collected a broad database in all ten countries; in total we conducted more than 700 qualitative interviews on the external threats and challenges and internal strength and weaknesses of police organisations, technology trends and knowledge sharing in the first part of the project. Additionally, case studies were conducted on best policing practices and (international) knowledge sharing and surveys were run in all countries on knowledge sharing practices. In the second phase of the project another 400 in-depth qualitative interviews on organisational change, technology acceptance, identity and change leadership have been conducted. Next to this, do all country teams run tailored studies on change topics in their specific policing context and a joined survey with police, public and media representatives will be conducted in all ten countries.

Dissemination efforts are equally diverse, ranging from peer-rated academic journals and conferences (e.g. Van den Born et al. 2013) to policy briefings, expert seminars and practitioner-oriented publications (e.g. Vallet & van den Oord, 2012). Among others we have also provided a project overview and first results in the CEPOL bulletin (Jacobs & Christe-Zeyse, 2012).

Further readings:

- Van den Born, A. et al. (2013): Policing opportunities and threats in Europe. Journal of Organizational Change Management, 26(5).

- Jacobs, Gabriele & Christe-Zeyse, Jochen (2012): Organisational Change in European Policing: Project COMPOSITE. European Police Science And Research Bulletin. Issue 7, Summer 2012: 10-17.

- Vallet, N. & van den Oord, A. (2012): Kiezen voor verscheidenheid. Grensoverschrijdende kennisdeling in de Politiezone west-Kust (Choosing for diversity. Cross-border knowledge sharing in the Local Police force of West-Coast). Het Politiejournaal, September 2012.

Dr Gabriele Jacobs (gjacobs@rsm.nl) is the project coordinator of COMPOSITE and associate professor at the Department of Organisation and Personnel Management at the Rotterdam School of Management of the Erasmus University Rotterdam (the Netherlands).

Photos: David Adams, Hans van Rhoon

COMPOSITE Gallery

Photo Project Of The COMPOSITE Project

In addition to the scientific work, COMPOSITE invited two photographers, Hans van Rhoon and David Adams, to realise two separate bodies of work reflecting the comparative spirit of the research project. Their work creates an artistic perspective on the police forces in the ten participating countries (Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, the Republic of Macedonia, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, and the United Kingdom).

The work of David Adams is based on object typologies, visually contrasting police facilities in all ten countries. He also produces a portrait series of police officers. Hans van Rhoon creates documentary style series of police activities in the field.

The immediacy and accessibility of photos makes it an ideal medium to use alongside a scientific research project. We are hoping to reach a large audience through the use of our photos in the media, books and exhibitions. If you are interested in hosting an exhibition for the COMPOSITE photographs, or want to see more of the photographs, please contact Bep Klop at Erasmus University Rotterdam (bklop@rsm.nl, +31-10-4082373) or visit www.composite-project.eu. The photos are also available online via www.composite.rsm.nl.

The COMPOSITE photo project is supported by European Commission (FP7).

Bep Klop is office manager at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University Rotterdam (the Netherlands), and contact person regarding the COMPOSITE Gallery.

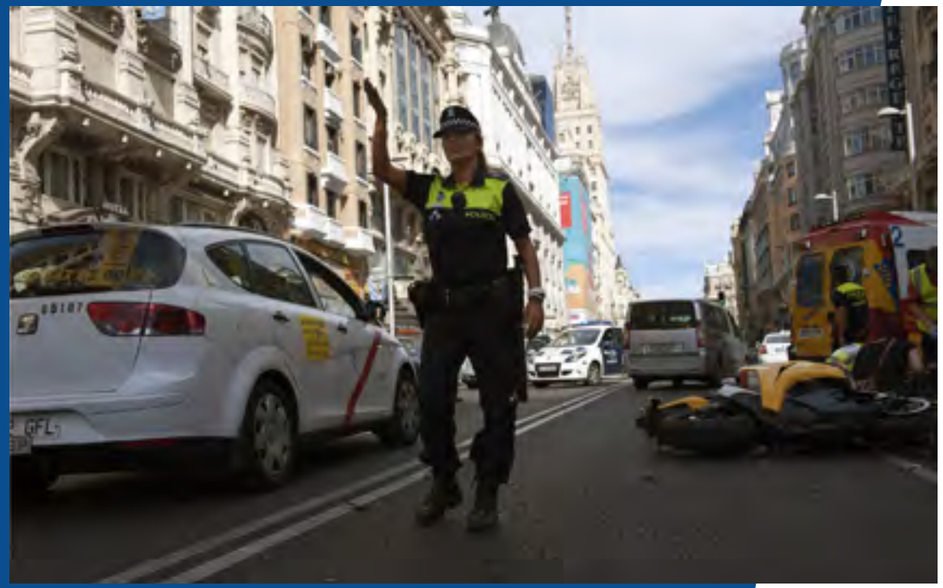

Photo: Hans van Rhoon

The Iron Rules Of Stakeholder Management

Melody Barlage

In the border regions of Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, Belgian, German and Dutch police officers go on patrols together. In the UK, the police outsource the closing down of shady businesses to health and labour inspection teams. In the Netherlands, the police work with housing corporations and energy suppliers to trace down marijuana plantations. These are just a couple of initiatives where the police need to cooperate with other external parties to be effective. In fact, the long list of all the different parties involved in solving crime, such as the public prosecutors, forensic laboratories, victims, witnesses, and suspects, already indicates that collaboration with other stakeholders is the rule rather than the exception in modern policing.

The police may often be perceived by outsiders as an independent and authoritarian organisation that operates in splendid isolation, but this is far from the truth in modern democracies. There are always external stakeholders with whom they cooperate, voluntarily or forced by law. More than ever, police organisations need other external parties to respond adequately to the increased demand from citizens, growing sophistication of societies, and new forms of criminality. Hence, to cope with societal complexity and turbulence, the police must effectively manage all their external stakeholders. This observation may seem obvious and logical, if not an exercise in forcing an open door, but a systematic, structural and well thought-through stakeholder management approach is missing in many police organisations.

Theoretically, there is a systematic approach to stakeholder management leading to a better performance based on the interdependence relationship with the stakeholder. Low interdependence relationships should be monitored. More effort in these relationships will not necessarily be appreciated by the stakeholders. High interdependence, on the other hand, asks for (intensive) cooperation. One could not imagine the police and public prosecution not working together, this would lead to failure of the justice system. When the stakeholder depends on the police, but the police doesn't depend on the stakeholder, it is best to involve the stakeholder. This stakeholder may have good insights into certain issues, increasing police performance. When the opposite holds true and it is the police who depends on the stakeholder then defence is the best strategy. Defence is a broad strategy, however, it means that sometimes the police may have to refuse the demands of the stakeholder while other times it is better to give in to demands, to win the favour of the stakeholder.

In the COMPOSITE project, about 450 interviews were conducted in 10 European countries, to find out, amongst other things, how police professionals manage their stakeholders. Our findings showed, first of all, that there is not a systematic approach to stakeholders. Secondly, police professionals who apply the correct strategy believe they perform better on the expectations of stakeholders, confirming the theory. For example, citizens who are critical towards the police and other authorities are often non-supportive stakeholders. Therefore, the Dutch police uses a strategy to make citizens more

aware of their own responsibility. Another example from the Romanian border police shows that collaboration in the form of frequent exchange of information between parties is crucial for the satisfaction of expectations. This is vital due to the fact that the Romanian border police often interdepend highly with other organisations of the national security in order to solve crimes that cross borders. In Germany, for instance, schools, who are frequently seen as supportive stakeholders would like to get more assistance from the police regarding the prevention of juvenile crime and traffic accidents. But the police doesn't dependent much on schools to perform well on their short-run targets. By involving schools in issues or programmes that deal with traffic education and crime prevention, the police could satisfy the stakeholder's expectations at a reasonable cost.

From this we could conclude that improvements can be made by police forces. We found for example that many stakeholders receive unnecessary defence and collaboration strategies. These strategies are labour-intensive and do not lead to better outcomes. Hence, using the appropriate strategy will not only lead to a better outcome, but may also be more efficient in terms of time spent on the stakeholder.

More information on stakeholder management: Born, Arjan van den/Witteloostuijn, Arjen van (2011): Policing Opportunities and Threats. COMPOSITE Brochure WP 1.2.

For further information on COMPOSITE Work Package 1 and stakeholder management:

Prof Dr Arjan van den Born (J.A.vdnBorn@uvt.nl) and Melody Barlage (m.barlage@uu.nl).

Melody Barlage from the Utrecht University (the Netherlands) is a COMPOSITE country-team member and was mainly involved in COMPOSITE's Work Package 1.

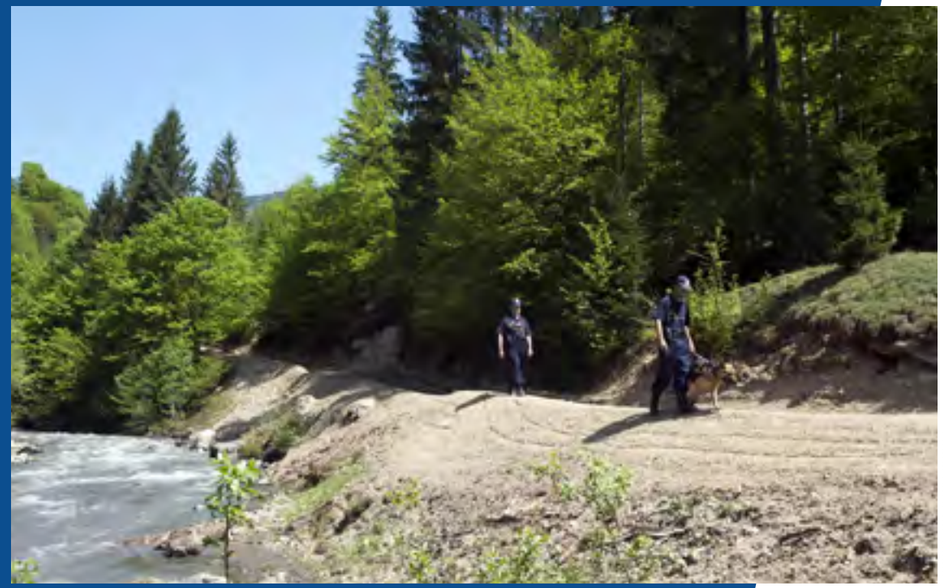

Photo: Hans van Rhoon

It's Not About Management, It's About Culture!

Some Thoughts On The Manageability Of Organic Professional Cultures

Dr Jochen Christe-Zeyse

Every leader and every manager pretends to know about the specific culture of the organisation he or she is responsible for. But mostly the notion of a specific organisational culture is confined to rather obvious manifestations such as corporate design, dress code, shop talk, or commonly shared assumptions about "the way we do things around here". But underneath the surface of these easily described manifestations, there are several layers of implicit, "taken for granted" aspects in an organisation that are hardly ever addressed – simply because they are taken for granted. Examples may refer to perceptions of good and bad, right and wrong, notions of fairness or professional standards, but also parts of the psychological contract between the employee and the organisation with respect to the things one can be held accountable for or the things the organisation can legitimately expect from its employees.

Change processes are often planned and implemented with a rather managerial and technocratic attitude, and decision makers frequently expect the members of the organisation to eventually get used to new structures, processes, or standards. In many cases, the members of the organisation go through several stages of irritation, criticism, resistance, but in the end make their peace with the change and adapt. But in some cases they do not. Some change processes in a certain type of organisation seem to touch upon a nerve that is deeply rooted in organisational culture – deep enough so decision makers might not be able to see it. In these cases, the decision makers may be caught by surprise when they encounter fierce resistance against a change process that they had envisioned to sail through without much ado.

Many decision makers in large organisations envision their organisation as a structure they are entitled to change as external or internal developments demand. That's what leaders are for, they think – to take care that the organisation reacts to changes in the outside world and to restore fit in order to be better aligned to the demands of crucial stakeholders, changing conditions, and new challenges. But most members have a different view of their organisation: They don't see their organisation as a system that leaders can change at will, they rather see it as a social microcosm they want to identify with, a game whose rules they want to understand, with leaders (or referees) who treat them fairly. They try to keep their end of the psychological contract and they expect their employer to keep his.

But psychological contracts are by definition not spelled out, and in turbulent times of change, the implicit aspects of a psychological contract might become fuzzy. And every so often, decision makers try to implement a change that may make sense from a managerial point of view, but violates basic norms and taken-for-granted assumptions on the shop level which in turn can severely threaten organisational identification and commitment. Our research in several European police forces indicates that pro-

fessional or semi-professional cultures often tend to be particularly sensitive towards changes that affect these basic assumptions and taken-for-granted aspects of their professional (sub) culture. These professional cultures are often rather strong cultures with high professional and ethical standards, a high sense of identification and loyalty towards their profession and organisation. The members of these organisations often pledge much more than only to work 40 hours a week in return for their salary. They pledge to improve critical aspects of life itself, fight for justice or security, for education, knowledge, salvation or art. Teachers, doctors and social workers, athletes, scientists and artists, clergymen and politicians, judges and policemen – most of them tend to have a special relationship with their profession and with the purpose and goals of their work. They achieve quality output not because they get money for it, but because they try to adhere to the implicit norms of their professions and the expectations of their peers. Most of them have a strong sense of what it takes to be a good doctor, teacher, or police officer, and they take pride in the fact that it takes a specially trained doctor, teacher or policeman to do the job according to their professional standards.

Out of this sense of professionalism most professionals have a clear sense of how things ought to be in their organisation, how work should be organised, what customers need and what to do to get results. Hence, management interventions need to be justified convincingly and need to promise improvement. Or resistance will inevitably follow.

In order to avoid resistance against a planned change and in order not to be confronted with time consuming and costly strategies to avoid or disrupt the change process, decision makers and senior leaders are well advised to have a clear sense of the cultural “root canal” in their organisation. They need to know when to stop drilling before the drill gets too close to the nerve. And they need to communicate the planned change taking into account the basic assumptions and perceptions of the organisational culture they operate in.

Dr Jochen Christe-Zeyse is vice president of the University of Applied Science of the State Police of Brandenburg (Germany) and COMPOSITE’s action line 3 Leader (Dissemination).

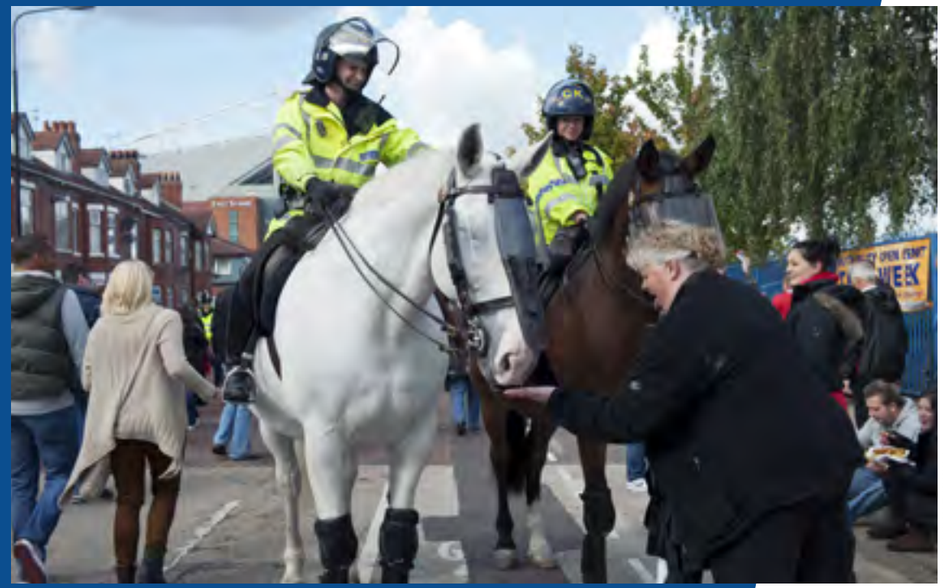

Photo: David Adams

They Are All Different But Somehow The Same – A Typology Of European Police Forces

Dr Leslie N. Graham

While police organisations may perform similar roles in different countries, they are highly influenced by the culture and environment of the society in which they are situated. Because of this, large differences are expected to exist in 'policing' in different societies. The extent to which police forces of different societies or countries vary is a topic of considerable debate. To investigate whether European police forces can be grouped into clusters, such that police forces in the same cluster are more similar to each other than to police forces in other clusters, we examine Mawby's (2008)[1] assertion that variations in police organisations can be considered on a continuum from being control dominated to community orientated to develop a conceptually-driven typology using statistical cluster analysis techniques. We use this conceptually-driven typology and other research in the COMPOSITE project to examine whether individuals' perceptions of enablers and barriers to organisational change are dependent on the context of the police organisation they work in.

Data was collected from 445 structured interviews with police officers in Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, the Republic of Macedonia, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom and from the COMPOSITE country teams' ratings of characteristics relating to three dimensions of structure, function and legitimacy/accountability of police organisations in their respective countries. Strong empirical support was provided for the suggestion that variation in European police forces occurs on a continuum from control dominated to that of being community orientated. A number of significant differences were found between individuals from each of these two clusters in terms of perceptions of the importance of organisational change barriers and enablers. Individuals in control orientated police organisations were found to be more likely to identify resourcing issues; such as availability of financial resources and adequate personnel as most important for change, while individuals in community orientated organisations were found to place a higher importance on process issues, such as internal communication and change management practices.

The findings provide support for Mawby's (2008) assertion that variation in European police forces occurs on a continuum from control dominated to community orientated and suggest that individuals' perceptions of the relative importance of organisational change enablers and barriers are dependent on the context of their organisation. This implies that efforts to implement change are more likely to succeed if senior police officers understand the impact of organisational context on employees' perceptions and possible resistance for change and plan change implementation strategies accordingly.

Dr Leslie N. Graham is currently a professor in Durham College's Critical Care Nursing E-Learning Graduate Certificate programme and the Bachelor of Science in Nursing programme in collaboration with the University of Ontario Institute of Technology and was Leader for COMPOSITE's Work Package 2.

1 Mawby, Rob I. (2008): Models of Policing; in Newburn, Tim (ed.): Handbook of Policing. Devon: 17-46.

COMPOSITE consortium:

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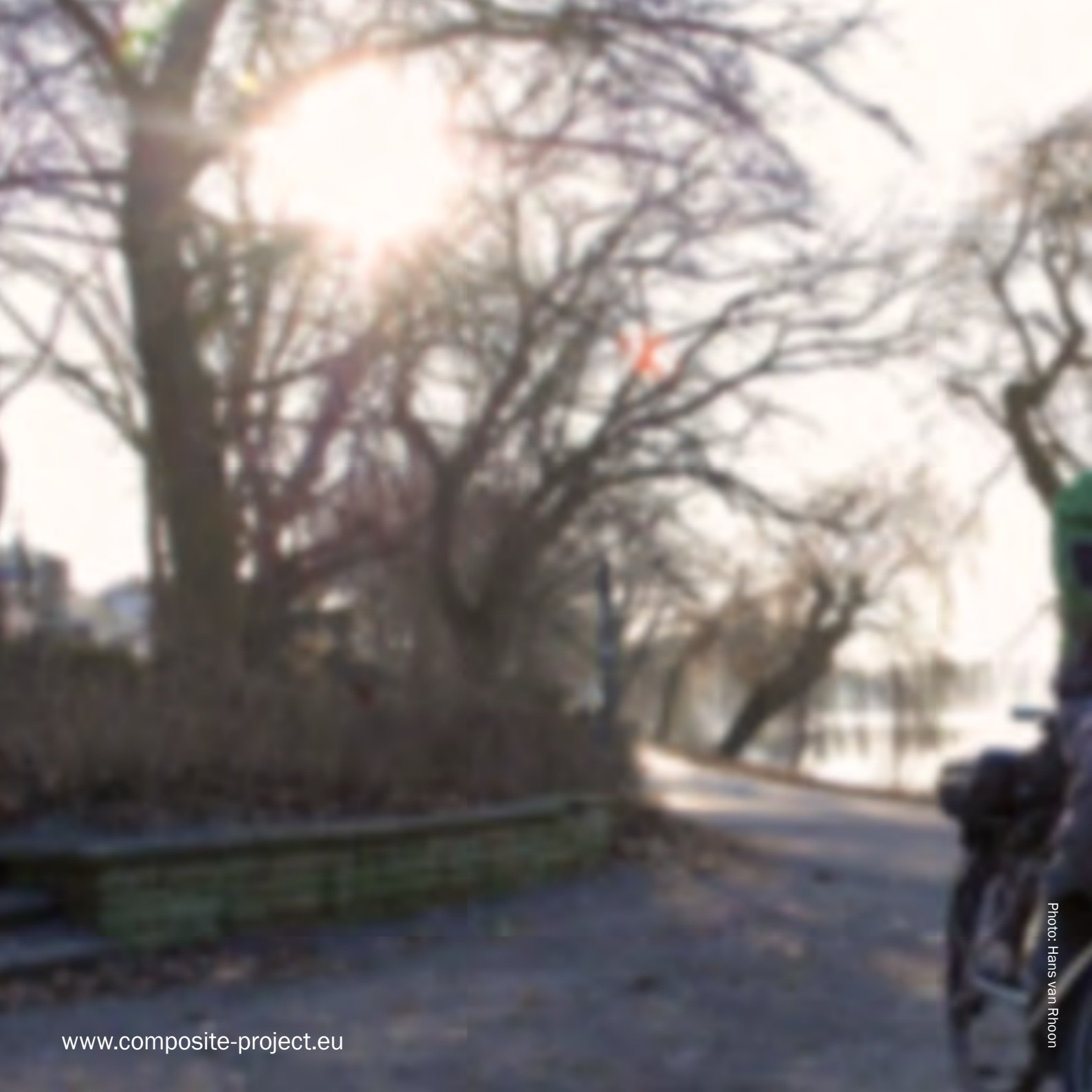

Photo: Hans van Rhoon

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