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## Sturingsperikelen in de Politieorganisatie. Een verkennende antropologische studie

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## Summary

Controlling the work of police officers is not a simple job for their supervisors. Factors complicating the control of police work relate to both the structural design of the police organization and the organizational culture within police forces.

This thesis examines control problems in the police organization from three angles: structural components of the police organization are first dealt with, then the organizational culture is discussed, and, finally, possibilities for expanding the control potential of police supervisors are considered. The study is in line with the tradition of cultural anthropological research, using participatory observation and anthropological theoretical frameworks. Empirical information in this study was collected from the Kennemerland police force.

### *Control and structure*

The first part of this thesis consists of an analysis of the structure of the Kennemerland police force. This is based on eight real-life examples, utilizing the theories of Mintzberg and Hofstede as points of departure. The analysis shows that the police force studied is a hybrid organization, with features of machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy and administrative adhocracy. Police activities are not all routine and are difficult to measure. Objectives are ambiguous, and the effects of interventions on work processes are unknown.

The effectiveness of the structure and control instruments in an organization depends on two factors: functionality and consistency. As regards functionality, scrutiny of the real-life examples leads to the conclusion that the wrong control instruments are often used in the wrong situations, or that obvious control instruments are not used. The consistency requirement is not always met either: various control instruments are used at the same time in order to increase the organization's control potential, which has, however, a counterproductive effect.

### *Control and culture*

The structural approach presents significant insights, but provides a one-sided view. In practice, the structure seems to offer insufficient potential for effective control. The structural perspective is also inadequate as a basis for analysis because it does not take sufficiently into account the complexity of the organization. That is why the cultural perspective was opted for, which follows the theoretical example of Mintzberg and Hofstede. This thesis examines the extent to which the culture can have a cohesive effect or serve as a control instrument. In the cultural approach used, culture is considered as an aid in everyday challenges, while the internal cohesion of a cultural pattern is emphasized.

Special attention is also devoted to the internal differentiation that can occur in an organization. The process of the formation of subcultures is described and political processes and various interests of groups and individuals in organizations are discussed.

The analysis of the cultural pattern within the Kennemerland police force and the cultural patterns of the various subgroups highlights common norms and values as well as the pattern of norms and values of the various subgroups. The common cultural features within the force studied are human orientation (strong involvement with familial traits in relation to each other) and theatricality (an intuitive, ad hoc working method, many projects and working groups, various initiatives that fail in the implementation stage), which has to do with the results of police work that are hard to measure, a high degree of intuition and considerable capacity for improvisation (reacting on the basis of instinct rather than facts and figures). The overall cultural features of the police force can be explained on the basis of three fundamental questions, viz.: How do we deal with the fact that we do not know our mission and will never achieve our goals? How do we legitimize ourselves to the public and ward off criticism of our performance? And how do we organize loyalty in order to prevent information from leaking out of the organization?

Subcultural differences are conspicuously present in the force studied. A distinction is made between street cops, supervisory cops and policy cops. Each subgroup has very different cultural characteristics and ways of expressing them. Power, status and material gain are diversely distributed in the force. Officers from various hierarchical levels strive for different types of organizational and political gain. The causes of cultural inconsistency in the force studied are contained in the various job descriptions and external environments of the subgroups, different pursuits of gain of the officers, limited opportunities for members of various subgroups to interact, and differences in enculturation processes. The differences in cultural reality pose the risk of cultural conflicts in the police force when control is administered.

It can only be concluded that, rather than having a coordinating effect on the exercise of control, culture in the police organization acts as an impediment. This is mainly due to the high degree of differentiation in the force.

#### *Increasing the control potential*

The study ends with an application-oriented section. The object is to make recommendations for increasing the control potential in the police organization. To this end, possibilities for intervention are discussed from a cultural and a structural perspective, and four scenarios of change are constructed, viz. a revitalization scenario, a growth scenario, an innovation scenario and a political scenario.

The scenarios are ideal concepts for transformation of the force studied and the Dutch police as a whole.

The revitalization scenario examines the possibilities of controlling the police organization on the basis of a machine-bureaucratic structure. Centralization of power and standardization of work processes are the primary features of this type of structure. The culture is determined by the following main, fundamental question: How do we guarantee high-quality, unequivocal performance of work? The revitalization scenarios can be achieved by reinforcing the elements of the machine bureaucracy, increasing the influence of supporting staff, and inhibiting elements of growth towards a professional bureaucracy. National developments promoting the revitalization scenario are the establishment of a quality control bureau for police and the political and social need for standardization in police work.

The growth scenario considers the possibilities of controlling the police organization on the basis of a professional bureaucratic structure. Decentralization of power down to the level of street cops and far-reaching professionalization and standardization of knowledge and skills are the characteristics of this type of structure. The culture is determined by the following main, fundamental question: How can we equip our street cops and keep them optimally equipped for their work? The growth scenario can be achieved by minimizing the elements of the machine bureaucracy and investing considerably in training and education, and influencing the conceptions of cultural reality of both street and supervisory cops. National developments promoting the growth scenario are increasing attention to police training courses and the growing supply of these courses.

The innovation scenario outlines the possibilities of controlling the police organization on the basis of a division structure. Decentralization of power down to the level of districts and the continuous measuring of results are the primary features of this type of structure. The culture is determined by the following main, fundamental question: How do we attain our objectives expressed in target figures? The innovation scenario can be achieved by making significant progress in technical resources in the area of information technology and methods for time registration and measuring results. This has to be accompanied by cultural changes and a different supervisory style on the part of supervisory cops and the first supervisory echelon (group supervisors). The police and interested outsiders are working hard on these developments at national level.

The political scenario does not present an ideal type, but its description does give a warning. It warns against the risks of decline and far-reaching politization if no significant choices are made in organizing control in police organizations. The political sce-

nario is one of non-choices and loss of energy: an attempt is made to exercise control in the politicized police organization, but so many forces are activated at the same time that they cancel each other out, as a result of which the ultimate control potential of police supervisors and those bearing administrative responsibility is highly limited. The political scenario is very realistic: the force studied as well as other police forces have a highly hybridized structure and inconsistent cultural pattern. The Dutch police displays tendencies towards profound politization of the police organization. To reduce the risk of the political scenario becoming a reality, it is necessary for administrators and policy cops to choose from the wide range of developments and innovated control instruments.

This thesis does not state a preference for the revitalization, growth or innovation scenario. All of them are considered to be realistic and challenging possibilities of increasing control potential in the police organization. It does oppose the political scenario, inconsistency and failure to make choices, which lead to an unnecessary loss of energy and lack of control capacity. It is up to administrators and police supervisors to make a well-considered choice.