

SCALES OF BLUE



Street-level bureaucrats
in the Nederlandse
Politie

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Prologue

Here before you is my master thesis on street-level bureaucratic behavior in the field of the Dutch police: Scales of Blue. I hope this thesis inspires you to look at the curious things in life that I find interesting. Why do people do what they do? Why is there so much randomness in human behavior and in administrative behavior? Decisions, mechanisms, and encounters between the state and its citizens sometimes seem to be full of contradictions. The state is rigid in its structure and rules, but it is made out of people. People that have to work with other people. That have to use these rules to make sense of what is before them. This thesis is dedicated to the human judgment and the structural power of the state.

This thesis had never been written without the help, advice, and corporation of several important people. First of all, Peter Hupe, my supervisor, with his enthusiasm about the street-level bureaucracy and sometimes confusing advice that made me think more of the research field and broadened my academic skills. Secondly, Michael Musheno, for inspiring conversations during my stay at UC Berkeley. Furthermore Gert van Beek, without whom I would never been able to do this research and who introduced me to the fascinating field of the police. Furthermore all the respondents from Raampoort for letting me be a part of their exciting world.

1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction: The organization and the street-level

“Every day is different, you never know what is going to happen, every day can be exciting” (R2). In the daily practice of police officers there are a lot of things happening and they encounter new situations on a daily basis. They have to deal with real situations that can differ from the plans and policies they have to execute. They work in different contexts and encounter varying situations that demand them to take certain actions. Usually these actions will be in line with the policy but at the same time they will differ per situation and also per worker. Street-level bureaucrats use discretion in their daily work and are inclined to use coping mechanisms in some situations, as Lipsky (1980) describes it. Lipsky was the first to research street-level workers in governmental agencies and the difficulties they have to cope with. He foremost described what happens on the street-level, later on others tried to research what factors influence street-level bureaucratic behavior, such as worker ideology, organizational characteristics and client preferences.

Lipsky discusses street-level bureaucrats within organizations that are characterized by little resources and the use of coping mechanisms at the street-level. The behavior of street-level bureaucrats, in this case street-level officers, varies between individuals, situations, and departments of the particular organization. Although within the same organization or department the street-level bureaucrats have to deal with the same conditions, the way they work still differs per person or even per situations. Within the police for example, as will be further addressed in this research, a certain variety between individuals and how they handle certain

situations can be found. Some officers handle a case like this and others like that. Nevertheless, on the other hand, coherent and uniform behavior can also be found in the daily practice. Some situations are handled exactly the same by all officers. Street-level bureaucratic behavior, the behavior of the police officers, is not only concerned with coping or problematic behavior, but also with the normal day to day business. Not every situation asks for a special individual approach and there are situations that can be handled as prescribed by the policy. However, variation between individuals in the way they work and how they handle certain situations is interesting to look at when wondering why street-level bureaucrats do what they do. This question is the starting point for many research into street-level bureaucracy and is also the puzzle underlying this research.

This research focuses on differences between individuals and their working behavior. These differences ask for an explanation in order to understand what happens on the street-level. There are different explanations for this, researched by several scholars (Evans, 2011; Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2000; Meyers & Vorsanger, 2003); Riccucci, 2005; Scott, 1997; Winter, 2002), such as the specific situations, worker preferences and the street-level organization. The street-level organization, specifically the different management layers and regulatory organizational context, might be able to explain street-level bureaucratic behavior, especially in the cases where individual behavior does not deviate that much. In this research I will try to explain street-level bureaucratic behavior – actions, decisions, discretion – by looking at the different aspects of the organization they are part of. Nevertheless, management and organizational regulations might be able to explain all variety in individual actions. Other clusters of factors should not be ignored and will also be used to explain street-level bureaucratic behavior.

1.2 Research question

The question for this research will be as follows:

Why do street-level bureaucrats do what they do and how can we understand the variety in behavior from an organizational perspective?

In order to answer this question properly, some sub questions will be posed and answered in the analysis part of this research report. The sub questions are formulated as follows:

1. What is street-level bureaucratic behavior and what variety can be found in the behavior of street-level officers?
2. How do street-level officers fulfill their tasks?
3. What is the role of the specific situations in the actions, decisions and discretionary behavior of street-level officers?
4. What is the role of individual characteristics of street-level officers in their actions, decisions and

discretionary behavior?

5. What is the role of the organization, specifically the management and the regulatory context in the actions, decisions and discretionary behavior of street-level officers?
6. How do these different clusters of factors explain variety in street-level bureaucratic behavior?

This research has as a main focus the variety of behavior of street-level bureaucrats. Behavior can be specified by actions, decisions and discretionary behavior. By looking at four different clusters of factors – the street-level organization, the specific situation, job-specific attributes, and individual characteristics – I will try to find an explanation for the varying behavior of street-level officers. These different clusters stand in relation to one another; however the way in which they influence each other is expected to differ within the organization, between street-level workers and certain situations. The expectations about the relations will be elaborated more extensively in Chapter 3 in the theoretical framework where the causal model below will be addressed more elaborately and by stating some expectations and assumptions that will be addressed in the analysis.

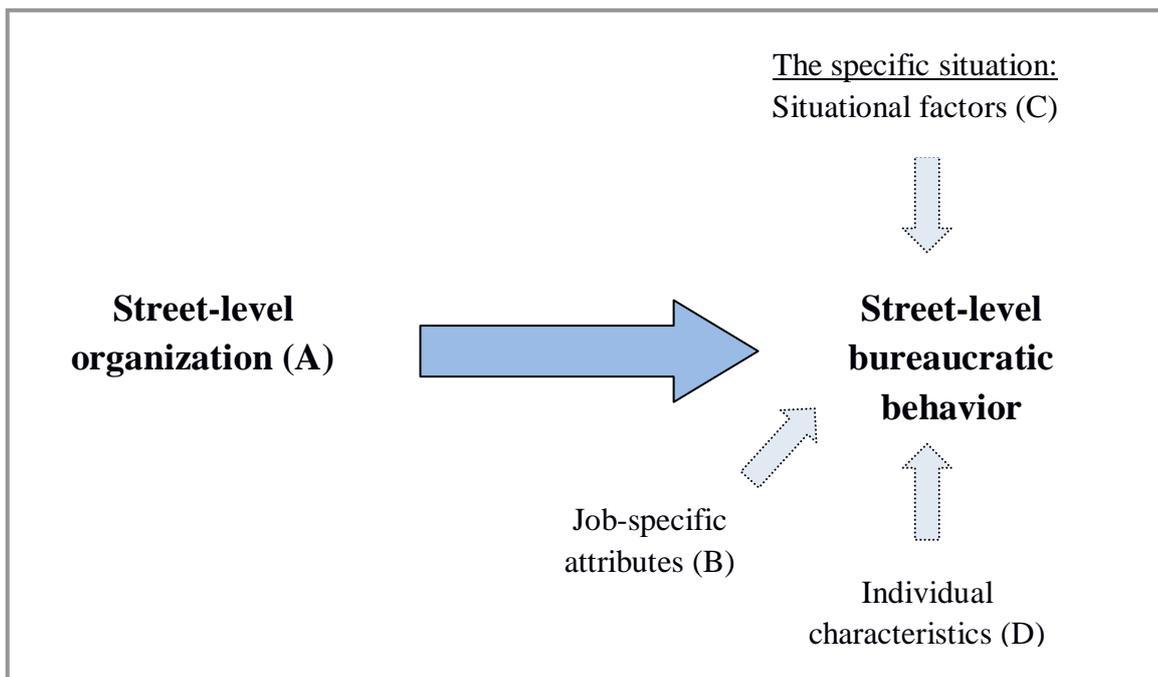


Figure 1: Causal scheme

This research will make use of interviews, observations and documents in order to answer the research questions. The qualitative data will be analyzed with the help of a Qualitative Data Analysis tool, Nvivo. This tool is helpful but the analysis will be mostly conducted by the researcher. The interpretation of the researcher is important in analyzing and structuring the data; the different stories and examples of the interviews, the interpretations of the observations, and the relevant documents. In order to get comparable and coherent information from the interviews, a semi-structured style will be conducted with the use of a

topic list. This topic list is formulated on the basis of the theoretical framework.

1.3 The police organization and street-level officers

This research is focused on the street-level of the Dutch police organization. The police is a classic example of a street-level organization where policy has to be executed in close contact with the client, either the citizen or the 'bad guy'. The police is occupied with law enforcement and maintaining public order. This is done under the authority of the Ministry of Safety and Justice and the police is held account by the public prosecutor, but also by the mayor of the specific municipality. The police is restricted and organized with many rules and regulations which make the work of street-level officers highly regulated. However, these officers encounter different situations on the street and it can be sometimes be hard to fit every situation within the rules. Although most work is of a bureaucratic nature, there are complex moments that cannot be captured by the rules. Street-level officers have a degree of discretion that they can use in their work. This research focuses on the street-level bureaucratic behavior, the actions, decisions, and discretionary behavior of street-level officers and how variety within this can be explained. In order to find this variety, an explanation and thus an answer to the research question different police officers and managers were interviewed and these data give a good impression of what happens within the organization and on the street-level. In Chapter 4 and 5 an elaboration on the police organization and the street-level will be given in order to come to an analysis in Chapter 6.

1.4 Research purpose and relevance

As can be converted from the research question, the purpose of this research is to understand street-level bureaucratic behavior from an organizational perspective. The variety that can be found in the actions, decisions, and discretionary behavior of street-level bureaucrats, in this case street-level officers, needs explanation. Street-level bureaucratic behavior is rather complex and there are many explanations that can take account for differences between situations and individual workers. Different explanatory factors have been researched before, such as the organizational influence by Riccucci (2005) and Scott (1997), the influence of worker preferences by Winter (2002) and of the client (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2000). Although the field of street-level bureaucracy is well-known and many aspects have been researched, there can still be found contradictions and complexity in the explanations of street-level bureaucratic behavior. Most scholars focus on one explanatory aspect in a quantitative study. This research tries to get the whole picture of street-level bureaucratic behavior and how variety between individuals can be explained. Where others, such as Lipsky mostly focused on discretionary behavior and behavior that was out of the ordinary, this research focuses on all actions and decisions as well as discretionary behavior. All in all it tries to capture and understand as much as possible of the behavior of street-level bureaucrats, police officers in the Dutch police force. This research addresses a specific context and cannot be generalized to other differently organized street-level bureaucrats. However, it does give insights into the workings of street-level bureaucratic behavior and might have information that can be useful for different street-level practitioners

and the street-level literature.

For the police organization and the street-level officers cooperating with this research, it might be relevant to see how things are done within the organization and how street-level officers differ from one another. The police can learn about the way they work and how things could be improved in order to avoid the use of coping mechanisms and to create a coherent execution of the service they deliver. Especially by comparing street-level officers within different departments and locations of the police, the organization can learn from each department or location and try to understand differences. By looking at individual behavior which adds up to organizational behavior as Wilson (1989) states it, this research might give in insight in the way policies are executed and the way the organization works in its whole. It can find behavioral structures and might distinguish different clusters of factors that might play a role in the actions, decisions, and discretionary behavior of the officers. Individual workers will be compared in order to find underlying behavioral structures. This design will be further explained in Chapter 3. Although this research highly depends on individuals, it is not a test whether the officers are displaying good or bad behavior. The research will not focus on individuals in such a sense that individual behavior will be assessed. It will look at the individual level of the organization and is focused on differences between street-level officers and how this variety can be explained from the theoretical framework.

1.5 Structure of the report

In order to answer the central question, and to get a better understanding of street-level bureaucratic behavior and the role of the street-level organization, some steps have to be taken first. In Chapter 2 the theoretical framework used for this research will be given. The main concept of street-level bureaucratic behavior and the clusters of factors, namely the street-level organization, the specific situation, the job-specific attributes, and the individual characteristics will be addressed by looking into works of for example Lipsky and Wilson. Furthermore some assumptions and expectations will be formulated that will give an answer to the central question. In Chapter 3 the methodology used in this research are discussed in order to give a better foundation and a better understanding of the choices for this research. These two chapters are the base for this report and the chapters clarify how the later analysis is conducted.

Chapter 4 will address the contextual framework of the police in order to clarify the specific context and restrictions the organization has to deal with. Also the structure of the organization will be addressed, which is important for the later analysis. In Chapter 5 the data will be presented by giving the main findings organized by tasks. Although the interviews and observations have generated more than just these findings, the findings given in this report are the most important for the analysis and answering the main question. In Chapter 6 the analysis will be given in accordance to the theoretical framework. The assumptions stated in the theoretical framework will be addressed before the conclusion in Chapter 7.

2

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Max Weber as the founding father of bureaucracy

Street-level bureaucracy is a concept that nowadays most Public Administration scholars and students know by heart and are familiar working with. Before going to the specifics of this concept, the term ‘bureaucracy’ will first be examined since this could give a better picture of the term street-level bureaucracy and the underlying assumptions of this concept. In Max Weber’s *Bureaucracy* (1978) he describes bureaucratic structures in governmental agencies and other organizations, especially the features of bureaucracy that promote rationality and impersonal judgment. In a bureaucracy human action is captured in rules, laws and procedures to promote this rationality and discourage arbitrariness. “When fully developed, bureaucracy also stands, in a specific sense, under the principle of *sine ira ac studio*. The more perfectly developed, the more bureaucracy is “dehumanized,” the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation” (Weber, 1978: 975). Weber saw that most situations could be handled with law like procedures and that this caused governmental agencies to treat every citizen as equal and making the work of administrators more objective.

Weber did see that in reality not all behavior can be objective and dehumanized, as you can see from the quotation marks used by Weber, “thus implying that the emotional, irrational, and personal are hard to suppress” (Billing, 2005: 262). However, Weber emphasized these dangers of personal judgment, like inequity, favoritism and decisions based on emotions and not on ratio. On the other hand, Weber leaves room

for more humanity towards the individual, by emphasizing the expertise of administrators that can lead them to other decisions:

For the field of administrative activity (...) one has become accustomed to claims for freedom and the paramountcy of individual circumstances. General norms are held to play primarily a negative role, as barriers to the official's positive and "creative" activity which should never be regulated. (...) Decisive is that this "freely" creative administration (and possibly judicature) would not constitute a realm of free, arbitrary action and discretion, of personally motivated favor and valuation. (...) The rule and the rational pursuit of "objective" purposes, as well as devotion to these, would always constitute the norm of conduct. (Weber, 1978: 979)

So, Weber sees the use of discretion for lower level bureaucrats still as something one has to be cautious of and that "objectivity" and the rules and laws have to be the first motivation in making decisions. However, he does leave room for individual circumstances that can cause bureaucrats to consider other options. Rules do not always promote justice, if they turn into rigidity.

Weber sketches a good picture of the basis of modern day bureaucracy and the reason this type of structure is mostly used in governmental organizations. Weber does not make a distinction between different types of bureaucracies, which can probably explain better why there are different degrees of "creativity" and "objectivity" among street-level bureaucrats and the ways in which they use the rules and laws during their daily work. He does not describe elaborately what kind of factors influence bureaucratic behavior if the rules are not sufficient to help the client. By reading Weber one gets a better understanding of the foundations of bureaucratic work. It clarifies the assumptions behind the rule-bound work of bureaucrats. Other authors addressed in the next paragraphs will give a better overall picture of what actually happens in the bureaucracy.

2.2 Wilson: Different types of bureaucracy

James Q. Wilson describes in his book *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do* it (1989) different types of bureaucracies and what kind of consequences different bureaucracies have for the governmental agencies, but also for the operators (street-level bureaucrats) in these organizations. By using a various amount of examples Wilson creates an understanding of modern day bureaucracies and the differences between them. It is useful to look into Wilson's distinction since street-level bureaucrats are to be found in many different types of organizations, such as schools, the police, social work organizations and so on. These agencies can differ from one another and one of the explanation for the organizational behavior can be found in Wilson's *Bureaucracy*. Wilson makes his distinction between agencies on the basis of the visibility of activities (as he calls it "outcomes") and the visibility of results ("output"). By looking at these dimensions he recognizes four types of agencies: Production organizations, procedural organizations, craft

organizations and coping organizations.

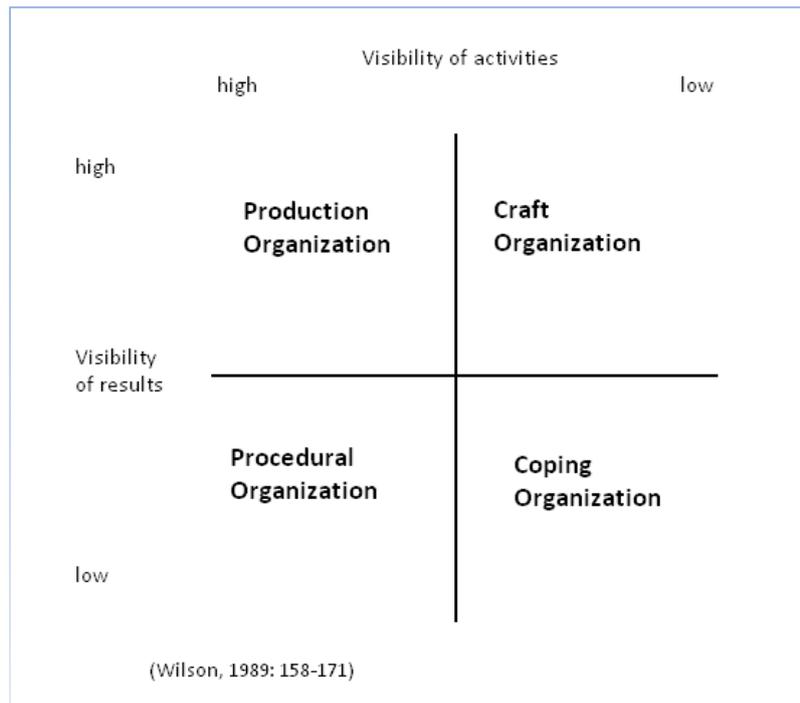


Figure 2: Governmental agencies scale

In a production agency both the activities of the work and the output the work results in are observable. “Managers have an opportunity to design (within the limits established by external constraints) a compliance system to produce an efficient outcome” (Wilson, 1989: 160). Wilson states that the observable activities and the observable results simplify managing these agencies. The activities can be controlled and can be laid down in rules, laws and procedures more easily than when it is not observable what has to be produced. However he warns for the effect of control on the results, because it can lead to only measuring the observable outcome and output and ‘force’ operators to produce only these outcomes. By paying attention to the measurable results, the operators are mostly pressured to regard their speed of handling the maximum number of cases. “But another, less easily observed outcome thereby will be neglected – being helpful to clients” (161). One of the dangers of this type of organization is this neglecting and by focusing too much on the numbers operators “will try on occasion to fudge the numbers by which they are evaluated, either out of a desire to shirk (that is, minimize effort) or subvert (that is, produce other outcomes than the measured one)” (161). Wilson warns that this type of coping will especially arise if the agency is managed like a production organization, but in fact has no easily observable outcome and output. One should only manage the agency as a production agency if the outcome and output are easily observable.

In procedural organization are the activities observable but cannot always be said what the result is from the work of the operators in these types of organizations. “The conditions that define a procedural bureaucracy seem to make it ripe for management in ways that encourage the development of professionalism. What better way ... to manage organizational activities ... than by recruiting professionals to do the work in

accordance with the highest professional standards?” (163). In a procedural organization the management has to encourage the practitioners to be professional and “to put the client’s interests ahead of their own and to engage in behavior that is most likely to produce the desired outcome” (163). The management in this type of organization is more means-oriented and has to promote professionalism. Behavior is more based on the professional standards operators get from their education and experience than only from rules and procedures. Their behavior is less easily recorded in rules and procedures, because the results of their efforts are not observable. Whether their work is effective can hardly be measured so the organization depends highly on professional standards.

Another type of bureaucracy is the craft organization where the results are observable but the process is hard to observe. Wilson mentions the example of Kaufman’s *The Forest Ranger* (published in 1960) in which Kaufman tries to explain how the Forest Service works with its widely spread operators and how the Forest Service operated almost equally in all different parks. In this example the day-to-day activities of the forest rangers are hard to observe, mostly because of widespread locations of the parks, but the end result was more easily to observe. To manage this kind of organizations, one has to depend on the ‘craftsmanship’ of the operators, their work ethos and sense of duty. “It is just this combination of self-taught or professionally indoctrinated skills and group- or profession-induced ethos that justifies calling such agencies craft organizations” (167). However, as Wilson argues, such organizations are often not only result-oriented, because they cannot easily observe the process. They try to control the process as well by creating “conformity to the contextual goals and constraints in which the agency is enmeshed” (168). So the craft agency still has rules and procedures that try to control the behavior of their operators, even though it depends more on the professional ethos of these workers to actually act accordingly.

The fourth type of organization Wilson describes is the coping organization, where both the activities and the results are hard to observe. Wilson argues that in this type of organization it is hard for a manager to cope with this difficult situation. There is often no agreement about what “good work” is and what the desired outcomes should be. One of the things the manager should do is try to create a sense of what is good within this organization. However, where “both outputs and outcomes are unobservable there is likely to be a high degree of conflict between managers and operators in public agencies, especially those that must cope with a clientele not of their own choosing. The operators will be driven by situational imperatives they face. ... The managers will be driven by the constraints they face” (169). Wilson mentions that most organizations will be focused on thing that can be measured easily, thereby giving an incentive towards the operators to do their job only conform the things that are measured. He argues that only the “brave manager will be inclined to give much freedom of action to subordinates” (171) and to depend on their professionalism.

By explaining why and how government agencies can differ from one another, Wilson gives a good picture of why behavior can vary among different street-level bureaucracies. Besides this distinction between four types of bureaucracies he also explains why behavior on the operating level should be addressed.

To understand a government bureaucracy one must understand how its front-line workers learn what to do ... The work of the operator is the place to begin because it is their efforts that determine whether the agencies' clients (that is, we the people) are satisfied. Moreover, one cannot say many interesting things about the structure, incentives, and the leadership of an agency without first knowing what behaviors are supposed to be organized by those structures, motivated by those incentives, and directed by those leaders. (Wilson, 1989; 30)

By looking at this behavior on the bottom of the bureaucracy Wilson starts with stating that goals and tasks within an organization not always explain why bureaucracies act as they do. Goals are often ambiguous and therefore cannot explain bureaucratic behavior. He therefore emphasizes the influence of situational imperatives that make operators act differently in different cases. "When goals are vague, circumstances become important" (36). Operators create a sense of how to "handle the situation" in their day-to-day activities. Peer expectations lead them in learning how to act in different situations, as well as prior experience, professional norms and in less severity political ideology and the bureaucratic personality of an operator. The way in which these factors influence (street-level) bureaucratic behavior is for a part dependent on the type of bureaucracy the operator works. Wilson shows the complexity of bureaucratic behavior in his book and by looking at these types of agencies and the influential factors one can try to understand what happens in bureaucracies.

2.3 Lipsky's Street-level Bureaucracy

Wilson argues that operators 'make' a bureaucracy and it is their behavior we have to look at if we want to understand the working of bureaucratic agencies. Lipsky is one of the first in 1971 (his book was published in 1980) who paid special attention to the street-level of a bureaucracy where the client experiences the state by being in contact with lower-level workers. Lipsky called these workers street-level bureaucrats and recognized that street-level bureaucrats are interesting to look at because of their special role on the borderline between the state and the citizens. As Michael Lipsky describes it:

To deliver street-level policy through bureaucracy is to embrace a contradiction. On the one hand, service is delivered by people to people, invoking a model of human interaction, caring and responsibility. On the other hand, service is delivered through a bureaucracy, invoking a model of detachment and equal treatment under conditions of resource limitations and constraints, making care and responsibility conditional. (Lipsky, 2010: 71)

Lipsky describes the practices of lower level workers in bureaucratic governmental organizations that are working in the primary process from a theoretical perspective in his book *Street-level bureaucracy*. He recognizes the special characteristics of the work of front line workers in particularly government agencies

that have to deal with for example the distribution of public services. His definition of street-level bureaucrats is stated as follows: “Public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work” (Lipsky, 2010: 3). In his definition there is a big role for the vague and ambiguous term ‘discretion’. He mostly referred to the room that street-level bureaucrats have within the rules and procedures of policies to determine “the nature, amount, and quality of benefits and sanctions provided by their agencies” (Lipsky, 2010: 14). Lipsky finds the exercise of discretion a critical dimension of much of the work of street-level bureaucrats; it plays a big role in their daily jobs because of the diversity of individual cases they encounter. However, he does note that there are “in public services some interactions that take place with citizens that involve relatively little bureaucratic discretion” (15). Even taking in account these encounters, most street-level bureaucratic work is characterized by discretion which cannot be reduced because of the complexity of the cases. Street-level bureaucrats work in situations that are too complicated to reduce to “programmatically formats” and these situations often require responses to the “human dimensions” of the situation. Street-level bureaucrats are not only demanded to be impartial but are often also asked for compassion and flexibility towards certain cases. Lipsky emphasizes that street-level bureaucrats are to an extent professionals and therefore are expected to use their discretionary judgment in their field. The inevitability of discretion however has consequences for accountability. Lipsky argues that “accountability is virtually impossible to achieve where workers exercise a high degree of discretion, and ... the likelihood of securing accountability seems slim” (Hudson, 1993: 392). Lipsky notices that public managers are pressured to improve their workers’ accountability “through manipulation of incentives and other aspects of job structure” (159). This has an effect on the way street-level bureaucrats will do their job, by posing certain (often measurable) standards.

Lipsky claims that street-level bureaucrats often cannot perform according to these highest standards of decision-making because of lack of time, information or other resources. Lipsky says that these problems and the impracticability of the policies they have to execute cause street-level bureaucrats to develop coping mechanisms that make their job ‘easier’ for them such as psychologically simplifying their clientele and environment. “The work context of street-level bureaucrats calls for the development of mechanisms to provide satisfactory services in a context where the quality, quantity, and specific objectives of service remain (within broad limits) to be defined” (82). How to do the job then becomes a matter of coping with inadequate resources, few controls, indeterminate objectives, and discouraging circumstances. The coping mechanism that surface help controlling this difficult and ambiguous work environment street-level bureaucrats have to deal with from day to day.

Lipsky distinguishes three general responses of street-level bureaucrats to cope with their job.

First, they develop patterns of practice that tend to limit demand, maximize the utilization of available resources, and obtain clients compliance over and above the procedures developed by their agencies. They organize their work to derive a solution within the resource constraints they

encounter. Second, they modify concepts of their jobs, so as to lower or otherwise restrict their objectives and thus reduce the gap between available resources and achieving objectives. Third, they modify their concept of the raw material with which they work – their clients – so as to make more acceptable the gap between accomplishments and objectives (83).

Street-level bureaucrats simplify situations and cases to reduce the complexity and they create routines other than stated in the policy they execute. Lipsky states that especially the structure of these routines and simplifications can be problematic, because these decisions are to a certain extent political. Street-level bureaucrats “determine the allocation of particular goods and services in the society, utilizing positions of public authority. ... If the dominant patterns of decision making are characterized by routinization and simplification, then the structure of these patterns must be analyzed to determine who gets what, when, and how” (84). Besides this political aspect, Lipsky also mentions the biases that come to the surface with routines and simplifications. The biases can come from organizational demands, but also from the workers’ occupational and personal biases.

Although routines and simplifications are brought to live by street-level bureaucrats to get more control over their work, Lipsky states that the extent to which these coping mechanisms are present in the day-to-day work depends on the extent to which the policy objectives are difficult to achieve. So the more ambiguous, difficult the environment of the street-level bureaucrat, the more chance there is coping mechanisms are inhabited in the work. The routines are especially directed on rationing services (use of resources), controlling clients and the work situation, and modifying the conception of the client and work. By using all these coping mechanisms the street-level bureaucrat makes his job ‘easier’, and therefore more the work environment more workable.

Coping mechanisms, however, could strongly influence the outcomes of street-level bureaucrats’ efforts to make decisions in line with the policies they have to execute. The individual behavior of the front line workers add up to the agencies’ behavior. Lipsky sees the behavior of street-level bureaucrats as policy-making, since they play such a big role in policy execution and shaping the policy outcomes. Even though the rules within most policies are the most leading in making decisions, there are as state above cases where other mechanisms influence the decision making process. At this point new policy is created according to Lipsky.

Lipsky created a good fundament for research into street-level bureaucracy which has been of great influence for scholars assessing this topic after him. By looking what happens on the street-level of public service agencies he created a better understanding of the working of these organizations. The notion of inevitable discretion and the consequences of the demanding environment have showed the dilemmas street-level bureaucrats have to cope with and how this results in certain mechanisms. Lipsky paid less attention to the factors that guide their behavior if the rules are not used as a guideline and if they fall back on coping

mechanisms. He mostly describes the phenomenon of street-level bureaucracy and the reasons why policies are not always executed as they were stated. Other scholars researched this phenomenon following Lipsky and have come to explanations for the behavior of street-level bureaucrats and the notion of discretion.

2.4 Explaining street-level behavior

Street-level bureaucratic behavior can be influenced by different factors, varying from the formal legislative side (rules, laws, procedures within the executed policy) to more individual considerations for decision-making. Street-level bureaucratic behavior is mostly about making decisions about others, and these decisions can be influenced by different kind of factors. In this research street-level bureaucratic behavior is exemplified by actions, decisions and discretionary behavior, which will be further addressed later in this chapter.

Meyers and Vorsanger elaborate on street-level bureaucracy in the light of bureaucratic control and policy implementation. By looking at street-level bureaucrats they try to explain how discretionary actions of street-level bureaucrats are controlled. Meyers and Vorsanger compare different explanations from different authors and thereby give a good overview of what can be found in this field. They conclude that there can be found a lot of contradiction within the literature which indicates mostly complexity. Not only hierarchical control mechanisms influence street-level bureaucratic behavior, but organizational constraints and individual incentives play a big role as well. Therefore they make a distinction between three different clusters of factors “that would be predicted to control street-level discretion” (Meyers & Vorsanger, 2003:154).

2.4.1 Political control: macro-context versus micro-context

First of all they address political control, where they state that there is indirect evidence that political officials have to some degree control over the discretionary actions of street-level bureaucrats. They have mostly control over visible actions (the numbers), and not over the content of street-level decisions. In a research from Søren Winter (2003) the influence of political principals and the influence of street-level preferences and ideologies on street-level coping behaviors are addressed. His findings from a large scale quantitative research “give considerable support for the claim that politicians are able to influence relatively visible aspects of street-level bureaucratic behavior according to their policy preferences” (Winter, 2003:24). Winter notes that the political influence is mainly towards visible and measurable activities and outcomes such as time, quantity of helped cases etc. They have “no or very little control of those aspects of street-level bureaucratic behavior, which are less transparent because they take place in tête-à-tête encounters ... behind closed office doors or in the field at site visits” (24). Street-level bureaucrats get more control over their own behavior, if their practices are less visible. During these encounters the preferences and specific attitudes of the street-level workers influence their coping behavior, and especially more job-related attitudes, experiences and constraints and feelings of lack of resources are important in explaining behavior. Also the

attitude towards the target group can explain coping behavior to a certain extent.

Winter describes that if political preferences have little control over the content of street-level bureaucratic decision making, street-level bureaucrats are most likely to act according to professional and individual values (May & Winter, 2009). Street-level bureaucrats have an understanding of policy goals, professional knowledge, and policy predispositions that cause street-level actions to be consistent with the policy. This gives a different picture of street-level bureaucratic behavior and the policy implementation process, where many scholars address street-level bureaucrats as policy shirking.

Winter shows that there can be a difference between a macro-context, the political arena of which street-level bureaucrats are a part or the micro-context of their work and their personal values. The macro-context of street-level action can definitely influence street-level bureaucratic behavior. Especially the institutional setting of the executed policy and the institutional context of the organization create a certain context and expectations for street-level workers. How the specific street-level bureaucracy is seen can be of influence of how street-level bureaucrats react in certain situations. This macro-context is often quite stable but can change over time and place. It is connected to the social and cultural climate in a country. Expectations about governmental agencies can be leading in how street-level workers in these agencies fill in their job. The macro-context seems to have an influence on the overall system and the possibilities and constraints of the work.

This can also be seen in the light of accountability. The institutional setting creates a certain climate for expectations which is connected to accountability. In different situations other forums of public accountability can be a reference point. Hupe and Hill (2007) make a distinction between public administrative accountability, professional accountability and participatory accountability and three different action levels; the system, the organization and the individual. Different actors demand accountability from the street-level bureaucrats and to whom they in the end take their responsibility depends on the situation and the ways in which the actors 'pull' on them. Hupe and Hill show that accountability can differ in every situation and can shape street-level bureaucratic behavior in different ways. For this research it is important to inquire which types of accountability play a role in the decision-making process, in order to look for organizational influence.

The micro-context is apparent in the day-to-day activities that street-level bureaucrats have to deal with and that form their frame of reference for their work. The interpretation of the micro-context will be addressed more elaborately in the third cluster of factors that according to Meyers and Vorsanger explain behavior.

2.4.2 Organizational control: organization versus client

Political control cannot explain completely why street-level bureaucrats do what they do. That is why

Meyers and Vorsanger secondly address organizational control. Street-level discretion can be linked to organizational and task complexity. “Complexity increases the need for discretionary judgments by front-line workers along with the difficulty of overseeing and monitoring their actions” (155). So the more complex the task, the less the organizational control on street-level bureaucratic behavior. The organization has to depend on the professional judgment of their employees. The activities cannot be controlled easily and the organization has to find ways to manage the behavior of the operators in such a way that it answers to the expectations of the organization. This can be seen in Wilson's research. Also the amount of resources available in the organization influences street-level bureaucrats, as could be seen in Lipsky's book. Therefore street-level bureaucratic behavior is more influenced by what they can do, than by what they are supposed to do according to the organization and the policy (Meyers & Vorsanger, 2003).

The organization can have a substantial influence on the work and the discretionary decisions, especially if street-level bureaucrats have more loyalty towards the organization, their management than to other factors such as worker preferences. This can be seen in the research of Scott. Scott (1997) did an experimental research into street-level decision-making and came to the conclusion that street-level bureaucrats decide mostly in line with the expectations from the organizations. Organizational characteristics such as structure, work load pressure, rules and constraints from the organization are according to his experiment most influential in determining discretion. He concluded that street-level bureaucrats are foremost a member of an organization and that organizational characteristics will therefore be more important in their decision making process than for example the client. This can differ between organizations, especially if there is less frequent and longterm contact with clients, clients are less important in the decision-making process. In Riccucci's research clients were the most decisive factor. Riccucci found that “the reference point of their discretionary power is not the supervisor but, in fact, the client” (Riccucci, 2005:89). According to Riccucci, but also to Maynard-Moody and Musheno has the organization little power over street-level discretion and is the client key factor. This could be because the street-level bureaucrats in these organizations have more frequent contact with the same client than in other organizations. Also the type of bureaucracy could explain differences in how the management handles the street-level.

Maynard-Moody and Musheno (2000) use two different narratives, from the state agent perspective and the citizen agent perspective to explain discretion in street-level work. In their article they firstly describe the dominant state agent perspective which “acknowledges the inevitability of discretion and emphasizes that self-interest guides street-level choices” (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2000: 329). The state agent perspective describes street-level workers as “government employees who are charged with carrying out the plans and policies of government agencies” (337). This dominant perspective sees street-level behavior as troubling for the democratic control over bureaucracy and the implementation of public policy. Street-level workers try to make the job easier and are the furthest from the reach of political and hierarchical control which can cause problems with accountability. From this perspective discretion is seen as inevitable because of the nature of the work and often also as a danger “that must be circumscribed and controlled to the extent

possible” (341). The organization tries to control the behavior of their street-level employees by framing their behavior into rules and regulations. These control mechanisms, however, are not always the best way to streamline behavior.

Maynard-Moody and Musheno note that “street-level work is, ironically, rule saturated but not rule bound” (334) and that supervisors have little control over street-level workers because their work is mainly shaped by the day-to-day face-to-face contact with clients. Also is discretion needed because without “street-level discretion to interpret rules, procedures, and laws to fit the individual case the administrative case would collapse under the weight of its own rigidity” (342). Maynard-Moody and Musheno try to give another narrative about discretion which they gained from street-level workers in vocational rehabilitation, in schools and welfare offices. They do not talk about the theoretical concepts such as discretion, so Maynard-Moody and Musheno note that these concepts are not helpful to “understand how street-level workers understand their role in government” (347). They noticed that in the narratives these workers rarely describe themselves working for the state, but mostly for the client. They do not act in response to rules, procedures, and laws, but in response to “individual citizen clients in specific circumstances”. Maynard-Moody and Musheno note that in the most common situations the rules fit these specific circumstances and that street-level judgment is not problematic. However, if the rules do not fit, the citizen encounter is the main pragmatic guideline. They act according to prior experiences, professional norms and moral judgments. Street-level workers describe “their decisions as normative, an exercise in moral reasoning rather than rule following or even rule breaking” (351).

By bringing forward this citizen agent narrative Maynard-Moody and Musheno give a different perspective to look at street-level bureaucracy and discretion. They argue that the “exercise of discretion exists in the context of social relations, not, as the state-agent narrative emphasizes, in the context of the abstract, formal, and hierarchical duties and responsibilities as defined by law and policy” (352). The macro-context of the organization is not leading, but the micro-context of the face-to-face client-encounters are most important for the decision-making process. According to the citizen agent perspective discretion is mainly used for pragmatic purposes to help the client as good as possible.

It is clear that there are differences between scholars in whether they believe the organization, the management, to be influential in the decision-making process. It seems that other factors such as the client preferences are especially important in situations where the management has little sight or influence over these moments. Other actions, the more visible actions are more influenced by the organizational regulatory context; the actions that can be organized by rules and regulations, that can be controlled. Taken that there is no consensus yet on the organizational control asks for further investigation of this topic. This research will try to come to a better understanding of the influence of the managerial and organizational regulatory context.

2.4.3 *Worker ideology and professional norms*

The third category Meyers and Vorsanger mention is worker ideology and professional norms. This incorporates “the influence of individual interests, professional norms and the processes through which workers construct meaning in their daily work routines” (156). In these daily routines street-level bureaucrats get experience with the work field and create routines and practices of how to act in certain situations. Many scholars have observed that bureaucrats, including those working at the street-level, are highly self-regulating and that they embrace norms of public service. They work mainly according to these norms and thereby they work in line with the expectations regarding the policy they execute. The professional norms are shared and influenced by peer consultation, and discretionary behavior is therefore rather coherent among professionals in a certain field. Front-line workers develop collective beliefs about the job during the course of their daily work. Street-level bureaucrats are largely guided “by the shared knowledge and collective beliefs that staff developed to make sense of day-to-day work” (156). When the management is inconsistent with these professional norms the management initiatives become “disconnected from the realities of daily work, workers’ collective schemas legitimated workers’ pursuit of alternative objectives and definitions of success” (156).

Professional norms and their influence on discretionary behavior has been addressed by Evans. In an earlier article of Evans and Harris (2004) discussed the “exaggerated death of discretion”. Evans and Harris argued that discretion is usually looked at from a two different perspectives, the curtailment perspective and the continuation perspective. “Both perspectives have a tendency to treat professional discretion as a phenomenon that is either present or absent and rest on a background assumption, particularly in the curtailment literature, that professional discretion is self-evidently a ‘good thing’” (Evans & Harris, 2004:871). The curtailment literature suggests that discretion is only found in situations of strong, autonomous, self-regulation of professionals. Evans and Harris, however, present an alternative perspective that sees discretion as inevitable in all street-level bureaucratic work that deals with translating policies to practice and that sees more rules not to create more control, but more discretion. They also bring forward that discretion is neither a good nor a bad thing, but highly dependent on the circumstances. Evans and Harris suggest that discretion should be seen “as a series of gradations of freedom to make decisions and, therefore, the degree of freedom professionals have at specific conjunctures should be evaluated on a situation-by-situation basis” (871-872).

This different notion of discretion is the basis for Evans qualitative research into street-level bureaucratic discretion in social work. He discovered that professionalism has an impact on the nature of discretion and the relationship between front line managers and workers. Evans argues that in “Lipsky’s account of street-level bureaucracies, the key regulators of discretion are managers” (Evans, 2011:371). Evans, however, sees this differently: managers and professionals in public organizations tend to be drawn from the same

professional group and therefore the line between management and workers becomes vague. They have shared professional commitments. Discretion is structured and informed by the shared professional values within the whole organization. Evans reveals with his research that managerial control is limited and that managers mainly give, according to the practitioners, professional support and guidance promoting professionalism. To become an expert in a certain field one needs experience to interpret every context and act accordingly, this is what professionalism beholds (Flyvbjerg, 2009). “Professional status has an influence on the extent of freedom that an occupational group exercises and entails a commitment to values that should inform the use of that discretion” (Evans, 2011: 371). So it is important to note what is meant with professionals. “Professional work becomes professional because it is institutionalized — professionals become professionals when they are part of professions that constitute, define, and control professional work” (Noordegraaf, 2007: 767).

Professionalism however can have different dimensions and is not the same in every organization and for every street-level worker. Hupe (2009) addresses the topic of street-level bureaucracy from the perspective of professionals in the public sector. Hupe explains that street-level bureaucrats are professionals, however, that there are different dimension and degree to recognize and explain professionalism in street-level bureaucracy. A professional is someone who has a specific training for his profession and can carry out his profession with authority. The execution of the profession is bound to certain ethical standards with sanctions. A profession is on the one hand formed by the professional group itself and on the other hand by the role expectation present in society about the profession (Hupe, 2009:131). The characteristics of professions and the way in which society accepts a relative autonomy from the professionals within this profession, is referred to as the institutionalization of the profession. This has consequences for the way in which professionals work in organizations and for their working conditions. It also affects the way in which they put their profession into practice.

Table 1: Dimensions of professional diversity

Scale	Category	Dimensions
Profession	<i>Institutionalization</i>	Type of profession Content of profession Social acceptance Self regulation
Organization	<i>Organization and working conditions</i>	Administrative level Policy making/policy execution Organizational structure Function ICT in primary process Principal/agent position
Professional	<i>Individual characteristics</i>	Length and type of training Habitus Work experience Sex Age Personal characteristics

Source: Hupe, 2009:132

By looking at these dimensions it becomes clear that there can be differences between professionals and that not only the content of the profession determines the professional status but other factors can also have an effect. Hupe sketches hereby the context in which street-level professionals work and what the different reference points are for their acting.

Furthermore he recognizes the increasing pressure from different forces on street-level bureaucrats in their daily work. Professionals are held account by different actors, either formal or informal and this influences the way in which they act, as could also be seen in the macro-context. Hupe makes a distinction between professional accountability, administrative accountability and participative accountability (see Hupe & Hill, 2007). With all these different forces professionals have more pressure and are expected to act in different ways from different actors. To deal with this pressure professionals have different options to act and the way in which they eventually deal with the different rules and expectations is referred to by Hupe as '*handelingsruimte*' (autonomy). This is different from discretion which Hupe sees as the stated and accepted room within the rules to act. Autonomy is the factual used room to act. How professionals proceed with their autonomy depends on different factors, such as the different accountability pressures. Also working conditions, rules and protocols from the organization and professional norms, personal characteristics, and the type of professional (of the dimension scale) influence the way in which is dealt with autonomy.

There are many factors that should be taken into account when looking at street-level bureaucracy. In the above paragraphs many factors have been addressed. Using the distinction of Meyers and Vorsanger has given a good overview of what different scholars have found in the field of street-level bureaucracy and especially about how street-level bureaucrats exercise discretion. They show the complexity of the factors that influence street-level bureaucratic behavior and make a helpful distinction between three types of influential factors on different levels in a street-level bureaucracy. In this thesis the distinction will be used as could be read in the introduction, which can be derived from the theoretical framework. This research focuses on the influence of the street-level organization (management and the regulatory context), job-specific attributes, the specific situation and individual characteristics. These four aspects have been addressed in the chapter above, but will be clarified and defined in the following paragraphs before going to a conceptual framework that will be used for the analysis.

2.5 Conceptual framework

2.5.1 Definition of main concepts

In the literature on street-level bureaucracy there are some concepts that need more clarification and that are handled differently by different authors. These concepts will be used later in the analysis and it is thus important to clarify the definitions handled in this research. First of all the main concept, street-level

bureaucratic behavior will be defined and specified since this is the main focus of the research. Furthermore the clusters of analysis will be addressed and further exemplified. In the end a theoretical framework will be created that will be used for the assumptions and the analysis of the data later on.

Street-level bureaucratic behavior

The concept of street-level bureaucratic behavior has been used in this thesis before and is the main focus in this research. Street-level bureaucratic behavior comprises everything street-level bureaucrats do during the course of their job. In this research street-level bureaucratic behavior is specified by actions, decisions and discretionary behavior. Actions are seen as all tasks that have to be done during the course of the work of street-level officers, but do not require binding decisions. In police work there are many tasks that do not have legal consequences but are part of the day-to-day practices.

Decisions are seen as the eventual legally binding decisions that street-level bureaucrats have to make during the course of their job. Although a whole process of actions might lead to a decision, this decision is a thing by itself that needs special attention. Within the actions and decisions we might see coping mechanisms or different ways to handle the situation. There might also be differences between street-level officers in how they behave, which is the focus of this research. Finally discretionary behavior is distinguished. Although this does occur during actions and decisions it is needed to be specifically defined. When street-level bureaucrats behave differently than prescribed by the rules, I speak of discretionary behavior. In this research the distinction is made between discretionary authority and autonomy.

Discretion

“A public officer has discretion whenever the effective limits of his power leave him free to make a choice among possible courses of action or inaction” (Davis, 1977:4). Davis sees discretion as something that can be controlled and can be either present or non-present. Others, however, see discretion as something inevitable and always present within the rules. Discretion is therefore distinctive for street-level bureaucrats according to Lipsky. He uses the term to describe the room that street-level bureaucrats have within the rules and procedures of policies to determine “the nature, amount, and quality of benefits and sanctions provided by their agencies” (Lipsky, 2010: 14).

Discretion is here used as inevitable to all street-level work, as described by Evans and Harris (204). The rules cannot describe every context and therefore leave room to act or not act. Discretion and rules are connected to one another. “As rules specify the duties and obligations of officials, discretion allows them freedom of action” (Hupe & Hill, 2007:281). Discretion is always present, however, it can be more or less structured and there can be weak and strong forms of discretion. Discretion is not the same in every context and every situation because of the different ways it can be present. Discretionary authority is discretion that is specified by the organization and to some extent structured. It is the discretionary behavior that the organization expects from their employees and that is prescribed in certain situations and when possible.

Autonomy

Hupe (2009) uses autonomy to describe what actually happens when street-level bureaucrats act during the course of their job and outside of the prescribed discretion. Street-level bureaucrats get certain freedom to act from their superiors and the way they fill this freedom – which cannot be described beforehand – is referred to as autonomy. Hupe makes a distinction between discretion and autonomy and by doing this he shows that there are differences in what is expected to happen on the street-level and what actually happens. Ringeling (1978) explains that discretion is dependent on the efficiency of the supervisors in the way they give autonomy to policy executers to use their discretion. Autonomy in this sense is deliberately dealing with the inevitable discretion in bureaucratic acting. In this research autonomy is used to show the freedom street-level bureaucrats have to act in certain situations, the freedom that is not controlled. Discretionary autonomy is the freedom that is not always visible to the management, but is almost always apparent in all actions and decisions.

2.5.2 Clusters of analysis

The clusters of analysis are the street-level organization, job-specific attributes, the specific situation and individual characteristics. These different clusters have different indicators that help understand to what extent these clusters have an influence on street-level bureaucratic behavior.

The street-level organization

The street-level organization is defined as the governmental agency that is mostly concerned with street-level activities. The main work force of this organization is active on the street-level and the organization might hence be managed in a different way than other organizations. To understand how the street-level organization influences street-level bureaucratic behavior, we will look at the regulatory organizational context which consists of rules, laws and regulations on different levels and with different focuses. Also the type of agency is important when looking at governmental agencies. Wilson's distinction between the four types of agencies can help clarify the workings of the street-level organization and the difficulties they have to deal with. Moreover the goals and tasks of the organization will be addressed also with an eye on the mission of the organization. At last the style of management gets attention in order to see how street-level bureaucrats are controlled. The style of management can also be connected to the type of agency. Although the street-level organization has many facets that might be of interest for this research, the main focus is on the management and the regulatory context since street-level officers are in direct contact on a day-to-day basis with these aspects.

Job-specific attributes

Job-specific attributes are defined by the activities and factors that are special for the line of work done by the particular street-level bureaucrats. Job-specific attributes differ between different professions, functions and organizations. Job-specific attributes can be described by the specific tasks for the street-level bureaucrat,

these tasks are more practical and specific than the organizational task. Also the routines developed for the specific tasks and the categorization that has been developed for the tasks are addressed here. Last the professional norms for the job are of importance here.

Although job-specific attributes might not be the most important cluster of factors when especially looking at discretionary actions, they still are the starting point for street-level actions. All actions are in a sense based on the specific tasks street-level workers have to execute. These tasks come from the policy, the organization, but also from the training and education from street-level workers.

The professional norms that are specific for the particular profession are also of importance when looking at street-level bureaucratic behavior. The norms and expectations coming from a professional education or from other professionals in the same field set a certain standard according to which street-level professionals act. The expectation of peers can especially be leading when working close together. Professional norms can be in contrast with the expectations from the organizational management.

The specific situation

The specific situation has been addressed in the literature as being of great importance for explaining street-level behavior. The macro-context consists of the institutional setting which can be seen as the political and cultural climate in which the governmental agency has to act. The institutional setting of the executed policy and the institutional context of the organization create a certain context and expectations for street-level workers. How the specific street-level bureaucracy is seen can be of influence of how street-level bureaucrats react in certain situations. This macro-context is often quite stable but can change over time and place. It is connected to the social and cultural climate in a country. Expectations about governmental agencies can be leading in how street-level workers in these agencies fill in their job and how they act in specific situations.

The micro-context where the face-to-face encounters happen are important for the completion of discretion. The micro-context are the work circumstances; the available resources that put constraints on the street-level workers, the expectations of peers, and other material and immaterial things that play a role during the work. Expectations of peers can be connected to an organizational culture and to a certain extent to institutionalization of behavior within organizations (Ricucci, 2005). These expectations create a certain perception of expected behavior and holding others account for their behavior, that it can be a regulatory force in street-level bureaucratic behavior. Professional norms play a big role in expectations of peers. These professional norms can also be in contrast to what the organization expects from their workers.

The occurring situations fill in the micro-context as well, the ad hoc situations and the client-encounters that are always different and that can sometimes hardly be categorized. Street-level bureaucrats are confronted with clients every day and they try to categorize their clients using their training and prior experiences. The demands of clients can be highly influential in the daily work of street-level workers (Maynard-Moody &

Musheno, 2000). Many street-level bureaucrats see themselves as ‘citizen-agents’ rather than ‘state-agents’ and therefore shape their perception of the work on the basis of experience with clients.

Client encounters are always different and it is often the case that street-level bureaucrats have to make ad hoc decisions. These ad hoc decisions are often influenced by the expectations of the client of the service delivered or by other factors. Ad hoc occurring situations are hard to lay down in rules and protocols because they can never be completely predicted. It cannot be said that in every ad hoc situation the client is the most leading factor, however it is expected that this will be the case, especially when looking at the research from Maynard-Moody and Musheno (2000).

Individual characteristics

The last cluster of factors is the individual characteristics, especially characteristics that are aimed at the nature of the work. Personal beliefs about the job, worker ideology and preferences towards the target group were researched by Winter and others and make up for partly explaining why street-level bureaucrats decide to act differently in some situations. Brehm and Gates (1997) argue that street-level bureaucrats are highly self-regulating and that their worker preferences and personal beliefs about their work and the service they deliver are most leading in their behavior. They also note that most street-level workers have the same ideas about the work and that this creates a coherent policy execution. However, personal beliefs and worker ideology can differ per person, and in different organizations different ideologies can be most leading. A fit between personal beliefs and organizational goals and culture may help in creating a good fit between organizational expectations and street-level bureaucratic behavior.

These different clusters and their indicators are used to look at street-level bureaucratic behavior, that exists out of the concept of discretion, autonomy, decisions, actions, coping mechanisms, and dimensions of professionalism. In the following table the different concepts and their indicators will be stated, however, these indicators are not exhaustive. They are important but there can be different factors that might explain behavior in particular circumstances.

Table 2: Main concepts and their indicators

<i>Clusters of analysis</i>	<i>Attributes</i>		
Street-level bureaucratic organization	Regulatory context: Laws, rules and protocols.	Organizational tasks & goals.	Management: higher & lower level.

Job-specific attributes	Tasks	Professional norms	
Specific situations	Macro-context: Societal context	Working circumstances	Occurring situations: client encounters
Individual characteristics	Personal beliefs	Worker ideology	Dimension of professionalism

2.5.3 Causal argument

In the introduction a causal scheme was presented which is the main assumption of this research. This scheme will be further addressed here in order to come to a better understanding of the foundation of this research and the assumptions in paragraph 2.6. The scheme implies that street-level bureaucratic behavior, the actions, decisions, and discretionary authority and autonomy can be explained by looking at different factors. In the literature different explanations could be found. These explanations sometimes contradict but they give a good picture of explanations in the street-level literature.

The differences between the scholars seem to concern differences between the organizations, the type of agency, the researches deal with. Maynard-Moody and Musheno investigated street-level bureaucrats who mostly had activities that were not visible for the management and that were harder to get down in rules. Also in the case of Riccucci's research, street-level workers had frequent unsupervised contact with clients where the management had less control. I want to stress that these researches are important for understanding how street-level workers act, but their explanations do not suffice in giving a full understanding of every particular street-level bureaucrat in different organizations. Other researches do give a role for organizational factors, such as goals (Wilson, 1989) and the management (Scott, 1997).

It seems that the organization street-level bureaucrats work in – and then especially the position and possibilities of the management and the way the organization has regulated the work, the regulatory context – is of importance in explaining why street-level bureaucrats do what they do. Street-level workers are part of an organization with a specific management and regulatory context. However, they are also professionals, doing a specific job which is shaped by different aspects such as

resources, tasks and professional norms (Evans, 2011). Besides that the specific situation can explain variation in behavior, since it can differ per client, context, or situation what is needed from the street-level bureaucrat. Last street-level workers are also individuals, different in particular aspects, their preferences, ideologies, and professional status.

The causal argument here is that the way and degree in which these clusters of factors affect variation in street-level bureaucratic behavior depends on all the different clusters of factors and how they work together. They are always apparent but which cluster is most important (in which circumstances) will be researched here. It is assumed that these cluster affect behavior and have a direct effect although sometimes strengthened or weakened by the appearance of the other clusters. There are many aspects that can help understand variety between individuals and also between different work actions of one individual. The variety is interesting but asks for explanation. In the following paragraph this will be further crystallized by formulating different assumptions derived from the causal idea that has been presented here.

2.6. Expectations and assumptions

The following assumptions will be used to answer the central question. By addressing these assumptions in the analysis, a better understanding of street-level bureaucracy and in particular the police as a street-level bureaucracy will form. The assumptions are aimed at the different clusters of factors and are derived from the literature. They are formulated in a broad sense and not particular towards the police organization, since they address street-level bureaucracy as a phenomenon. In the analysis this will be specified towards the police organization since this research is based on that particular organization.

2.6.1 Main assumption

If it is clear for street-level bureaucrats what is expected from them by the organization, there is consensus about the work and street-level bureaucrats have the feeling that they have enough professional autonomy to do their work, the differences between street-level bureaucrats are not problematic and less apparent.

It is assumed that a ‘healthy’ organization is an organization in which street-level bureaucratic behavior is to some extent institutionalized. It is not to say that every little detail is laid down in rules and regulation, however, the behavior is rather predictable in a sense that the organization knows what to expect from its street-level workers and the street-level workers know what is expected from them. In these organizations there is consensus about organizational goals and tasks and the organizational culture stimulates unanimous behavior. Street-level workers are not inclined to fall back on coping mechanisms. It is expected that in

organizations that do less to create this consensus and to reduce complexity, street-level bureaucrats are more likely to use coping strategies because that seems the only way out and the organization does not give a good framework for street-level bureaucratic action. Street-level bureaucrats do not know what is expected from them and this will almost force them to fall back on coping strategies and this creates more diversity.

This assumption can be connected to the research question in the way that it can say something about why street-level bureaucrats do what they do. It is expected that in organizations where behavior is more institutionalized street-level bureaucrats will do what they do because this is what is expected from them from the organization and there is consensus among the organization and the street-level that this is the best way to act in situations. In organizations where behavior is less institutionalized street-level bureaucrats will act according to other mechanisms, mostly derived from the specific situation. This can cause coping and from an organizational perspective, this behavior will not be seen as most favorable at the street-level. It can be the case that every situation is addressed differently and that there is no coherent policy execution.

2.6.2 Underlying assumptions

The assumption above arises from some underlying assumptions about street-level bureaucratic behavior and the influence of organizations on this behavior. The assumptions below will contribute to answering the research question and to assessing the main assumption. The assumptions will be used as an analysis tool and a guideline during the research. The data will probably confirm or counter the hypotheses; however if other interesting findings are found that contribute to answering the research question, this will not be ignored. The hypotheses will mainly be used as a perspective for looking into the research field.

(A) Street-level organization

H1: The more street-level bureaucratic behavior is institutionalized within the organization the less street-level bureaucrats use coping mechanisms.

This hypothesis is one of the core assumptions behind research into street-level bureaucracy. However, in many cases is institutionalization seen as controlling of behavior. In this research institutionalization is seen as an overall sense within the organization about what the organization stands for and what is expected from everyone within the organization. This has to do with organizational goals, tasks, culture and moreover with consensus within the organization. It is expected that institutionalization will incline the use of coping mechanisms since there will be less need for coping mechanisms. It is expected that the environment is clearer and therefore there is less need for rationalizing this environment in order to deal with it.

H2: The less the management of an organization is able to control the activities and the results of these activities of street-level bureaucrats, the more the management has to depend on professionalism of their

workers.

It is expected that the less the organization is able to control the behavior of street-level bureaucrats the more the organization is dependent on professionalism. If the organization has confidence in the professional norms of their lower-level workers and stresses this confidence and trust in their employees, it is likely that street-level bureaucrats will act according to their professional norms and according to the organizational expectation. If this trust is less expressed, then it is likely that street-level workers are more likely to fall back on coping mechanisms to make the job 'easier'. Especially if it is not easy for the organization to monitor the activities of the work and the results, coping mechanisms can be used. However, relying and trusting on the professionalism of the workers could help to limit the use of coping mechanisms.

H3: If the activities and the results of these activities are not visible, it is likely that there will be no consensus between the street-level workers and the higher management about the work (goals and tasks) and this management layer will have less influence over street-level bureaucrats.

The unpredictable environment of an organization makes it harder to establish consensus concerning goals and objectives of the work. In public organizations goals are often ambiguous and it can be hard for street-level bureaucrats to figure out what is expected from them. It can also be that there is dissension between the organization and the street-level on important things such as the goal and task of the organization. The less consensus there is, the harder it will be to manage employees and other factors will influence the behavior, such as professionalism or coping mechanisms. Ambiguity can stimulate the use of coping mechanisms. An unambiguous environment will be beneficial for both the organization and the street-level workers. The more clear it is for both parties what is expected from one another, the more behavior will be institutionalized. Certainty can foster behavior in line with expectations.

(B) Job-specific attributes

H4: If job-specific attributes are in line with the expectations of the management of the organization, there will be little differences between individual street-level bureaucrats.

It is expected that if job-specific attributes are in line with organizational expectations this will create an overall consensus throughout the organization in how to do the job. This consensus will limit the differences between individual street-level bureaucrats. The job-specific attributes create a certain environment in which the job has to be done and if this is in connection to the expectations of the organization, it is likely that it is clear what is expected from each individual street-level worker.

H5: The influence of the higher management on the content of street-level work, depends on the clarity of tasks, the institutionalization of routines and on professional norms.

The content of street-level work is constructed by the tasks, routines and professional norms. The organization can have influence on the content if for all street-level bureaucrats this is the same and it is clear what is expected from the job. If this is different for every worker within the organization, it will be harder to control the content of the job. Beside this the management will mostly be able to control visible and measurable outcomes from the job. If it is not clear what the job produces it will be harder to control the content of the job.

(C) The specific situation

H6: The specific situation will have a larger influence on street-level bureaucratic behavior if street-level bureaucrats feel more connected to the client than to the organization.

The more a street-level bureaucrat feels part of the organization, the more likely he/she will act according to organizational expectations about their work. Organizational expectations are not just formal (task, goal, mission) but also informal expectations posed by colleagues and the organizational culture. If the street-level bureaucrat does not feel part of the organization, it is likely that he or she will act according to the clients' needs or wishes. Physical and mental distance from the organization can both occur and the way in which the organization deals with this distance can influence the way in which street-level bureaucrats act. Physical distance does not always mean fragmented street-level workers working according to individual standards as could be seen in Kaufman's *The Forest Ranger* (1960). Feeling part of the organization is expected to be really important for creating unity in behavior. If street-level bureaucrats see themselves as individual workers it is likely that the specific situation is more guiding in their day-to-day activities. This can put constraints on the street-level worker but also on the organization.

H7: The more behavior is laid down in rules, laws and protocols by the organization, paradoxically, the more other clusters of factors than the organization can explain behavior, especially situational factors.

Trying to completely control behavior by defining every action by laws, rules and protocols, will not lead to more control. It is expected here that it will lead to more rigidity and therefore to coping mechanisms. Street-level bureaucrats will have the feeling that they cannot act according to their professionalism and will not feel supported by the organization. Trying to control every move will endorse a distance between the organization and the street-level worker. In order to work street-level bureaucrats need to have some room to use their professional judgment. The organization will probably benefit from some flexibility within the system. Complexity needs some flexibility and many street-level situations are complex and need professional judgment. The organization does not need to try to control this complexity but needs to create an environment in which street-level bureaucrats know how to deal with complexity and how to use their professional judgment without falling back on coping. The difference here is whether the street-level

bureaucrats have the feeling that they have to *bend the rules* or whether they use *professional judgment*.

(D) Individual characteristics

H8: Individual characteristics can foremost explain behavioral differences between street-level bureaucrats.

It is expected that individual characteristics can explain a great part of the diversity between street-level bureaucrats. Especially if all other factors are the same and there are still differences, the individual characteristics of street-level bureaucrats can explain why this occurs. However, this does not mean that individual differences are problematic in its nature and that this is in principle bad for the policy implementation and the entity of an organization. It might be needed to deliver the expected service to the clients.

3

Methodology

In this chapter the design and methodology of this research will be elaborately addressed. In the introduction this has been briefly touched but here the details of the research will be explained. First of all the research design, with the methods of data collection and analysis, and the focus of the research will be discussed. Secondly the research case – the organization and respondents used in this research – will be addressed. With this chapter I hope to give a clear view of how this research has been conducted and how in the end the answer to the research question has been generated.

3.1 Research design

3.1.1 Data collection: Qualitative methods

In order to get to an answer to the research question and the sub questions, data were collected in the field. This was done in the police organization with police officers as respondents. The precise case used in this research will be addressed in a next paragraph. For this research qualitative methods were used, in order to understand what is happening on the street-level and how the organization plays a role in this. By using qualitative methods the information needed for assessing the research question has been obtained, since the nature of the research question asks for a qualitative approach. The research is not focused on finding quantities but on stories and examples about situations and actions of the officers that can be used to understand what is happening on the street-level. By conducting interviews, observations and using documents the information needed has been gathered and a data-set has been created. The interviews and

observations are for a great part interpreted by the researcher.

Interviews

The 19 interviews were semi-structured with the use of a topic list for the researcher to use as a guiding tool (for topic list see Appendix II). During the interviews I tried to ask as much examples as possible and most respondents could give these examples quite easily. The interviews were digitally recorded, so during the interview I could focus on listening and asking the questions. Later on the interviews were transcribed and in some cases I came across extra questions that were answered through email. Informal conversations with police officers have also been used to get a good view of what is happening on the street-level. However, these conversations are not recorded and the summaries written down from these conversations do not give the exact conversation. Moreover I have written down the things that I found important for my research and the examples that I thought to be important.

In the interviews, many respondents talked about phenomena that they mostly noticed with other colleagues. Some coping mechanisms were said to be used by colleagues but not by the respondents themselves. Although this is second-hand information, this social mechanisms of signaling behavior with others but not yourself has been mentioned in social science research (Boeije, 2010; Elster, 2007) and can be used as information for social research. This research is focused on social mechanisms; “frequently occurring and easily recognizable causal patterns that are triggered under generally unknown conditions or with intermediate consequences. They allow us to explain but not predict” (Elster, 1998; 45). However, it does not look for social mechanisms in itself, it is important to keep these mechanisms in mind. The analytical approach of social mechanisms will help understand street-level bureaucratic behavior and the underlying behavioral mechanisms.

Observations

Although I did not get the chance to as many observations as I hoped to do, especially in an official manner, I did observations in the stations and the street. Sitting in once with a focus project debriefing session, sitting in twice at Plot 1000 (the information call room), sitting at the station to observe service and intake activities in total for 8 hours, were useful for getting a good picture of what is happening on the street-level and how decisions are made. I also went to one of the party areas in the centre of Amsterdam to observe the activities of the police officers there and I talked with 10 officers on surveillance duty after observing their activities in an unofficial manner, without recording the conversation. Observations were especially helpful for seeing the officers in action and understanding what they were talking about during the interviews. The observations were used as a tool to probe respondents and giving them a situation to reflect on. They could explain behavioral considerations of colleagues and themselves. This also gave a good view of how officers differed between one another.

Documents

For this research official documents have been used such as *Jaarverslag*, protocols, documentation on the *Nationale Politie* and official laws. These documents have been obtained through the organization, but also through the official website of the police. The website has been useful to find official documents about the organization and it has given a clear view of what the organization stands for. Besides textual documents I have also used some video material for the recruitment of aspirant officers, videos from the police about unsolved crimes and reconstructions of crimes. All these different sources of information have given a clear picture of the organization and the values it stands for. This could be used in comparison to the interviews and observations.

3.1.2 Data analysis

After the collection the data has to be analyzed in order to find the patterns and explanations that will help answering the research question. This research is foremost interpretative, so there will be a great role for the researcher in reflecting what is happening in the field and how this can be understood (Boeije, 2010).

With this research I will try to come to a grounded theory on street-level bureaucratic behavior and organizational influence. A grounded theory approach is mainly aimed at formulating a theory with the data as its starting point. However, the grounded theory approach does not only use the data, but also literature and previous research as a reference point. Central concepts derived from the literature are used as sensitizing concepts. This can be seen as “a theoretical framework derived from the literature [which] indicates how I will approach the research analytically. This is not to say that the framework will dictate which variables will be examined” (Boeije, 2010; 23). It gives a guideline, but during the research other important indicators might come up. The researcher can use these concepts or indicators as well, this in contrast to fixed variables. The sensitizing concepts will be used as a lens through which the field of research will be viewed. They provide a certain guideline for how to approach the data. The data will be the main element in coming to a grounded theory in the end, using these concepts. The concepts were addressed in the previous chapter and some indicators were given. These concepts have led to a topic list and an operationalization (see Appendix) that were used for the interviews but also as a guideline for the data analysis.

The data analysis has been done by using a qualitative data analysis tool, Nvivo. This program helped coding the data (foremost the interviews, the observations and documents have not all been coded) and gives an overview of the data that helps analyze and interpret the data. The codes give a summary of the data and can also quantify the results. The indicators for the central concepts were used during the data collection and during the data analysis. The indicators have been used as codes. However, during coding, other important indicators can come to the surface. These things were taken into account in order to not oversee important information. Nvivo is mainly a structuring and coding tool, the actual analysis will be done by the researcher.

I have used Nvivo foremost to structure my data in such a way that I could find the relevant data when writing the analysis. However, by using these tools, the data collection and analysis become more valid and reliable, since it gives some system to the data and it can be controlled later on what has been coded. The researcher can show what is found and on what the analysis is based, in order for others to judge the validity and reliability.

6.1.3 Focus of the research: Comparing individuals

This research is a comparative study in which individual street-level workers are compared on the basis of their behavior. In order to get a good understanding of what is happening on the street-level and why differences between individuals occur, it is useful to research one organization with different departments or locations. By researching one organization most clusters of factors will be the same for all the individual street-level workers. The job-specific attributes will be somewhat constant, since the street-level workers have to a great extent the same tasks and the same policy to execute. The situational factors can be comparable, since the street-level workers act in the same context. Also the organizational context is the same, however, the way in which the departments or locations are managed or what kind of organizational culture dominates can differ. This is interesting for the research, because organizational influence can then be assessed. In the next paragraph and to a greater extent in the next chapter the institutional features of the police organization will be addressed.

So, most factors are the same for each street-level worker. However, there still are differences between these workers which can be understood when looking at their behavior. The individual street-level workers are the units of analysis; the organization is the research context and cluster of analysis used as an explanatory concept. The research design is a most similar system design, since this can help comparing individuals and keeping the context more constant in order to find answers to the research question (Van Thiel, 2007). The research embraces a structured approach, beforehand many aspects, theoretically and analytically, have been made considered. “Structured approaches can help to ensure the comparability of data across individuals, times, settings, and researchers, and are thus particularly useful for answering variance questions that deal with differences between things” (Maxwell, 2005; 80).

This research is focused on street-level officers in the Dutch police organization. The findings generated in this research will be based on these specific street-level bureaucrats and will not be generalized to different contexts. Although the findings here might give some insights into street-level bureaucracy in its whole, the results of this research are only based on one type of street-level bureaucrats in one specific context, a specific type of agency, and I do not reckon that it can be generalized to a broader spectrum.

3.2 The case: the Nederlandse Politie

This research is focused on the police organization. In the next chapter the specifics about this organization will be addressed; however, here the organization and its street-level workers will be discussed as a unit of analysis. For this research the police is a perfect fit with the research design. First of all it is a governmental organization, that is foremost a street-level bureaucracy. It fits the concept of street-level bureaucracy and police officers are a classic example of street-level bureaucrats. The police is a uniform organization with different local departments, which can be used in order to see how the organization has an influence on the street-level workers in these local departments. There are differences between the departments, but they are still part of the organization so the organizational influence is comparable and other factors can be distinguished.

For this research the district of Amsterdam Centrum – the stations Raampoort and Lijnbaansgracht as the main stations – has been the main object of the research. Over half of the respondents (12) were employees of this district, although many have been employed by other districts or stations as well, so they were able to compare the different stations and districts. Since this research is aimed at comparing individuals with the organization as an analytical concept, other street-level officers from other parts of the organization have been interviewed as well. Multiple respondents (3) were employed by Midden-West Brabant and furthermore one respondent from Friesland, two respondents from DCIV (Dienst Controle Infrastructuur en Verkeer) in Amsterdam. Finally one retired districts chef has been interviewed, mostly on management topics. From the 19 respondents, 6 respondents had management tasks, ranging from street-level management, to head of the station. The respondents had different ages and work experience, some just got out of the academy and others had been on the job for over 30 years. The sample of respondents was rather diverse in demographic, which was important for this research in order to compare individuals and to see which factors are most influential in their behavior and which factor can explain differences in behavior between these individuals.

After the interviews with the respondents in Amsterdam, I believed that I needed a better view of the organization and differences between districts, so I tried to find respondents through a message on Facebook. 6 interviews have been organized through this medium. After interviewing these respondents it became clear that there was not a big difference in the way the respondents worked in comparison to the respondents in Amsterdam. The geographical location and local factors could mostly take account for the differences in the behavior. There were not big differences between the respondents in how they did their job, so after multiple interviews, it felt that this amount of respondents was sufficient for the research. The information saturation had reached its point and I did not get new information in the interviews.

4

Contextual framework

4.1 *The work force*

Since 1993, with the introduction of the new Police Act, the Dutch Police Force has been organized in 25 regional corpses and the nationwide force (KLPD) which is responsible for nationwide issues such as high way patrol and water way patrol. The regional corps are divided into different districts with their own district management and different teams/stations in neighborhoods. The corpses are responsible for contributing to safety and security, law enforcement, and social assistance. The precise tasks of the regional corpses will be explained to a full extent later in this chapter. The organization of the police as it is at this moment will change with the introduction of the *Nationale Politie*. The police will become nationally organized with 10 areas instead of regionally organized with 25 regions (Kwartiermaker Nationale Politie, 2011). The plans for the National Police were supposed to be implemented in 2012 but the implementation is still going on and will do this research the police was still organized regionally.

The Dutch police force existed in 2011 out of 50.587 FTE of operational work force (Schermer Voest & Schreuder, 2011). All positions with direct contact with the public or with a direct contribution to the street-level actions can be seen as part of the operational work force. Also the students of the Police Academy are counted as operational work force, since they spend 40% of their training working in the field and contributing to primary police tasks. The non-operational work force consisted in 2011 out of 12.649 FTE, a decline of 11% in comparison to 2008. The ratio of operational and non-operational is around 85%-15%.

Within the work force there is a smaller number of numbers of special groups contributing to the police. The introduction of forensic assistants has been realized with 407 FTE (Schermer Voest & Schreuder, 2011). The forensic assistants are mostly introduced for extra help in the investigation of crime scenes. The introduction of forensic assistants is an experiment and the effect has not been measured. The hope is that crime scene investigations can live up to the quality norms with the introduction of this extra assistance (Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie, 2011).

Moreover the introduction of extra neighborhood directors (or neighborhood officer as they are called in different districts) on local projects, mostly concerned with youth group related problems, has added 639 FTE to the work force. These officers are part of specific goals of the police to operate more locally and stay close to the target groups to detect problem groups in an early stage, to gather information about these groups, and to work preventive.

Also the introduction of 131 animal cops, although less than the aimed 500 animal cops, has contributed to a bigger operational work force. However, the animal police will probably be revised with the introduction of a new cabinet. Although with an average of 600 calls per week, there are enough cases for these officers, the tasks might be organized in a different way without specific officers.

Within the police there are different ranks, all with their own tasks and authority. The ranks are organized by training and most police officers can climb up the ranks by promotion after several years of service and extra training. The lowest rank is aspirant, the student officer who mostly has to operate under the eye of a superior. Then there is the rank of superintendent, then officer and then head officer. Nowadays most students from the Police Academy are trained to start as a head officer. More responsibilities and managing tasks come with the rank of brigadier. Most brigadiers have a group of police officers to manage, mostly for a certain project. Brigadiers are held account by the higher ranks such as inspectors and head inspectors. Commissars and head commissars are the highest ranks within the police. Ranks are mostly important for the accountability and responsibility structure of the police. Different ranks have different managing tasks and are responsible for different groups of officers. The function of the police officers says more about the content of their work. Right now there are 7000 function descriptions, which will be decreased to 100 function descriptions with the introductions of the National Police (Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie, 2011). Beside the ranks and functions there are different positions that say more about the actual content of the work they do. For example, within districts there is a criminal investigation team, there is a team of motor officers, bike officers, police on horseback, water police, animal cops and police working with dogs. These positions are quite often besides the normal tasks that have to be performed. Criminal investigation however is an investigating position that requires inspectors to work for this full time, whereas other positions are more sideline activities on a regular basis. The Quick Response Team (QRT), for example, is a side activity from which involved officers can get a call-up whenever they are needed. More about the specific activities of the different positions will be explained more elaborately in the Chapter 5.

4.2 The Police Act; tasks, responsibilities and authorities

As stated above, different ranks and positions have different responsibilities and authorities. However, the main responsibilities and authorities of the police as a whole and its officers in particular are regulated in the Police Act of 1993. This law regulates the actions of the police, by stating some tasks and setting some rules with which the tasks have to be executed.

The most important part of the Police Act for the work force is Article 2, stating the tasks of the police. It says: “The police has the task, subordinate to the authorized party and in accordance to the applicable rules, to care for actual enforcement of the law and to assist those who need help.” (Politiewet, 1993) This means that all police officers with an operational position have the task and the authority to enforce every law and that when help is needed they are expected to provide this. However, this task definition is broad and ambiguous and the way police officers fill in their duty depends on things like the particular situation.

4.2.1 Tasks

The broad definition of the police task in the Police Act is more specified by policies and rules from the ministry through the public prosecutor, from the municipality, or from the police through the local districts. There are many problems and crimes that need attention; however, there is always a certain focus on tasks with a main priority. In the annual report of 2011 (Schermer Voest & Schreuder, 2011) some main aspects are highlighted in the tasks of the police. The main objectives of the police are divided into four clusters; cluster I focuses on making the neighborhood safer for the inhabitants and local businesses. In order to get to this the police has to focus more on preventive work with criminal youth groups. All youth groups have to be localized and by collecting information about these groups the police has a better view of the status of these groups. Special projects such as Top600 are created to reintegrate these groups into society. Top600 is a group of mostly young males who commit the highest percentage of all severe crime. By targeting these groups, neighborhoods can become safer and these young males will not stay at the margins of society.

Besides these specific youth groups there is also a focus on high impact crime, since this has high (mental) consequences for the victims involved. High impact crime are crimes such as robbery, street robbery, breaking & entering (B&E), and violence. By focusing on high impact crime the police hopes to decline the number of crimes committed and to increase the chances of catching the suspect. For now the chances of catching the suspect of B&E are just 7%, although the chances for the other crimes are higher since these crimes are quite often witnessed (Schermer Voest & Schreuder, 2011).

The police, and especially more locally focussed teams, are also active with making an “area scan” in order to get a better picture of the main criminal activities in a specific area. By collecting as much information as possible about the neighborhood – information about criminal youth groups, nuisance, and street criminality

such as drug dealing – the police has a better view of what happens and can prevent crimes by surveilling, keeping an eye on the activities, and giving warnings. When a crime is committed and there is a clear description from a witness, the police can easier catch the suspect because of all the specific information about the suspicious people in the area.

Finally in this cluster, the focus on animal maltreatment gets extra attention. This focus however could change with the new cabinet. This shows that the focus of the police can change according to new political opinions and wishes. However, most task focuses are guided by the crimes that are most prominent and frequent at a certain time.

Cluster II elaborates mostly on an offensive against organized crime with as focus points cybercrimes and child porn. These topics have special attention since they are upcoming and the Netherlands has had some severe cases, especially with child porn. Cybercrime and child porn are often international crimes and thus need an international collaborative approach. The Dutch police tries to intensify this cooperation with other nationwide police forces to target these crimes.

Cluster III focuses on intake and service, and more administrative tasks of the police. Taking up case statements can now be done in person on the street and at the bureau, on the phone and on the internet. With every statement all information has to be written down and mutated. This is done for the records, however, this information can also be used in the future by other officers if they have to go to the same address for example. All information is put in a reporting system and this system is said to be a lot of work and not easy to work with. The police is experimenting now with reporting over the phone, so the officers on the street have less work on the administrative side (Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie, 2011).

At last, Cluster IV focuses on (the facilitators) of illegality and criminal incomers. This cluster deals with the connection of the criminal world with the legal world, where it is hard to deal with the interwoven nature of the problems.

These clusters mostly highlight some extra attention points of the police. There are other tasks such as assistance in crises or the protection of the Queen. However, these previous focus points give a good view of what the police is occupied with, especially the first cluster consists out of typical tasks for the street officers. They are expected to act on ad hoc situations where they have to enforce the law or give assistance. However, it can be said that the importance of either law enforcement or giving assistance to those who need it, can change over periods of times. Also the approach of the police changes quite often. The approach is now close to the public, visible for the public (blue on the streets) and approachable for the public. However, the specific implementation also differs between different areas. In Amsterdam-Centrum, the methods are more repressive and with a quick response to disturbance, whereas in Amsterdam-West the main method is verbal. The different stations are allowed to locally adjust policies in order to fit the context (Politie in Ontwikkeling,

2008).

4.2.2 Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the police are connected to their tasks. However, the accountability of their tasks can differ per area of responsibility. The Police Act, Article 12 states: “When the police in a municipality takes action to enforce public order and to execute the assistance task, then the police does this under the authority of the mayor.” Within the borders of the municipality or sometimes the district, the mayor is responsible for the activities of the police and can enforce the police to take particular actions.

On the other hand, the police is also held account by the ministry of justice. According to Article 13: “When the police takes action to either enforce the law or to perform tasks serving the court of justice, then the police does this under the authority of the public prosecutor, unless otherwise stated by any law.” Any time the police enforces the law, for example by arresting suspects, giving tickets for speed driving, or using camera images, they are held accountable by the prosecutor. However, it can be the case that the responsibilities of the police overlap the different responsibility areas, so the officers are held account by both the mayor and the prosecutor. In these cases there is a dialogue between the three involved parties in order to take proper action. In some cases other parties such as the Commissioner of the Queen or the Procurer General have the authority, however, in most cases street-level officers are held account by either the mayor or the public prosecutor.

4.2.3 Authorities and rights

In order to perform their task properly, police officers have certain authorities and legal tools. Police officers are allowed to act nationwide, although police officers should withhold from acting outside of their district unless the situation or law asks for this. They have to respond to the district in charge and hand over the case if this is possible outside of their district.

The police has the monopoly of using violence, although this is restricted by the law. Violence can only be used if the situation justifies this and if the goal can in no other way be reached. Violence can be used when it is proportional and preferably with a warning in advance unless the situation asks for immediate action. The use of violence has to build up by starting with the least heavy measures and building up to other sources if the situation asks for this. All use of violence has to be reported and tested for proportional and rightful use.

Other authorities are for example the right to have access to every place if this is required for assistance to those that need help. It would not be allowed to have access without permission to every place with other purposes. Moreover, police officers are allowed to search a suspects body when it is expected that this is

needed to protect oneself, the suspect or others. All these rights have to be used with moderation and with the intended goal in mind.

The Police Act regulates more than just these view highlights, however, these points are most important for those working on the street-level. It should be noted that many street-level work of the police requires authorization from either the mayor or the public prosecutor. Also many actions of police officer are regulated by these laws and institutionalized in their behavior through training, as will become clear in the next chapters. Twice a year the legal knowledge about the laws they have to enforce and their authorities is tested to keep it vivid and fresh. There are also information lines that officers can consult whenever they are in doubt whether they are authorized to take certain actions or which rights they have in a particular situation. The Police Act 1993 mostly regulates police actions, however there can be other laws that compliment this law. It should also be noted that almost all laws can be enforced by the police during the course of their job. However there are some focus points as could be seen before.

4.3 Mission and vision

In the following graphic, the mission and the vision of the police are visualized. The main mission is 'alert and subservient', this is also the slogan of the Dutch police. These two word can be read everywhere, on the uniform, the flag and the stations. 'Alert and subservient' is aimed at protecting law and order (Politie in Ontwikkeling, 2005). The goal of this statement is to institutionalize this mission in all considerations of officers on the street when taking action (Hoogewoning & Homminga, 2006). The main objective is to contribute to safety, however, the vision on this is to do this as one uniform organization, with a local to worldwide orientation, in a professional manner. The pillars that this vision builds on are the different focus points, such as information directed, locally oriented, and the signal and advising role of the police. Finally this whole structure rests on the communal biography, which means the whole force that has been trained in a similar way. This graphic summarizes the vision of the police organization well, however, as will be explained later on, this vision can be executed differently by the street-level officers.

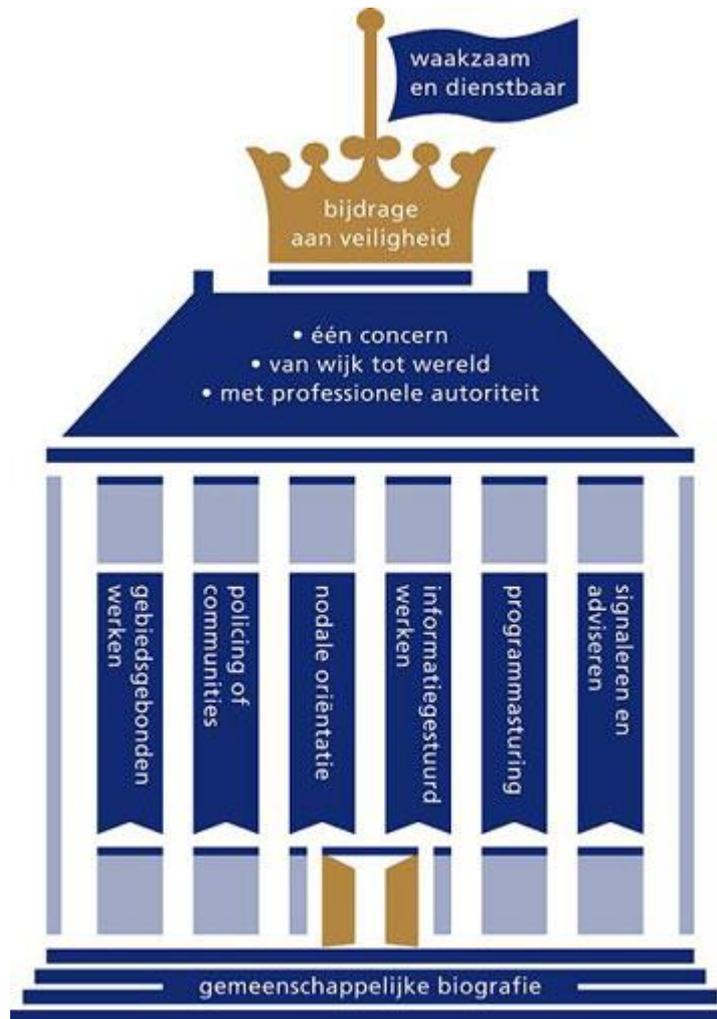


Figure 3: Mission and vision police (Politie in Ontwikkeling, politie.nl, 2008)

The mission statement has been further crystallized in the professional code, 'Code Blauw'. 'Code Blauw' has been implemented after it was stated in the code for good governance that all public governmental organizations need a code for integer behavior. This code focuses for example on transparency and integrity, proper contact with the public, effectiveness and efficiency, legitimacy, reflexive behavior and accountability (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijk Relaties, 2009). This has been further elaborate in 'Code Blauw' to make it specific to the police. One of the important notes in this code is the fact that police officers are 24/7 civil servant and that their behavior outside their work can affect their profession as well. The core value of this code is responsibility: “The police officer contributes with his work method, attitude and behavior to a positive image and results of the corps, in his professional job execution” (Van Hoogdalem, e.a., 2007; 3). Police officers have a certain responsibility towards the public to act integer and this has been stated in the professional code with seven professional values; respect, transparency, responsibility, involvement, reliability, fairness and balance. This professional code is not normative and is mostly a guideline for professional behavior and does not prescribe behavior in details.

5

Results

In this chapter the results from the interviews will be given. In the Appendix you will find a short list with the respondents and their function. The interviews were anonymous and will be used like that. In the interviews many things were discussed, however, not everything can be written down, the main important findings will be discussed here. The findings will be organized according to a differentiation of tasks and the way they are fulfilled by the street-level officers. As could be read in the previous chapter, the main tasks of the police are maintaining public order, law enforcement and assistance to those who need it. This is a broad description of the tasks and these will be further crystallized using the information from the respondents to come to a more accurate description of what street-level officers do during the course of their job. The following tasks will be specified: emergency work, local work, focus projects, criminal investigation, intake and service, and traffic control. Special attention will be paid to how the decisions within these tasks are made. The elaborate descriptions will later be used in the analysis to come to a better understanding of street-level bureaucratic behavior.

5.1 Emergency work

Many police work is highly ad hoc and unpredictable, especially the emergency calls. 24/7 the police can be reached on the emergency number 112. These calls are evaluated by the people working in the control room and will then be send to the police car closest to the emergency or when more assistance is needed to more

stations and other partners such as the fire squad and ambulances. Very diverse emergencies can be called in, ranging from a small fight on the street, robbery of a store, reanimation to domestic violence. Although most descriptions of emergencies are most often rather clear, for example an armed robbery, until the emergency car comes to the address, the officers never know what the situation exactly entails. “You can get a call that there is a robbery and the suspect has threatened the personnel with a knife. You can then come to the crime scene with the expectation that the suspect will be hard to handle, but when you are on the spot the suspect is really calm and gives the knife right away” (R11). When officers come to the scene, the first thing is to assess the situation and figure out what the situation exactly entails. “Sometimes you get a call about domestic violence, and you expect the husband to be the offender, but when you come to the house, after seizing up the situation you come to know that it is the wife who tyrannizes the husband. It is never black or white, it mostly is gray” (R3).

Some of these situations cannot be solved right that day and need to be taken into a care trajectory. Especially domestic violence can almost never be dealt with right away but requires a long term care trajectory. However, through the signal function of the emergency calls problems can be spotted and care can be started up. Some social work organization cannot detect their problem cases and the police gets in contact with these problem cases through disturbance in the neighborhood or other illegal offenses.

During emergency shifts many different problems can come to the police officers, however, sometimes there is less to do than on other days. During rides where there are not many assignments from the control room, officers mostly drive around and stop at places where for example youth groups usually hang out. Although these youth groups might not commit an offense, getting out of the car and having a chat with these boys is frequently done. Staying in contact with these groups and keeping an eye on them, can have a preventive effect or can help with future offenses or problems. These checkups can also help in making better descriptions of the members of the groups; “if I see that one has a new BlackBerry, I write this down, even though it is not an offense but it might be that his description comes out of a burglary where a BlackBerry was stolen” (R3).

However, if something truly happens, like a collision with injury, the emergency car has to drive to the scene immediately and other less important activities don't get priority. “Emergency car officers have freedom to a certain extent if there are no calls, but otherwise they are lived by the calls from the control room” (R8). The unpredictable nature of emergency work is what attracts many officers to police work. Every day is different and even if there are situations that seem similar, it can always turn or other factors come to the surface. They have the freedom to decide what to do to a certain extent, especially to decide what has priority and what delinquency should get attention. However, most situations give less freedom to act since they can be understood from a legal perspective and there are certain protocols, legislation and restrictions how to deal with it. Emergency work is highly contextual, but has to be framed once the situation is attended to. How to deal with the specific situation is dependent on regulation, protocols but also how the officer thinks the goal

can be reached best. Talking with both parties can sometimes be a better solution than suing each other when in a fight with neighbors, according to many officers.

When driving to a certain situation, although the situation can never be completely known beforehand, most officers try to be as prepared as possible when they come to the scene. “You go through the rights and authorities you have. Like whether you are allowed to look inside the trunk” (R14). When they have to do a reanimation they divide tasks between the colleagues and sometimes go in their mind through the steps. When they are called for an armed robbery, they prepare themselves in their mind for the violence they might have to use. However, if the situation changed in the time they were driving up there, they have to change their attitude as well. “If you prepare yourself to fly in the situation, to jump on top of it, and you arrive there and it is completely calm... You have to be able to adjust to the situation and take a step back” (R10).

The emergency car is always first at the crime scene, but some tasks could be done by other teams as well. Moreover, the first aid the emergency officers provide often needs further care and attention and will be handed over to different divisions. In the case of a robbery, the emergency car comes to the scene right away and talks to witnesses and gives the necessary care. However, if the suspect has not been caught this becomes a case for the criminal investigators who will use all the information provided by the emergency car to use as leads. The tasks of the emergency car, quite often, does not go further than providing first aid and a signal function for other divisions. This task, however, is very important and is seen as the 'real job' of officers, by themselves and the public. It is the action and being there at the moment that they are most needed that are of high value for this specific task.

5.2 *Local work*

As could be read in the mission statement of the Dutch police and the focus points in their year report, being close to the public is an important value for the police. Many tasks are therefore organized in such a way that the district and its officers are well-known by the residents of the neighborhood. There is a special team, the neighborhood team, that focuses on the small area of the neighborhood where the station is located in order to be close to the citizens, to be recognized by them and to know what is going on in this area. It has been stated by law that there has to be 1 officer on 5000 residents in a neighborhood (Kwartiermaker Nationale Politie, 2012). The main task of this team is to walk through the neighborhood and do surveillance, in particular on the squares and streets that are 'problem areas'. Most officers here work alone and have a particular area under their responsibility. These officers are called 'neighborhood directors'¹ in most districts in the Netherlands and have besides surveillance tasks also after-care tasks. When an emergency call has been made and the emergency car has attended the immediate situation, the trajectory that has to be started

1 Buurtregisseur

after this is the task of the neighborhood director who is in contact with all organizations that are involved in this care trajectory. The neighborhood director knows what is happening in the neighborhood and whether a particular family has had problems before, information that some social organizations lack. The neighborhood director also comes behind the front door, when in close contact with the residents of the neighborhood. “In earlier years the 'local officer'² was the guy who was drinking coffee with every one” (R4). Nowadays the neighborhood director is the spider in a whole network of partners, the person who signals the problems in early stages. If there has been a noise complaint late at night, then the neighborhood director will go to this address the next day, quite often well-known, to see what the situation is and whether it can be helped.

Especially with these after-care and signal tasks, officers do not have a lot of resources to use to help the problem. Noise complaints for example are actually not a task for the police to solve this, since they do not have any source to deal with this. It is the task of the housing corporation and the municipality to secure a good living environment for the neighborhood. However, these problems do get to the police and the neighborhood director is the one who signals this to the partners. With many problems in neighborhoods, the main problem is mostly a resident with mental issues, “who cannot live normally, like others” (R5). As long as these people refuse help and are not a danger to themselves or others, there are no valid reasons to force this person into a mental facility. The decision to remove someone out of a house and give him mental help, either in a facility or not, is not for the police to make. This decision needs to be taken by a psychiatrist from GGZ or by the housing corporation if there are reasons to prohibit residency because of the failure to pay rent or dangerous activities. “It can be the case that a person gets so many noise and other complaints, and you know that this person is crazy, but not crazy enough. They will not be put in a mental facility, and they can still take care for themselves, but they are a big annoyance to the whole building and neighborhood. You cannot do anything about that, as officer” (R5).

The group of mentally unstable persons is a big concern for the neighborhood director; however, there are also other groups that get special attention, such as youth groups. At the station of Raampoort, the whole troublemaking group of teenage boys has been mapped and every member is well-known by the local officers. As part of a bigger project have all parents been paid a visit, to get a better view of what is happening with these boys and how further criminal activity can be prevented. Their brothers and sisters are known by the neighborhood director and they try to prevent these kids from following the criminal career of their older siblings. Talking with these groups is the most effective according to many officers, especially if you do not see any criminal activity. “Letting them know that we are watching and that we know them, is a big part of the work. Give the little buggers a little attention” (R17).

Besides activities that are mostly aimed at the “worse part of the society” (R14) there is also a lot of contact

2 Wijkagent

with the 'normal' residents of the neighborhood. The police makes use of a citizen network³ that can help detect crimes in an earlier stage and that knows who to call when they need the police for non-emergent problems. The neighborhood director tries to stay in contact with these alert citizens to have some extra eyes and ears in the neighborhood. The police organizes special meetings for interested citizens, for example seminars about how to prevent breaking and entering. There were also citizen courses in Amsterdam to see how the police works and what it takes to be an officer. This created more understanding, but has been terminated since it took too much time from the prioritized activities.

Neighborhood directors have a lot of freedom within their local work. They work highly individual and can make decisions on their own. Their work is less regulated mostly because they deal less with law enforcement and more with after-care and maintaining public order. They have other tools than only law enforcement to do this and are highly dependent on their people skills and intuitive abilities. They are dependent on their partners for giving the care to their clients and to prevent problems from happening. Although there are protocols for many situations, neighborhood directors have a lot of freedom when deciding how to take action. “Last week I heard from a shop owner in my neighborhood that there was a guy dealing on the street. I knew exactly who he was, it is a little bit of a doofus. When I encountered him, he right away told me what he had done and that he was sorry. I had a good talk with him and I think this was enough and he won't do it again. I could have taken him to the station and keep him locked up for a couple of days but I think this was more effective. And he knows that if he tries it again, he will be very sorry if I get to hear it” (R4). Other methods are sometimes used because the neighborhood directors know who they are dealing with and what might be most effective in this particular case. They have a lot of tacit knowledge which they use in their actions. One side note, after six years neighborhood directors are redirected to different areas, so all this knowledge is then gone. However, it could be needed because it would not be effective or good for the integrity of the police if officers get to attached to or cultivated in a particular group.

5.3 Focus projects

All street-level officers have besides their day-to-day activities and responsibilities also a focus project⁴. A group of officers and a project leader try to attack a particular problem by making plans and organizing special activities for this particular subject. In different regions, districts or neighborhoods are different problems more apparent, and the projects are thus highly localized and specific for a certain area. The boarder districts are more occupied with drugs traffic and tourism and have thus special teams for this topic, whereas in Leeuwarden many problems can be linked to a group of Antillean persons, a different target group with a different approach. The focus projects in big crime cities such as Amsterdam and Tilburg are mostly focused on high impact crime, with focus projects for Breaking & Entering for example. Also

3 Burgernet
4 Taakaccent

criminal youth groups have special focus projects, outside of neighborhood director activities. One big focus project is domestic violence which works together with network partners.

Although every officer has such a focus project, the time that can be invested in these projects varies and can also differ per project. “I would really like to go in plain clothes on the streets to catch burglars when Breaking & Entering. I think we could catch a lot more than in uniform. But there is simply no time to start up this project, the daily business is always pressing” (R10). Project leaders get extra time to organize activities and to plan actions, but if there is an emergent situation, the focus projects will not get priority. Planning in an ad hoc environment can be hard and the focus projects need planning. However, there are also action points that can be used when in a situation that is connected to the focus project. Certain agreements are made about particular subjects, such as dealing with victims of domestic violence, and when such a situation comes by, the agreements can be put to work without planning this in advance. The effect of these agreements and how they are put to practice is evaluated in a debriefing session with the project leader. In this way the focus projects can be put to practice without special steering.

Other projects however have to be planned and steered, especially if other parties are involved such as the fire department. The eviction of a squatting house asks for preparation and agreements between different parties. It could escalate so the ME should be ready for action as well. Every officer needs to know his or her task so on the scene there is no question who is responsible for what and who is in charge when decisions have to be made. This also asks for extra man force because the other emergencies should still be attended.

Focus projects ask some creativity and inventing from the officers involved in the projects because they are expected to think about the problem and come with ideas. The project leader is in the end responsible, but the project is from all its members. There is some freedom in coming up with solutions, however, the projects are sometimes part of a bigger project or focus point from the police and in this case there will be some guidelines and a framework. Some projects are also enforced by the government, such as the control of all fire arms. Before the control of fire arms was done by sample, but after the shooting incident in Alphen aan de Rijn the government has instated a control of all fire arm license owners. The project groups that has this task has little to decide about this and just follows orders from higher up. In other focus projects however is some space for own initiative as long as this can be supported by the resources, time and regulation.

5.4 Criminal investigation

When the suspect could not be caught right away or it is unclear who is responsible for a crime, an investigation has to be started up. Victims and witnesses have to be heard and the crime scene has to be investigated. Many steps in an investigation have to be authorized by the public prosecutor, for example in

order to get the rightful access to video material. Criminal investigation requires more planning than ad hoc activities. Most often, a crime has taken place and the emergency car has taken action, by taking up the statement of the victim and giving first aid. However, after this the process of the criminal investigation has to be started up the next coming days. Steps have to be taken that might lead to the arrest of a suspect. For every step authorization is needed, such as the authorization for taking in suspects. Criminal investigators have different resources to use during the course of their job, however, these resources are restricted by these authorizations and other regulation regarding criminal investigation. “If you want to hold someone over the weekend, this might not be possible, because you are restricted by the six hour regulation. You can only hold suspects for six hours, after that you have to let them go” (R7). Sometimes these regulations stand in the way of the investigation and restrict the possibilities. The officers are rather dependent on the capacity of other actors such as the public prosecutor as well, even though they follow protocol. On the other hand, these restrictions provide suspects with a fair process and make sure that the police cannot do whatever they want. “Sometimes you have the wrong suspect, it turns out in the end, and then you are happy that there are all these rules that protect the suspects and their privacy” (R9).

Criminal investigators are mostly occupied with day-to-day criminal activities that they try to solve, such as robberies, B&E and mistreatment with violence. The public prosecutor, the mayor and the districts chief can prioritize certain cases over others. There is always a stack of cases, which case needs to be attended to first depends on the severity of the case, but also on the information that is available for the investigation. Many cases of B&E for example cannot be solved once the suspect has fled. These cases are thus quite often only attended to because of standard protocols and for insurance purposes. However, cases of severe mistreatment with video material might be better cases to solve in terms of chances of catching the suspect and solving the crime. It can also be that some incident gets a lot of media attention and is therefore a priority to the city. For example, riots in a football stadium, where the hooligans were as violent as to the point where they destroyed the cafeteria and threw refrigerators on the football field, might get special media attention and will become a priority to the city and the police. Attending this with a lot of man power can set an example for future hooligans and offenders. Catching the suspects now can also help prevent future outbreaks.

Besides these special attention investigations directed by either the public prosecutor, the mayor or the districts chief, can criminal investigators for a large part decide what cases they want to prioritize and how they will the crime investigation. The possibilities they have range from hearings to undercover observations. Especially for long term projects, the police officers are rather free in their ways of working. Although they are restricted by the rules and regulations, they do have the freedom to organize the investigation by themselves or with others. Long term projects can be large investigations into organized crime or the distribution of child porn; however, many bigger projects that are not restricted to a local area are conducted by the national police or in cooperation with the regional districts. Most police officers that are criminal investigators and that are still in close contact with the street-level are involved in local investigation projects with a more ad hoc nature, since they deal with the day-to-day crime activities that have to be solved after

they have been reported from the streets.

5.5 Intake and service

Most police stations are open to the public and function as a reporting station. For reporting crimes, complaints or stolen objects you can file a report on the scene, go to the police station, make use of their phone number or for some less severe crime reports, such as a stolen bike, you can make use of internet, digital forms or twitter. The police is working on more methods of reporting, such as 3D webcam reporting. All reports have to be taken in and put in a file. This takes time and is mostly for administrative purposes. Some complaints or statements are questionable whether they belong to the tasks of the police, such as the statement of a missing wallet or noise complaints. Many things belong to the tasks of the municipality; however, many citizens do not know that they can come with their problems to other places than the police. “Some problems you write down and take into account, but you cannot really do anything with it. They have to go to municipality with complaints about dog poop” (R18). However, these problems do get to the police and they mostly try to help these people.

In some districts the intake and service is a separate department with employees only handling the intake and service activities. In other districts this is a task carried out by police officers, when they are assigned this task for that day. The task is rather clear and straightforward and does not require a lot of input from the officers, unless there are situations that might profit from a different approach. The police officer on duty has to be sensitive and has to try to figure out what exactly happened, with a report for a crime for example. When hearing the story and thinking of the next steps that can be undertaken the intake and service might require more than just the rules. “When people report a neighborhood fight, the best steps might not be to get it to court. Talking it over and giving it to the neighborhood director might be the best option” (R8).

Intake and service is an important function of the police, although most officers see it as an administrative burden. “Making a dossier for a stolen bike takes a lot of time and you will probably never find it back” (R17). However, it makes the police approachable and the intake of reports serves other purposes such as generating information about crimes and insurance purposes for the citizens. Some tasks could be done by other organization; however, the threshold to go to the police is small since they are 24/7 accessible, in contrast to for example the nuisance complaint point⁵ in Amsterdam.

5.6 Traffic control

One of the tasks of the police is traffic control and the enforcement of traffic laws. This is done by a special division of the police in Amsterdam and in other districts by the police officers with a special tasks or motor

⁵ Meldpunt Overlast

cops. There are targeted traffic control projects, where a group of officers controls at a certain point or only targets certain offenses such as biking without light or scooter controls. When controlling at a certain point a scan reads all the license plates and gives all the information. If something is irregular, for example if this license plates still has non-paid tickets, the motor cop will be sent to stop this car. These kind of actions are planned and leave little room for the judgment of the officers at work. The officers cannot choose which cars to chase and which to let go. This is different when they are on the road by themselves or together with a colleague.

During traffic controls and on the road different traffic issues can come to the surface and need attention. It ranges from smaller offenses of red light offenders, driving without a license or using a phone while driving to bigger problems as truck load offenses and traffic accidents. On the one hand is the task to enforce the law, so giving a penalty to those driving through red or endangering other people on the road. On the other hand, however, is a part of the task also giving assistance to those who need it, for example during a traffic accident. Also organizing traffic after an accident or during events can belong to the tasks. However, most often the task of traffic officers consists out of enforcing laws by ticketing or in another way suitable for the situation.

During the training of police officers they are taught that when they encounter a certain situation they have to decide whether they will give a ticket for the offense before they actually step in. Using a cellphone while driving is illegal and, in principle, will be punished with a fine of 220 euros. However, most officers, especially in traffic situations, say that they quite often do not know whether they will write the ticket or not. They first want to see what the situation is and how the offender reacts. "I know you should not do it, but if someone gets mad because you stop them, I might give them the ticket I will not give if they are reasonable and you can warn them with a simple conversation" (R14). Police officers have discretionary authority to decide whether they want to give a ticket or not and whether they use this authority depends on both the situation, the goal they want to reach and the way they think this goal is best reached. "I think with just talking, someone will not do it in the future. But if you notice that your story does not sink in, you might grab your book" (R15).

In recent years, ticket quota were enforced by the government. Police officers were expected to write a certain amount of tickets per month. This policy was not in favor of most police officers, since they do not feel that the amount of tickets written is a measurement for the quality of work they deliver. "I am glad that the ticket quota does not exist anymore. It is a ridiculous way to control your work. When I was a student I almost failed a course because I had five tickets too little for the quota. But all the arrests I made of real bad guys did not count for the evaluation" (R13). The ticket quota do not exist anymore, since they did not enforce officers to do their job better, but rather enforced them to give tickets in situations where they would otherwise use a different tool to come to their goal, such as warning. Since the ticket quota have been abolished, a million tickets less have been written; in 2010 from January to September 8.5 million tickets

were written for traffic offenses and in 2011 this number was declined to 7.3 million (Schermer Voest & Schreuder, 2011). Fewer tickets have been written since there is more space to decide not to punish an offender. “I do not work to line the treasury” (R16).

One of the reasons to not give a ticket is the opinion about the fines. Many officers think that some fines are not reasonable and comparable to the severity of fine. “You can rather steal something in a store for the first time, 150 euros, than drive while being on the phone, 220 euros. That is ridiculous” (R13). Especially in traffic control police officers have the freedom to decide how to act and if they think a fine is not reasonable they will find other ways to punish the offender or to correct the behavior. “In the end you want people to change their behavior. And just giving tickets might not always be the right way” (R5). The fines are also rather black and white, although most often there can also be a grey area. “This grey area is not defined in the law. We can try to find solutions for this grey area. If someone rides through orange red, it is not really dangerous but it would technically be an offense. I rather let these people go and stop someone that is really dangerous for other people on the road” (R15).

5.7 Concluding remarks

In this chapter the tasks of the police are given in a simplified way. Describing the tasks of police officers can be done by these categories, however, since the work and the situation are so unpredictable and diverse, it can be that many situations are not described or some tasks are not mentioned. This chapter tries to give an overview of the most mentioned tasks and the tasks that are most typical for street-level officers. During the course of their job they encounter many different situations but in the end they also have to categorize the offense or problem they encounter to start the process of either solving the crime or helping the citizens adequately. They use their common sense and gut feeling for seizing up the situations in order to come to a reasonable trajectory or punishment. “In the end you mostly use your gut to feel whether a situation is not right. You act upon this feeling” (R12).

6

Analysis

“The amount of tickets I have written, can be counted on one hand. ... I like to solve a problem differently, with a good conversation for example.” (R7)

“I always write a ticket, unless there are extenuating circumstances I will overlook the offense. For example, if a mother drives too fast because her little boy is sitting in the back, screaming, with half a finger bleeding like hell...” (R10)

“I try to figure out the situation. If someone is reasonable, I will maybe decide not to give a ticket, just give a warning. But if that same person would go crazy because I stop him, he can get it.” (R15)

During the interviews and observations variation in behavior has come to the surface. Officers have different ways of working and often make different considerations. The examples above give a range of responses on the matter of ticketing a speed driver. Most officers belong to the third category, where they consider what the effect of the ticket is and whether the person can change his behavior with just a warning. Nevertheless, there are also officers that more or less belong to the two extreme groups. There can be found variety in how officers act during the course of their job. In this paragraph, this variation in behavior between individuals will be addressed by looking at the action level, decision-making level and discretionary level. After assessing the variation, an explanation will be searched for in the next paragraphs by looking at the different factors that might explain behavior.

6.1 Street-level bureaucratic behavior

6.1.1 Actions

Street-level officers have to deal with many ad hoc situations where they have to decide how to act in a split-second. There is often not a plan beforehand because they almost never know what the situation will bring exactly. The way they act is highly streamlined by the rules and protocols, but when they jump into a situation they do not think about the different steps they have to take. “There are many situations where you have to decide in a split second what you can or cannot do. You need to have knowledge of the law for that, but it has to be in your system because you do not have time to decide your action” (R13). These steps and the authorities and rights they have in certain situations are institutionalized in their behavior and it is tacit knowledge that they use without thinking about it. It is well-known what they can and cannot do, even though they have to act fast and step into situations where they do not know beforehand what they will encounter. There is not a lot of variation in actions in the heat of the moment. This is mostly because the actions are highly prescribed in what the officers can and cannot do.

The rules and protocols are institutionalized in the behavior, which is necessary for a safe work environment. If not all officers would know what to do a shooting, this would have severe consequences for their colleagues and themselves. It is important to know what they can expect from each other during ad hoc situations because there is little time to discuss this. Everyone should know what their task is and which actions belong to this task. It would be unworkable if officers decide to take different actions than prescribed. Action, especially the ad hoc split-second type, is highly influenced by the rules and protocols, although it is still required to seize up the situation and to see whether the prescribed action is suitable for the situation. If there is a robbery and the prescribed action is to step into the situation armed with fire arm, but the situation has already calmed down and the suspect has already been mastered by the security guards, then this action would be inappropriate and might have consequences for the case. Officers are expected to take action that is proportionate to the situation and it is hence important to feel the situation and the action that would fit to it. The actions will later on be reported and also tested whether the action was proportionate to the situation. These considerations are institutionalized in their behavior and they mostly know what the appropriate action is. If they do act inappropriate it will have consequences. Inappropriate action can be driven through inexperience or lack of feeling with the situation which can come from individual characteristics. “It can always happen that someone makes a mistake. As long as they can learn from it, it is not problematic. If someone is not reflective of his own behavior, that would be problematic” (R1).

More planned actions, such as projects, are discussed beforehand so it is clear what is expected from the officers involved and from their actions in the field. Since these are special projects, preparation might be needed because the actions might differ from the usual activities. More common ad hoc actions can not be

discussed beforehand but are sometimes practiced during training days to keep the routines and rules fresh in their behavior.

Actions concern most actions on the street, but also considerations about actions. Coping mechanisms play a big role in these consideration and can be considered as part of the level of action. Lipsky described several coping mechanisms that street-level bureaucrats use because they have to deal with little resources, ambiguous goals, and difficult cases that do not fit the policies. Street-level bureaucrats find ways to make their work easier or to find ways to cope with the restrictions and constrains they have to deal with. In police work this is also the case, especially since there are sometimes problems with the capacity and time, but also with the hard to reach goal of their organization. The coping mechanisms street-level officers use are different than other street-level bureaucrats use, mostly because they do not stand in close contact with the client and cannot husband resources or change things in this manner. They use coping mechanisms that have more to do with letting things go and not being able to attend all problems that they might do. This is mostly because of capacity problems. As Lipsky put it: "They organize their work to derive a solution within the resource constraints they encounter" (83). Coping mechanisms cause some variety in actions, in comparison to how officers would normally act. There are also differences to what extent the mechanisms affect individuals.

In most stations there are enough police officers to do the main job and to fill in the main positions. This is not always the case. When stations do not have enough capacity they sometimes get officers from other stations as is the case with the Lijnbaansgracht. At Raampoort they have to cope with capacity shortages, especially during the weekends because many officers are redirected to the Lijnbaansgracht to help with the party areas. This has consequences for the officers at the Raampoort, because they do not have back up for all calamities. They have to take this into account when they are on the street and might hence decide not to take a certain action because they know it will take longer before there will be back up from another station. "Sometimes I have to be smart and decide not to act and wait for back-up. In the end I am just a girl, I cannot handle a big bad guy on my own. But if there is no back-up you have to let it go, sadly. Own safety first" (R3). Other officers might be less affected by little personnel: "When I am alone, I also step into a situation, even though there might be no back-up close by. But I can handle it myself and do not want to let the case go because I have to wait for back-up" (R12). The street-level officers have to deal with this capacity constraints but also modify their concept of their work. They try to find different solutions or estimations of the problem. Things become less important and other things will be prioritized in order to achieve the objectives of their job.

Little capacity means that some projects cannot be done, because there is no man power and time free to take these extra tasks. These projects can be preventive and often have a great effect on a certain criminal activity in a certain area. But the pressing day-to-day cases demand direct attention and man power, so these extra projects sometimes cannot be executed. "There is just no time or capacity! I would really like to spend more

time on this than picking up a shop-lifter” (R10) Street-level officers have little freedom in choosing their cases, because they are most often directed. Nevertheless if they have the task of surveillance they have this freedom, they can choose to let one thing go and go for something they find more interesting. Most police officers are more interested in the more exiting cases, so they will try to get to these scenes and let the more routine less severe cases go, such as noise disturbance. But if they get the assignment to go to a certain scene, they have to obey this.

As mentioned before, the goal of police work is hard to reach, subjective, and rather ambiguous since multiple actions can lead to safety. The goal of police work concerns so many aspects that there is always work to find for street-level officers. It can always be safer and street-level officers can always take more actions to make it safer. They have to let some things go, not every cyclist is a danger for the safety on the road. There are always laws that are trespassed, so police officers can always find something where they could take action. They look for the most severe and pressing matters and let some other minor things go. There are differences in what they find important. If you would use one of Lipsky's coping mechanisms, they cream their activities and only do the ones that they find worth the effort (or those that are assigned to them).

Street-level officers also use some coping mechanisms to make their work more practical. Some rules are rather cumbersome and they try to make their work easier by working around these rules. This can sometimes be foremost beneficial for the situation and sometimes it is mostly more time efficient or practical. The rules that they then bend concern in most cases different steps in a process laid down in a protocol. They will skip some steps or do some steps later on because this is beneficial for the process. “Some things can be done way faster. So you try to find a way around the process” (R2). Although it is not allowed, making the process more practical is mostly understood by the superiors and does not have severe consequences. The superiors in the police organization are aware of some of the cumbersome processes. It is thus a focus point to improve the police work by making some processes more flexible (Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie, 2011).

Coping mechanisms will always be used in work situations where not everything can be prescribed and some situations have a different context that ask for a different action. Coping mechanisms make the work more practical and suitable for the officer, but quite often also for the client. The organization can have influence on the use of coping mechanisms, with the police this is mostly through the rules and protocols, but also through the professional norms. Officers know what is expected from them and where they have the space to do their work a little differently than is prescribed. The police organization has an accountability structure that helps the lower managers with the control and that causes officers to act according to rules because they know that it will have consequences if they do not. It is important that officers of the police act according to the rules and expectations because they have a lot of power from which citizens are protected by these rules. Their behavior becomes predictable, but the public also expects officers to be sensitive to the context so

through coping mechanisms and discretion officers can answer to this expectation. “Citizens sometimes do not understand why some things take so much time. And I understand why they would think that, so where possible I try to match their expectations” (R18).

The limited resources and ambiguous goals have different effects on street-level officers. Most officers try to be practical about it and let the specific situation be guiding in their actions. Although many actions are according to the prescribed rules and there is only some variation in the actions of street-level officers, there are still differences and moments where street-level officers have to cope and where their actions vary between officers. Their actions are quite often not visible for the managers and differences in handling situations are not always known, unless the officers themselves ring the bell if the differences are alarming. “Once an officer had a fatal accident with an important person in the car. Back at the station some colleagues told me that he always drove quite dangerously. They never corrected him and I did not know about it. But I never drive with him” (R1).

6.1.2 Decisions

Most decisions are highly prescribed and captured in different steps that officers have to follow. There is little variation in the eventual decisions of street-level officers, especially if there are normal circumstances and it is clear-cut and highly prescribed what the particular case would demand in consequences. There are also situations where the decision to act is not taken by the street-level officer but by their superiors or management. There are protocols and rules of how decisions have to be made and in many cases is the decision whether for example a suspect will be arrested not in the hands of the street-level officers. The public prosecutor is leading in many decisions, either literally where the public prosecutor makes the decision or in a sense that officers decide according to what they know would be correct in the eyes of the public prosecutor, following the rules and regulation. Decisions are always recorded so there is less room to bend the rules, only when this can be explained. “In most cases you do not really have a choice. You cannot let a shooter go because he is so nice” (R11). Officers are held account for their decisions by their superiors, the public prosecutor, or the municipality. There is a control mechanism through these accountability structures and through the strict rules and protocols.

However, when officers have the feeling that a certain decision does not fit the situation, they try to find a way to bend a certain decision that is prescribed. For example arresting the suspect in a case of domestic violence is prescribed in protocols, but in some cases the situation has already calmed down, the couple is sober again and arresting the suspect would not fit the situation and will give a lot of administrative and legal consequences. “Sometimes acting just according to protocol would be too rigid and does not fit the specific situation” (R2). In these sort of cases, where the decision does not fit the actual situation, officers try to explain and convince the public prosecutor that their decision is better for the case and will have the same effect but with better conditions for the people involved. There is variation in the consideration or what

officers find special circumstances, as could be seen in the citations in the begin of this chapter. Many decisions are mostly based on a gut feeling, coming from experience, professional norms, or an ethical sense. The same situations can still differ in what decisions are made, because of the context or the type of people involved. As long as the decision can be explained and the public prosecutor or the manager understands this decision and agrees with the trajectory, there is not a problem with other types of decisions. However, sometimes these decisions are not understood and this will either have consequences for the officer's job or the officer will get a lecture in the hope that they will learn from their mistakes.

6.1.3 Discretionary behavior

Discretion is one of the most important characteristics of street-level bureaucrats. Discretion is inevitable to their work because not every situation can be laid down by rules and not all behavior can be captured. There are always contextual factors that can make a situation different so that the rules cannot completely apply and the street-level bureaucrat is inclined to make a decision best suitable for the situation according to him or her. “A public officer has discretion whenever the effective limits of his power leave him free to make a choice among possible courses of action or inaction” (Davis, 1977:4). Davis sees discretion as something that can be controlled and can be either present or non-present. Others, however, see discretion as something inevitable and always present within the rules.

In the case of the police, the organization has tried to control discretion through the regulatory context by prescribing in which situations officers are allowed to decide action on their own. The discretionary authority that police officers have is highly regulated and it is prescribed in which situation it can be used. “I use my discretionary authority daily as neighborhood director. Always with all the rules and agreements in mind though” (R4). Discretionary authority is mostly allowed in situations where the officers have to either give a ticket or they have the discretionary authority to decide not to punish the offender with a ticket. These decisions are made in the field and the organization has not a lot of control over the situation and expects their employees to be able to use their discretionary authority in such a way that the punishment is suitable for the offense and that in severe cases the officers know what the best action is. The use of discretionary authority is trained and is to a certain extent controlled by the professional norms that are institutionalized in the organization and in the behavior of street-level officers.

Nevertheless, there is also behavior that is not captured in the discretionary authority but is still discretion that is inevitable in street-level work. Although the behavior of street-level officers is highly regulated and captured in rules, every situation is different and the organization cannot control every movement of their employees. This is called autonomy. Street-level officers sometimes let a case go, because they think it is not as important or severe. They close their eyes for some offenses because they think the offense is not as harmful and a warning can suffice. For example a neighborhood director who only gives a warning when he sees one of “neighborhood nuts” (R4) sell drugs on the street, is not acting according to the rules. The

managers, however, do not have control over these cases especially if the officers decide not to act. There will be no records of the cases where officers decide not to act so the organization has not a clear picture of the specific fulfillment of the work. Although most officers decide not to act because they think this is better for the situation, it can be said that sometimes laws are not enforced as they should. This mostly happens in situations that are not as clear-cut or severe. With severe offenses officers feel obliged to follow the rules because of the consequences, the professional norms, and the expectations of their colleagues.

Discretion is for a part captured and regulated by the organization, but this is only for the discretionary authority and not for the discretion that is inevitable in the work of street-level bureaucrats and the autonomy that street-level officers have during the course of their job. This discretion is led by the specific situation and the context of the situation. Every situation is different and officers have a sense of what they think is good and right. This sense comes from their personal beliefs, but also from their education and the professional norms from the organization. "Sometimes you just feel that different action is needed. We are also trained to be sensitive to certain situations" (R17). There might be some differences between officers in how they would solve a certain situation, because they are more accustomed to using certain methods or they have a slightly different working style. Nevertheless most street-level officers have the same idea about what the organization stands for and what good behavior is, so the eventual interpretation of their job, discretion, and the decisions they make in certain situations have the same intention. "There are always differences between colleagues in how they handle things. I think others might be a little stricter sometimes. But you have the same goal in the end and you are all professionals" (R16). They all work towards the goal of safety and although they might prefer a different work method in some situations they mostly understand their colleagues' considerations to do certain things. The institutionalization of the rules and professional norms coming from the organization makes that discretion is mostly filled in the same. Individual characteristics can account for the differences in behavior.

With discretionary behavior you see the most variety in behavior, especially since this behavior concerns cases that are not laid down in rules or protocols. It concerns special circumstances and many officers have different ways to deal with this. Some officers find other things special circumstances or have seen so many different cases in their career that through experience they better know how to classify a situation. For them there are less special circumstances, although they do still try to see every situation as a new one. Concluding it can be said that in normal circumstances there is less variety in how street-level officers act, because the situation fits in the prescribed rules and protocols. It makes the work more predictable for colleagues, managers, and citizens. Special circumstances do not fit in the prescriptions and different action is needed. Discretionary authority is freedom in some selected cases, prescribed by the organization. The judgment of officers how and when to use this authority can vary. The biggest variation, however, can be found in the discretionary autonomous behavior which is invisible for managers and which cannot be prescribed or controlled easily. It is the professional freedom to act according to other norms than just the prescribed rules.

6.2 *Street-level organization*

As has been stated in Chapter 4, the organization of the Dutch Police consists out of 25 regions and over 50.000 employees in the operational work force. It is a big organization with regional and local differences, however, the police is mostly organized the same. A part of the organization is the Police Academy where police officers are trained to bring their profession into practice. During the training, aspirant police officers are required to do internships through which they learn how to put their education into practice and where they can learn what the organization stands for in a real work environment. “Although the academy tries to prepare you for the work, in practice it is always different. You learn most in the field” (R3). From the start of their education police officers are embedded in the organization; its mission and goals are institutionalized in their behavior from the beginning. Everyone working in the operational force has had the same education to a certain extent and this education is part of the organization. We will see that this is important for assessing variety in the behavior of street-level officers because the institutionalization of rules and professional norms through the education plays an important role in this variety.

6.2.1 *Regulatory context: rules, laws and regulations*

The police is part of the ministry of Justice and Security, as an executive body they have the task of law enforcement and maintaining public order. These tasks are strictly organized and restricted by the Police Act 1993, as could be seen in Chapter 4. The organization is highly bound by rules, laws and regulations. Although the core task is to enforce the laws, this core task is restricted. The daily activities of police officers are highly organized by different rules, which mostly offer a guiding tool that helps police officers to perform their job in a rightful manner. There are different rules that can be distinguished, on different levels of the work and different parts of the process. They can explain in different ways why street-level officers act in a certain way, especially when there are normal circumstances.

First of all there is the law itself that has to be enforced. For example when a bad guy breaks into someone’s house and steals a TV, this is breaking a law. The police has to try to catch the offender; enforce the law. Most of the activities of the police exist of law enforcement, so this is highly structuring in how they do their job and how the organization is shaped. The organization provides its employees with certain resources and means to do the job. However, these resources and methods are restricted and streamlined by other laws and regulations, such as the Police Act and more specific protocols. It can be said that the laws that have to be enforced are the *WHAT* of the organization, the regulations around the behavior of the organizations employees are the *HOW* and the more specified codes and agreements are the *WHEN* (in which situation, which area and which timeframe). So the *WHAT* entails all laws that have to be enforced by the police, so all criminal offenses that are described in the Penal Code. There are some laws that are enforced by special investigation teams, such as organized crimes or the distribution of child porn. The laws that are enforced by street-level officers are mostly the ones that can be seen on the street or are reported by citizens, such as robberies, maltreatment or domestic violence.

It has to be stated that besides the law enforcement task of the police, there is also the maintenance of the public order. In these cases there is not always a law that can be enforced, but there are agreements with the mayor that these cases have to get attention and have to be redirected to the right organizations. For example noise disturbance of mentally ill residents can be a big issue for the co-residents; however, noise disturbance cannot be punished by the police. It can be punished by the mayor or by the housing association, but the police has to handle these situations because they signal these problems and the complaints. The agreements that are made about these cases are leading, but it cannot be said that this is law enforcement. However, maintenance of public order belongs to the *WHAT* of the police organization.

The *HOW* consists out of all rules and regulations that organize the organizational behavior on the street-level. The behavioral restrictions are quite often formulated by the organization or by the ministry of which the organization is a part. “Some things you just cannot do, it is the law. I cannot go into someone’s house without permission” (R19). So it can be said that the Police Act is a law that models the behavior of the organization and its employees. It states *how* the work can be done and what police officers are expected to do and how their work is restricted. As stated before, the Police Act shapes the behavior and it makes it very clear for every officer where the boundaries are of their possibilities and where their obligations lie. Besides the Police Act – which is quite broad, does not say much about specific situations, and is more an overall code for the behavior, for authorities and responsibilities – there are multiple other organizational rules, codes and regulations. For example *Code Blauw* entails moral codes and expectations about the behavior of police officers. Although it has been written down, the values on which it is based are also educated and carried out during the training. “You just know what is expected from you and which things are not done. A big swastika tattoo on your forehead would not be smart. You are wearing an uniform, you have to think about that!” (R9) Most officers know what is expected from them by the organization since these values are embedded in the organization and are not only rules that have to be followed but it is a mindset that is institutionalized throughout the whole educational trajectory and later within the station and during extra courses.

Besides these more overall behavioral guidelines, there are also more specific regulations, mostly in the form of protocols. In protocols the different steps and expectations for a certain event, calamity or situation are stated and they have to be followed (for example the protocol on arms and munition, 2011). Most often the protocols are created by the Ministry of Justice and the police officers are held account by the public prosecutor if they do not follow the regulations from the protocols. The protocol for domestic violence for example states that the suspect always has to be arrested, even though the victim might not file a declaration. In the protocol it is also stated that if there are children involved, youth care has to be alarmed. Sometimes these protocols might not fit the situation best, but in most cases you have to follow the protocols as an officer. “Only if you have really good reasons and can explain these reasons, then you can bend the rules” (R2). If the situation would profit from a different approach, authorization has to be given by the public

prosecutor. Most protocols are well-known by the police officers and they follow the different steps automatically. Some protocols, however, are less practical and are easier overstepped or bend, such as the protocol on obtaining video material. In order to be allowed to look at video material of for example Holland Casino where someone paid with a stolen pass, the officer in charge has to get authorization by the public prosecutor to look at these images. However, in almost all cases the public prosecutor will authorize the request. This knowledge makes officers keen to get the authorization after they looked at the video material, because in most cases they can look at the material right away and the chances of catching the offender are higher if they skip this time consuming step in the process of getting authorization. Although the authorization can almost always be required afterwards, not following protocol can have consequences for the prosecution since this can be held against the officer in charge by the lawyer of the suspect and the whole case can burst on a technicality, as it is in the eyes of most officers. It can be said that most protocols are there to make the work of police officers predictable and streamlined and it protects citizens from the power the police has if their behavior was not bound by some rules. "It is good those rules exist, because if you follow them you know what you do is correct" (R7).

Last there are the rules that can be said to be the *WHEN*, rules that organize behavior according to situation, area and time. These rules are mostly very location specific and are made by the stations or by the district. They are often called working agreements and entail different agreements between the station and its street-level employees about how to act in certain situations and with certain target groups. "They are in principal agreements about what the regional partners think to be necessary and feasible within the framework of the national goals, and where necessary supplemented with regional agreements" (Burger, Hoogewoning & Merten, 2004). For example a working agreement from the station Lijnbaansgracht is that in the party areas the working method is more strict and that suspects and agitators have to be evacuated from the area as quick as possible in order to maintain public order. This is a different approach than in other areas and also during other time periods. Only on the party nights this working agreement holds, on different nights there is less police available for the party areas and officers are expected to use a different approach when they encounter a problematic situation. The organization has adjusted its capacity for this working agreement, so on the weekends there are more officers available in the party area but also inside the station to make up the arrests for the suspects as quick as possible.

Although these work agreements might not have hard consequences if they are not followed, it is expected by the head of the station that you will follow these agreements. Especially on hectic nights in the party area it is important to have uniform behavior from the officers at the scene to not complicate situations and to have a safe and clear working environment. "Everyone needs to know what is expected from them otherwise it will be chaos" (R6). Working agreements streamline the actions and the working environment and make the actions of all officers predictable for the colleagues on the scene. Since a lot of work is ad hoc and unpredictable, it is important to make agreements beforehand about the approach and expectations from one another. However, working agreements are easier to bend because they have no legal consequences if not

followed. So if the situation should be approached differently than the working agreement prescribes, it is easier to take account for a different approach if you can explain the chief why you choose to act like this.

The regulatory context is applicable for all police stations and officers in the Netherlands. Also the rules that streamline and bind the behavior within the organization – especially the Police Act and moral codes that are institutionalized from the beginning of the education of the police officers – are applicable to the whole police organization. These rules however are less specific than protocols that state clearly what behavior is expected. The protocols should be applied in all situations and stations, however, street-level officers are more inclined to bend these when another approach is more practical or better suited for the specific situation. All these rules, laws, regulations and protocols are pretty strict and are applied to the whole organization, whereas working agreements are more specified agreements or rules for specific situations. Since they have no legal consequences when not obliged, the status of these agreements is slightly lower than the other rules, however, they do organize the work of the street-level officers and are important for the working environment. There are differences in how street-level officers handle rules, some officers are more inclined to work around it for practical reasons. Overall the regulatory context limits variety and can be considered as the everyday working conditions that have to be followed. Especially in normal circumstances the regulatory context creates clarity, predictability and security in the activities of officers.

6.2.2 Organizational tasks and goals

As could be read in Chapter 5, there are different tasks the police organization is concerned with. One of the biggest problems of the tasks of the police organization is the fact that it can be somewhat unclear what belongs to their tasks, as stated in the Police Act 1993. As a reminder, it says: “The police has the task, subordinate to the authorized party and in accordance to the applicable rules, to care for actual enforcement of the law and to assist those who need help.” The basis teams, the officers on the street, are the main executors of these organizational tasks (Kwartiermaker Nationale Politie, 2012). Most officers know this by heart and try to incorporate this in their behavior. However, sometimes it is hard to distinguish whether certain problems belong to the police or should be allocated to other parties. “We get calls of which I think: this does not belong to the task of the police! But you still have to do something with these calls” (R13). This is especially the case with the second part of the task description where it is stated that police officers have to assist those who need help. This can quite often be done by other partners, however, if they are not on the scene right away the police has to act conform their task. The tasks can sometimes clash with the goals as well. Most officers call their main goal securing safety for the public and caring for safety and security.

An example to show how the tasks and goals can clash comes from the videos the police uses to recruit aspirant police officers. In these videos a situation is shown and then the question is asked what the correct action is in that specific situation with multiple answers you can choose from (Source:

screenjezelf.kombijdepolitie.nl). There is one situation where an officer gets a call from an accident with injury. You hear that the ambulance has been alarmed but you come to the scene first. The question is what the appropriate action is in this situation. The options are (a) "I start helping the victims right away", (b) "I provide a safe situation and barricade the road" or (c) "I focus on the cause and secure evidence". The right answer is B, although one might think that helping those who are in need would lead to answer A. The other answers are not false because those tasks have to be done as well, but the order in which is of importance. Providing a safe situation has a higher priority and officers need to know in which order the tasks have to be executed in order to create a safe working environment.

The organization regulates the tasks for police officers by all the rules and protocols and it is therefore for most officers clear what is expected by the organization from them. There is not a lot of freedom to act differently in most situations because the actions have been prescribed. There is some freedom in how street-level officers can fill in the process or how they decide what has first priority. However, in most severe situations such as a shooting the behavior is so prescribed that all tasks are well-known and will not be executed differently because of the consequences this has for the safe work environment. The tasks are clear cut and the execution of the tasks has been trained during the education and later on through experience but also through extra training days. Tasks are highly institutionalized in the behavior of officers. If you ask officers how they know what to do, they usually say that they just know, that it is intuition. It is expected that officers act the same in similar situations. Especially if they work together it is important that they know what to expect from one another. Although there might be some little differences between officers in how they deal with certain situations, this is more the case for situations where there is no clear action or protocol and there is the specific notion of discretionary authority which is for example the case with traffic control and tickets. In situations that are prescribed, it can be said that most officers act the same and the tasks are clear and institutionalized in the behavior. Goals at the other hand are less clear than these tasks and might not be interpreted the same by every officers because they are more abstract and less institutionalized in the behavior of the officers. Although most officers agree that the main goal of their work is securing and caring for safety, it is such an abstract concept that the interpretation of this might differ. You see this especially in the working methods officers use. Some are more inclined to use force to reach their goal, where others use more verbal tactics to reach the same goal.

Wilson and Lipsky both emphasized the importance of goals. Wilson declared that when goals are vague, circumstances become important. The situational imperatives become more important in steering behavior, especially if goals are ambiguous. In the police organization the main goal is safety, which is well-known by all officers, however, since it is hard to picture safety and work towards it because it is hard to measure. There are some ways in which municipalities and the police try to measure safety in neighborhoods, for example by using the Monitor, a questionnaire that tries to measure the feeling of safety in a neighborhood (CBS, 2011a). However, these type of measurements are highly subjective and the feeling of safety can differ between people. It can also be said that a neighborhood can always be safer, there is no ultimate safety.

In his book on the utopia of safety, Boutellier explains that safety has become a policy puzzle of this era and the police is confronted with the tendencies towards risk aversion in this society (Boutellier, 2002).

Officers start to define safety by situations they associate with safety in order to create some clarity. The circumstances and different situations together become the concept of safety, so the higher goal is divided into different more observable pieces. The interpretation of what safety is can differ between individuals and seems to depend for some part on the function of the specific officer and the frame of reference of this person. Although the goal of police work might be ambiguous, it is carried out through the tasks and is embedded in the behavior of street-level bureaucrats through the education. Still it can be said that some officers find other things unsafe and connect different actions to creating a safe neighborhood or situation. “I think something is safe if everybody has cooled down, where other colleagues might think it is safe if everybody is handcuffed. It has to do with their experiences and work methods” (R7). The notion of safety is to a certain extent personal as can also be seen in the safety researches in neighborhoods. It is subjective and hardly measurable as stated before, so it is also a goal that can hardly be reached. Thus, the behavior of street-level officers is moreover steered by the day-to-day ad hoc tasks that contribute to a safe environment. Circumstances are more important than the unclear vision of a goal. “You just look at the specific situation and what has to be done right there and then” (R17).

Besides the overall goal of safety and security, there are also some sub goals and missions as could be seen in Chapter 4. The sub goals 'one organization', 'from neighborhood to world' and 'with professional authority' make the concept of safety more visual and these sub goals can be brought to practice more easily. They are more practical and by giving such focus points for the behavior of officers, there is a guideline for how to act and what is expected from them when working towards safety. Also the mission of 'alert and subservient' gives some direction of what is expected and how to aim at safety. In the interviews I noticed that these values and goals were really embedded in the officers' stories about their work, but not specifically mentioned.

The overall task and goal of police work is clear for officers and they carry out the same sense of what the organization stand for. This is quite often also guiding in their behavior. “You have to enforce the law and help those in need. So you cannot just close your eyes for crime. I cannot do that in my free time either” (R10). Although some officers use different methods to reach the same goal, the goal creates mostly unity in their behavior. Their actions might differ slightly but their decisions usually match the overall goal. Actions usually match the tasks. In cases where officers act differently the ambiguity and unclarity of the goals and tasks play a role. The less clear the work the more room for own interpretation. “Sometimes you have to think of an own solution because you are working alone. You do what you think is best. And in the end it is usually the right solution” (R7).

6.2.3 *Management*

The management aspect of the street-level organization will be addressed by first discussing the conditions under which the different management layers have to work. This will be done by assessing the type of agency. The type of agency has consequences for how the agency is managed and the overall management strategy. The overall management strategy of the Dutch police can be found in different year reports and their website is a good source as well. After discussing the type of agency I will zoom in on the lower-level managers that are in direct contact with the street-level officers.

As Wilson stated the way the work is done by the operators and how this is managed depends highly on the type of agency. The police is an organization that is highly hierarchical and many activities are organized according to this hierarchical order. The visibility of the activities is low, especially for the higher managers in the organization that do not come into the field. It is more visible for the head chief in the station, who comes in the field with his subordinates from time to time and who has more experience in working in the field himself. Although the actual outcomes of the activities might not be seen by the higher management and quite often also not by the lower management, all activities are recorded and mutated, so it can be visible what has been done by the employees in the field. “I can read the report whenever I want to control my officers. I almost never do that though” (R6). However, not all activities can be written down, especially not softer activities that have no legal follow-up, such as surveillance or a chat with a youth group. This is not mutated, but it is a big part of the activities of police officers. It is not clear what the effect of these activities is, so these are not taken into account when looking at the activities of police officers.

At the other hand, the visibility of results is also low. This is mostly because it is hard to measure police work and it is especially hard to measure the goal of police work, safety and security. The activities of the police that add to the feeling of safety have a broad range and many are not easy to measure. The way the results of these activities are being measured and controlled is quite often by counting the numbers. The numbers of arrests, the number of B&E, the number of police officers on the streets. If the number of B&E goes down in a certain area because there was more police, this can be seen as an effect. However, in another area there might be more B&E than before, the problem has shifted. This is called the waterbed effect, where crimes shift from one part of the city to another. It can be said that in the one part it has become safer, but in another part it has become unsafer. It is also hard to credit the activities of the police for this result, because there are many other factors that could be responsible for the numbers that go down. For example street lamps that have been fixed in a certain area.

So the result of many activities are being measured by looking at the amount of arrests. This number is used by the management – the ministry and municipality but also the district and the stations – to locate problems and steer the work force in a certain direction. The focus of the police activities can shift because of these measurable results. For example, after the introduction of the registration of domestic violence, the numbers kept rising and a special focus group was formed to target this problem. This problem, however, existed in

earlier years as well, but the numbers were never accumulated and therefore the problem was not countered. This can also be said for the ticket quota; the numbers of tickets raised so it seemed that the actual offenses were also rising. “The numbers do not represent the actual work” (R2). It seems that these numbers were higher because of the obligation to get to a certain number. Wilson pointed to this flaw of managing organizations by only measuring the observable outcome and output and thus forcing operators to produce only these outcomes. This especially happens when there is a low visibility of results as is in the police organization. However, in an evaluation of performance measures in police work conducted by Burger, Hoogewoning and Merten (2004) they stated that the assumption that police work is too complex to measure is not true for all tasks of the police. They state that for example performance measures of arrests do contribute to the goal of these tasks, namely behavioral change within the public. On the other hand they also address one of the problems of focusing on rising the numbers in police work. The police is often dependent on other partners, since the output of the police work is input for the public prosecutor. Measurements should match the available capacity within the organization itself and the organizations connected to the street-level organization. “In the weekends you cannot call the public prosecutor so arrests have to wait sometimes” (R7). Withal they also encountered situations where the numbers did not contribute to a higher quality of work and moreover to reaching the numbers, but in the end they must conclude that it is especially the image of performance measurement for the police in the media and the public is more negative than the actual effects.

Combining the low visibility of results and the low visibility of activities, the police organization seems to be a coping organization. However, coping organization should be managed by trusting on the professionalism of the employees to act with freedom and according to the professional standards they have inherited through their education and experience. This is not completely the fact in the police organization, which is to a certain extent more managed like a production agency where the activities can be laid down in rules, laws and procedures because it is clear what the activities are. By laying down the activities of police officers in rules, these activities become more clear and streamlined and thus better controllable. It is clear what they will do in certain situations because this is written down in rules and protocols. These rules and protocols are institutionalized during the education of the police officers, so it could be said that by inheriting these norms, the police officer is prepared to act accordingly in a professional manner. “They are professionals and I trust them. There are always officers that need a little more guidance, but with most officers I expect that they know what they are doing” (R1). Especially since their activities cannot be controlled when they are on the streets, it is important that their behavior is to a certain extent predictable and according to organizational rules. So, because of the education that is part of the organization, a control mechanism and management mechanism is integrated in the training. The professional norms on which the organization is highly dependent are institutionalized in the behavior through the training and later on through the organizations culture and expectations. The rules and regulations regarding their behavior could be seen as a tool to manage a coping agency, but it is also part of the work of the agency and important for making the agency's output predictable and transparent for the public. Officers also write reports about every action they take which makes their behavior controllable by the organization. It should be said however that especially the

higher management layers of the police are inclined to mostly look at the numbers and less on the subjective results and more softer approaches that might bring many positive outcomes even though this cannot be put in numbers. “Some things cannot be written down in numbers, but I believe that those activities have a large effect. But I cannot prove that with the numbers” (R15). The preventive effect of police work can hardly be laid down in numbers, but this is still stimulated by the higher management levels and moreover by the management closer to the street-level.

Wilson's distinction between the different agencies gives a good tool to look at street-level organizations. It can be said, however, that governmental agencies – the police just alike – have multiple layers and management levels and that within organizations there can be therefore different types of agencies. Although it might seem that the police is foremost a coping agency, especially from the view of higher management, one should not forget that there are many managing operators that have to guide their subordinates all the same, but might depend on different control and management mechanisms.

Addressing the type of agency clarifies how the management works in such an agency. The type of agency might not directly be able to explain why there is variety in the behavior of the operators but it helps understand how the organization works and under which conditions operators have to work. For the police it becomes clear that although many activities and results are invisible, the organization has found a way to control the operational level with the regulatory context which limits differences.

As said before, there are different layers of management in the police organization that use different mechanisms and focus points. According to most officers the higher levels mostly focus on the numbers that are mutated by the officers and make policies focusing on these numbers. This is mostly noticed by the street-level officers and their superiors by the fact that focus points shift or tasks change. “If the government finds something important, like being more strict, we notice that. We get a memo and have to implement that” (R5). The higher management is instructed for a great part by political control coming from the ministry or the cabinet (Hubert, 2007). This management layer is less influential on the day-to-day activities of the lower-level employees and the ad hoc local situations that they encounter. “The minister is not in my neighborhood. My neighborhood stays my neighborhood, even though there might be a new cabinet” (R4). For these situations the street-level officers are mostly in contact with their direct superiors in the station – the 'professionals' (officers with managing tasks) –, the project leaders and the head chief of the team. Although overall every station is concerned with the same tasks and problems, there are differences between the stations that can change the way the officers are managed by their superiors. This has more to do with the content of what is expected from their behavior. For example according to respondents, there is a bigger emphasis on the softer measures in Amsterdam West, whereas in the area of the Beursstraat there is a big emphasis on always being prepared for the worst. They have different more severe cases here which makes it important for the management to prepare and focus their team for the worst case scenario.

The managing tasks of 'professionals' are mostly concerned with steering their subordinates, their colleagues, on the scene. They have to decide who has to take which action and which actions have to be put in motion. They are responsible for following the protocols and directing their colleagues, creating a safe work environment. These managing tasks are laid down in their job function and are highly structured by rules and regulations. They are responsible at that moment on the scene but once the head chief has come to the scene, the professional has to hand over the responsibility to his superior. The managing task is mostly inherited in the job function and the rank and requires less managing skills – carrying out values and inspiring employees – than other managing functions. Although most professionals do not regard debriefing as carrying out values, in these sessions the situation is evaluated and the different actions and the consequences of these actions are looked at from a task and goal perspective which I noticed during observations. In these sessions the values of the police are discussed and the situation is evaluated in terms of these values and in which sense the actions could have contributed more to these values, such as a safe working environment.

The managing tasks of the project leaders are almost the same as for the professionals, so mostly on the street, taking the leadership position in the actions and decisions, directing colleagues. However, project leaders are also more concerned with long-term policy-making and how to execute this policy with an eye on the capacity and time it would take. These projects are besides the regular activities and are often less streamlined by rules and regulation and require some creativity from the leaders of the project. There is some freedom in creating these projects and as long as these projects fit within the overall policy of the police and the resources are available, the project leader can form a team to execute their plan. This requires some leadership skills in carrying out the goal of the project and the values that are connected. These projects, however, are mostly in line with the other activities and do not require another value set or goal because they are directed at the overall goal of safety. The project leaders work mostly on the street and are on the same operational level as their colleagues, besides the extra leadership tasks they have.

The head chief of the station manages mostly with regard to the numbers and the reports written, the objective data about the output of their employees. They have some distance to their street-level employees and only work occasionally with them in the field. So they do not see their employees at work and the only records of their work are the numbers and reports. However, they do see their subordinates on the station and they have evaluations with the professionals and the project leaders, so they know what is going on in the organization. As long as there are no real signs for concern, they do not have to step in. Their management style is based for a great deal on trust and the professionalism of their employees. They have the feeling that street-level officers know how to act and that they will follow the agreements that are made and the rules that bound their behavior. Since they are less concerned with the day-to-day activities on the street, it is their task to see the bigger picture of the organization and carry out the values and mission. One of the problems is that most head chiefs only work for a couple of years at the same station and then change to a different station or function. The people working in the stations are quite often working there for years and there is a specific culture within the station. It could be hard to really change things as a manager in this environment. One

manager said that you have to make employees entrepreneurs in their own organization and give them the responsibility to take care of the organizational values. Employees have to feel safe in the organization and have to learn to act independently with responsibility. He trusted that his people knew how they had to act and that they learned from mistakes they made. “I mind it less if you act around the rules appropriately, than that you act within the rules inappropriately” (R1). This sense of appropriateness has to be inherent in the behavior and considerations of police officers and it is the task of the manager to stimulate the appropriate behavior and a notion of learning from mistakes.

Management has an influence on the behavior of street-level officers, mostly in the form of working agreements and in directing them. The behavior is highly instructed by rules and regulations and it is hence for managers easier to judge whether behavior is good or bad. There is a measure for the behavior and if the officers act around the boundaries they have to explain the reasons to their superiors. There are control mechanisms embedded in the regulations, so managers moreover have to focus on the overall vision of the organization and they have to stimulate professionalism for the street-level work force so they can act autonomously in an appropriate manner. Especially the lower-level managers that are in close contact with the street-level are aware that their subordinates will not always act the same. “They are just like people. You have some jokers, some really serious guys. Everybody has its own working style” (R7). Differences are limited by clear rules and agreements that streamline the expectations from the lower-level managers that are often in line with the overall strategy of the organization. However, if street-level officers act differently, in many cases the lower-level managers, the head chief, trusts on the professionalism of their employees to act appropriately.

6.3 *Job-specific attributes*

In the literature, especially emphasized by Maynard-Moody and Musheno, we can read that job-specific attributes do not contribute much to street-level behavior, especially not to discretionary behavior. Especially the tasks described by the organization are less influential than other factors. Maynard-Moody and Musheno stress that especially the client encounter is more defining than the prescribed job. In the case of the police this is less true, job-specific attributes, moreover tasks, are highly influential and directory in street-level behavior. This is less the case for discretionary behavior, where other factors are more influential. This is in line with the research of Maynard-Moody and Musheno; they stress that the undefined situations need different reference points. Nevertheless, the job-specific attributes make the day-to-day activities and street-level officers feel connected to their tasks and also define their job with these attributes. Their behavior is highly influenced by the tasks since all situations they encounter can be categorized into a task. These tasks are highly regulated and the tasks are highly institutionalized in the behavior. Executing tasks is almost a routine, where officers almost always know what is expected from them and how they are supposed to act in certain situations. “For almost every situation you have a protocol. I do not need to read the protocol, I know what is in there and if I do not know it, I call the information line” (R17). In most cases, officers cannot

decide to take another action because the task is so regulated that a different action would either cause an unsafe working environment or an unclear execution of the rules. It could be the case that in other street-level organizations the tasks are less easy to define and that consequently there are other factors that are more important in guiding their behavior. In the case of the police organization however all tasks are highly defined and most officers know what is expected from them and why they have to do certain tasks. However, some tasks can be organized and planned, such as big traffic control projects, but most tasks are ad hoc and cannot be prepared for. This is typical for police work and most officers are prepared for the unpredictable and know how to handle themselves in different situations. “That is the best part of the job. You never know what is going to happen. You have to be prepared for everything” (R12). The tasks are regularized but it cannot be predicted when which tasks and actions have to be executed, so the institutionalization of the tasks are important for these ad hoc situations.

One of the complaints of police officers is that they spend too much time on administrative tasks and less time on the street, what they see as their actual task. “I spend too much time behind that computer, time that I could spend catching bad guys” (R4). The Ministry of Safety and Justice is planning on making the tasks of police officers less administrative by reducing this with 20%. This will be done by changing the ICT in order to make this administrative tasks easier and less time consuming, but also by introducing a front office back office system (FoBo) where police officer can call in the information and the back up will draw up the report. Different measures are instated in order to change the task of the police, however the actual tasks will stay the same although the contextual conditions might change. There is also a plea for more autonomy on the street-level and more freedom to act according to professionalism. The minister has promised to create more autonomy and give more freedom to act, for example by changing some steps in the process of authorization (Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie, 2011). This is also connected to empowering the professionalism of police officers through their education and making them more defensible to the public (Programmaplan versterking professionele weerbaarheid, 2011). The context of police officers changes over time, especially when society changes, but also when there is a different political context. However, the content of the tasks stay the same and although some rules concerning this task might change, the tasks on the street-level are still highly regularized. This might change slightly in the future with more professional authority.

The behavior will not often deviate from the original task, as was the case in the research of Maynard-Moody and Musheno, mostly because the tasks are highly regulated and controlled. The consequences for not following the tasks can be big for the police officer, but also for the public, the victim, the witnesses and the suspect. Officers try to act according to their tasks unless this really does not fit the situation and if they talk about their job, they mostly see this in the perspective of their tasks. “My work is catching bad guys, making this society a little safer. At least I like to think” (R18). They relate more to their tasks than to for example their client, so they are not, as Maynard-Moody and Musheno call it, citizen-agents. Their behavior is more influenced by the organization and the tasks they have to execute for this organization, so street-level

officers can moreover be seen as state-agents.

One of the job-specific attributes is the routinization of categorizing clients in order to take the appropriate action. In police work most situations need to be categorized and defined in order to know what protocol or rule to follow. Although most situations seem to be clearcut and officers know how to categorize, there are situations where the categorization is hard because the situations can change within seconds. It could be the case that a police officer comes to a case that was categorized by the call room as a fight between neighbors, but is in practice a really violent scene with armed neighbors. They have to be quick in reacting to the actual facts and change their routines within seconds.

Professional norms can also be seen as job-specific attributes. There are many professional norms within the police, however these professional norms come from the training that is part of the organization. It is an important aspect of the institutionalization of professional norms that the academy where all police officers are trained is part of the organization. Officers inhabit the same values and have more or less the same professional norms. "There are always colleagues that handle things differently, but with most you do understand their intentions and you can speak about it. Professionalism is very important" (R13). The professional norms are hence inhabited in the organization and the behavior of street-level officers. There is not a big difference between the norms for behavior coming from the organization and from the employees as professionals. One of the professional norms is to act according to the rules, so it is expected by the organization and by peers that officers act according to their task and do not deviate too much from this. "Everybody knows if you do not act according to the rules, it will have consequences" (R8). The professional norms are however important for the street-level officers and give them a certain purpose for their work. "We get trainings for professional behavior. The academy tries to prepare you to act as a professional in the field" (R3). Officers feel like professionals and give great importance to their professional norms. If colleagues overstep these norms they disapprove of this. The fulfillment of the professional norms can still differ between street-level officers but this is mostly because of differences in individual characteristics as can be seen later on.

6.4 The specific situation

The specific situation where ad hoc decisions are being made can be explanatory for variation in street-level behavior. Especially since not all situations can be categorized and compared, it can be hard for street-level bureaucrats to encounter situations in the same way. Almost all officers said: "It is never black or white, it is sometimes grey". This grey area is filled in by the context of the specific situation. Not only the occurring situation can be influential according to the literature, also the macro-context of the situation plays a role in influencing behavior. In this paragraph the macro-context (societal context), the work circumstances and the occurring situations will be addressed in order to see to what extent the specific situation is influential for street-level bureaucratic behavior.

6.3.1 *Macro-context: Societal context*

The macro-context of police work is important to address because it can explain why police officers make certain decisions in certain situations. The macro-context of the police is for a great part the opinion of the public about the police. This opinion can differ between people but generally speaking the public expects the police to be integer, help them when they are in need and catch the bad guys. The image of the police is not always very positive and this is well-known by the police officers who have to deal with this negative image every day. Mostly negative actions are highlighted in the news and this influences the public opinion about the police. For example the YouTube video of a police woman in Rotterdam who kicked a suspect while lying on the ground has had consequences for other policemen on the street. “The people on the street are going to address me about such a video. What you do in your uniform affects every other uniformed officer” (R6).

What the public expects from the police can influence their behavior, but since police officers are bound by rules and regulations these expectations cannot always be answered. People expect from the police that they “catch the bad guys” and do not understand if they do other activities or are precarious if they are in a dangerous situation with “bad guys” and do not take action right away. Although the police is bound by these rules and mostly acts upon them, officers do feel the pressure of the public opinion and the new control that comes from amateur video material for example. “In the 80's not every thing was recorded, there were no video cameras in the question rooms for example. We may have done things that you would not do nowadays. Before you know it a video of you circles on the internet” (R11). So they try to avert bad consequences – and a video of themselves on youtube – as much as possible by acting according to what they think is right and they may be less eager to use some of their resources such as violence because of the image that this can leave. The public opinion guides them in taking actions even more according to the rules, because then they know that they did it right and they can take account for how they handled a certain situation. These rules, however, are not always known by the public so some actions can still leave a bad image in the minds of the public. “Forcing someone to the floor always seems worse than it is” (R14).

The macro-context of the police is also the political control that the ministry and governmental officials have over the police organization. The police organization is rather stable, but the political control usually changes every four years. The way the political wind blows can affect the work of street-level officers. The political climate can emphasize different aspects of the police work and they can also change laws and regulations that have to be executed by the police. For example, politics changed the policy on control of firearms after the shooting in Alphen a/d Rijn. The police had to execute this, even though the executers might not think this policy is the most useful. “I do not think this is effective. Most people just have a license for hunting. We have to do it so the government can show that they are doing something” (R2). They have to execute it because they are held account and steered by the political context of which their organization is a part.

6.3.2 *Work circumstances*

Looking more at the micro-context work circumstances become important in the day-to-day activities. Work circumstances can be described as the available resources, the expectations of peers, the methods, etc. Especially the available resources can influence the behavior. The police has to deal with a shortage of personnel in many occasions, mostly because personnel is being redirected to other departments or because there are just too little officers at a certain station. The station Raampoort has to deal with a shortage of personnel and is therefore closed for public for half the time. They also have too little officers for some shifts so sometimes there are less people working than actually prescribed. This means that some officers do not take certain actions because they know there is no back up at that exact moment from their own station. “The working circumstances are never optimal. But sometimes it is so bad that I do not take action because I know back-up will take ten minutes” (R3).

The expectation of peers about certain situations can be influential especially if police officers work together. Some officers make different considerations and act in a different way, so for these situations the officers have to deal with each other and the way they are used to do things. One officer might be inclined to give someone a ticket sooner than his colleague and this might be discussed later on but cannot be a discussion on the scene. The performance of the police officers has to be uniform and clear for the suspect. Younger colleagues might give their older colleague the decisive power, because they have more experience. The expectation of peers also plays a role in ad hoc situations where they have to act fast and have to trust on the professional norms and the institutionalization of the rules and regulations in order to work together and have a safe working environment. Some officers are more affected by work circumstances than others and change their behavior according to the available resources or the colleagues they work with. “With some colleagues it is harder to work because they have a different style. But I usually try to find a way to make it work. Sometimes that is according to your preferences sometimes theirs” (R8). The work circumstances can also change er situation which means that street-level officers might act differently in the same type of case but with different circumstances.

6.3.3 *Occurring situations (client encounters)*

“Every situation is different and you never know what to expect” (R10). Nevertheless situations have to be categorized in order to take action. Most situations are described in protocols and there are steps that have to be taken in order to handle the situation correctly. However, not every situation can be categorized or turns out as it appeared at first sight. Police officers are trained in categorizing these situations and recognizing abnormalities in situations. They always have to be alert for every situation although it might seem that it is a situation that they encountered a hundred times before. Only acting upon the expectations about the situations and only using experience might limit the alertness towards the occurring situation. Every situation has to be seized up before trying to categorize it to take the appropriate action. Situations that police officers encounter are mostly prescribed and most situations can be categorized, but the officers are supposed to be alert towards the situation to not lose their fresh perspective. In the end the occurring situation is less guiding

than it might seem, even though every situation is different, because of the many behavioral control mechanisms in the forms of protocols and rules. Also many situations are practiced in extra training sessions so the prescribed actions are fresh and well-known. The police organization tries to minimize the effect of the occurring situation but also trains their employees to be alert to every situation and go further than just categorizing the clients and the situation right away. However, the occurring situation is directing in the behavior if it is a special situation or if it asks for a different approach than prescribed. The situational factors are important in discretionary behavior, because they make the work tangible and force officers to look further than just the rules to come to an appropriate action. Every occurring situation there is a client encounter. “The type of person you have before you should not make a difference. I notice that it does make a difference, although I do not want to admit it. Especially how the cases evolves affects my decision in the end” (R14). During their education officers are taught to encounter every client the same and although many officers treat their clients equally, there are some differences in empathy. “I do admit that the nice blond sometimes does not get a ticket and the fat baldy does. Unless she starts to make a scene, then she can get it” (R17).

6.5 Individual characteristics

“There are 50.000 police officers, but there are also 50.000 individuals working in this organization” (R1). There are always differences between people, so also in the police force there are differences between officers. These differences can for a great part be explained by individual characteristics that make the officers the individuals they are. According to Winter (2002) these characteristics play mostly a role in the less visible practices of street-level bureaucrats. Individual characteristics that are important for explaining their behavior are the more work related beliefs, such as personal beliefs about the job, worker ideology (professional norms) and worker preferences towards the target group. The differences in how street-level officers act can for the largest part be explained by these individual characteristics, because this defines how they think they should do the job.

6.4.1 Personal beliefs about the job

Especially the beliefs about what can be reached with their work is of a big influence when street-level officers decide on certain actions. If they think a certain 'bad guy' is a lost cause they will do less effort for this suspect than for a suspect that seems regretful and willing to cooperate. “For some people you want to do some extra effort. They are not bad people, most they just had bad luck” (R7). They will do the extra step for this suspect and are more willing to see things through the fingers. Also when doing traffic controls, the belief whether a person will not do it again after a warning can influence whether they will give this person a ticket. They want to reach a certain goal with their actions and if this can be done through what they think is fair, they will do this. Many officers find the fines for traffic offenses too high and not proportional so they will find ways to not give a person a ticket if they have the feeling that the goal can be reached differently. Other officers however do believe that giving a ticket will be the best way and see punishment as the best

mean to their goal. This depends what they believe to be the goal of their work (there is a difference between the goal of caring for safety or letting people drive slower). Personal beliefs about the job can differ between officers, however, most officers have an overall sense of what the job is about and how it has to be filled in. This comes also from the education and from the organizational climate. Most officers do the job because they believe in what the police stands for. "I am proud to wear this uniform and what it stands for" (R12). The differences in their behavior have more to do with their personal frame of reference than with the job itself.

Personal ideology can also play a role but in police work this is less apparent since officers cannot mostly not choose whether they want to take action or not. They do not have any choice in most cases, so they have to be able to step over certain personal ideologies if these might be offended in a working situation. "Some things you have to do, whether you like it or not. Off course, to send a young mother packing is sad, but you have to follow your orders" (R5). Managers can take personal ideologies into considerations when giving their employees tasks but if there is no other option, the employee has to do its duty. Most officers say that personal ideologies do not influence the work, but it should be noted that personal beliefs about the job do have an influence. This is mostly visible in certain decisions and in the working methods from officers.

6.4.2 Worker ideology

Most officers have the same sense of what their work is about and how it has to be carried out, they rest on the same professional norms. Nevertheless there are still differences in what officers think is professional and the right attitude in certain situations. Some officers are more inclined to be stricter towards suspects and to act faster whereas others see more use in talking a problem over without using their legal tools. There is also a difference between work ethic and the extra effort that officers put into their job. Outside of their shifts police officers still have the duty to take action if they encounter a situation where a police officer should act. However, "some officers might not take the action, maybe because this means some hours of administration while they have a free day" (R10). These differences in worker ideology can be found in every organization, however, with the police the work force is rather uniform because they are selected from a certain profile and the professional norms are institutionalized in their behavior from the beginning of their training.

Also the preference towards a target group can affect the behavior of street-level officers, although they usually cannot select their target group or client themselves since almost all client encounters are ad hoc. Nevertheless, preference towards a target group can be seen during traffic controls for example where some officers do not give a ticket to young reasonable women when the offense was not severe. Although most officers admit that these kinds of preferences should not play a role in their decision-making process, in practice they do. Also prejudices can play a role in their decision-making process and especially in the way they step into a situation. If they believe they have a certain type of person in front of them, for example a Moroccan member of a youth group, they expect this person to respond in a certain way to the police and already adjust their actions to this expected response whereas in the actual situation this can be different.

6.5.3 *Dimensions of professionalism*

The dimension of professionalism can also explain why there are differences between officers. Police officers are professionals since they had a specific training for their profession and they can carry out their profession with authority (Hupe, 2009). Professionalism has been formulated by the police management as follows: “Tied freedom”⁶ (Politie in Ontwikkeling, 2005).

First of all the institutionalization of the profession of officers in society and the way in which society accepts a relative autonomy from professional with this profession has consequences for how police officers work in organizations and how they put their profession into practice. It can be said that the public sees officers as professionals, since they do except their authorities and autonomy. The image of the police is not always positive and the assumptions about their professionalism have a wide range and are not always correct. “You have pro police people and anti police people. The kind of people you have before you affects the way you treat them” (R12). People are afraid of, and sometimes even expect the police to misuse their autonomy (Programmaplan versterking professionele weerbaarheid, 2011). Because of this assumption, most officers try to execute their profession in the way this is prescribed by the organization and the education. They try to act mostly according to the law, although this might not always be understood by the public, it does make their action professional since they are more uniform and predictable. “If you do it right, you will not end up on YouTube” (R5).

By the organization they are seen as professionals and they get autonomy from their managers to act according to the professional norms. Some functions get more professional autonomy and responsibilities than others but overall the organization is built on the professionalism of their employees. Since the head officers cannot always see all actions of their employees, professionalism is very important for the work. In recent years the police organization has emphasized the professionalism of their employees more and more. This is one of the important action point for the organization, especially empowering professional behavior as can be seen in different programs and action plans of the police. The craftsmanship of police officers is one of the focus points in both the education and later on carried out by the organization (Programmaplan versterking professionele weerbaarheid, 2011).

On the individual level there is a difference to what extent officers see themselves as a professional and how they think this has to be filled in. Overall, officers have the feeling that they have a lot of freedom to act and make their own decisions, but at the other hand most decisions and actions have to go according to the rules. “You have to do it, it is the rules” (R3). Officers are highly aware of this fact and try to act according to these expectations as much as possible. Especially younger officers are aware of this framework of rules and show less professional autonomy. Also some personalities are more inclined to act as professionals. However,

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because of the training and day-to-day activities are professional norms and action institutionalized through and through. Officers know how to act and where they have autonomy, so they mostly act as professionals in an autonomous way.

Worker ideology, preferences, and dimensions of professionalism play a role on a micro level and in situations where there is freedom to use their discretionary authority to make decisions. In clear cut situations that need a quick response and that are highly regulated by protocols, these preferences are less apparent if they deviate from the organizational preferences and ideology. Most officers do have a frame of reference that is also carried out by the organization, through its mission and culture. It is important for an organization to find these kinds of people that would fit into the organizations value system. It is easier to get the desired behavior from the employees if they believe in the values they have to carry out.

6.6 Overall analysis and assessment of assumptions

In the following paragraphs the assumptions will be assessed in order to come to a better understanding of street-level bureaucratic behavior. After the discussion of the assumption, the findings from the analysis and the assumptions will be summarized in a table in order to answer the central question.

6.6.1 Assessment of assumptions

(A) Street-level organization

H1: The more street-level bureaucratic behavior is institutionalized within the organization the less street-level bureaucrats use coping mechanisms.

The organization is clear in what it expects from their employees, control mechanisms are implemented in behavior and most officers act according to the expectations of the organization. They know when there is room for different behavior than prescribed and they know what is judged as good and bad behavior by the organization. The organization (mostly the station as the leading organizational environment) is institutionalized in the behavior of street-level officer but on the other hand is the behavior of the street-level officers also institutionalized in the organization. They make the organization and most rules and regulations are made in correspondence with what happens on the street-level. Also discretionary behavior is accepted within the organization, because many situations benefit from a different approach if this is carried out in a professional manner. The lower-level managers trust the professional norms of their employees, foremost because these norms have been institutionalized in the behavior through the education that is a part of the organization itself.

Although it can be said that the behavior is institutionalized, there are still coping mechanisms to be found within the police. The organization always has to deal with little resources and different constrains on the

possibilities, so they cannot prevent their street-level officers from using coping mechanisms. Coping mechanisms are inevitable in an environment where there is no limit to the amount of work, but many limits to the content of the work. How street-level officers handle this environment and whether they use coping mechanisms to make the job easier and more pleasant depends on how the organizational mission and expectations are part of their behavior. The extent to which the organization accepts the fact that their employees are restrained by the environment and have to use coping mechanisms, has an effect on how the street-level officers use coping mechanisms as well. In the case of most police officers the organization is highly part of their considerations of their behavior. Coping mechanisms are used with the organization in mind, and less with the client in mind for example, and the organization encourages the use of professional norms in restrained cases. Coping mechanisms are often not seen as problematic, but moreover as inevitable and a way to make an ambiguous work environment more practical and workable.

H2: The less the management of an organization is able to control the activities and the results of these activities of street-level bureaucrats, the more the management has to depend on the professionalism of their workers.

In the police organization, many activities of the street-level officers are invisible to the higher management and to a lesser extent to the lower-level managers. Most of the activities and the results of these activities take place on the street and cannot be controlled to every detail by superiors. Superiors within the station trust for a great part on the institutionalization of rules and regulations within the behavior, and foremost on the professionalism of their subordinates. Professional norms in the police mostly come from the training and from experience within the organization. The professional norms are therefore highly connected to the organization's mission and goals. What the organization expects from street-level actions is mostly captured in these professional norms and the professional behavior of the street-level officers. They are trained in the Police Academy and through extra courses coming from the organization.

The lower-level management trusts for a great part of the professionalism of the street-level employees, especially when they are on the streets out of sight of the superiors. However, many activities are reported and mutated, so there is a control mechanism for their behavior. Although most manager do not read the reports, the activity of reporting your behavior works as a control mechanism in the field since most officers know what is seen as good and bad behavior by the organization. The managers can use these reports as a tool to control their employees and to check whether they do enough in the field. This control mechanism is inhabited in the behavior and considerations of the street-level officers. Nevertheless, professionalism is very important for the organization since not all activities can be reported and the organization cannot see their employees at work. Also the absence of hard results of their work and the inability to measure the effect of many activities makes that the organization trusts on the professional behavior and in the effect of their methods.

H3: If the activities and the results of these activities are not visible, it is likely that there will be no consensus between the street-level and the higher management about the work (goals and tasks) and this management layer will have less influence over street-level bureaucrats.

The activities may not be visible in a sense that the lower-level management, such as the head chiefs, and street-level officers are most often in different physical places and the management cannot always be on the scene to see their street-level officers in action. However, the activities are visible if the head chiefs are on the scene and for colleagues and most activities can be defined and are reported. However, it is clear for the management, especially the lower managers, what activities entail in most cases and most activities are highly prescribed. There are different steps to be taken in most situations and this is clear for the different layers of management as well as for the street-level employees. Through reports and evaluations the activities are controlled and assessed by the lower-level managers. The activities are visible although not every moment of the day for the management, so there is also consensus about what the activities entail and the organization has a big influence on the fulfillment of activities.

The results on the other hand are less visible and it is hard to define the result of many activities. The management is often focused on numbers as results. Qualitative results are generated as well, but these results are harder to describe and measure. There is not always consensus about the results and there is especially less consensus about the different methods that can lead to the result. There is sometimes dissensus between the organization and the street-level employees about what the goal of the work is and which results are most important, and also about which methods should be used to get certain results. There can also be differences between street-level officers about what they think the work is about and how to execute the job. However, since the organization prescribes so many actions, there is less room for considerations about the results of these actions. It is mostly clearcut because the actions will lead to safety. What the organization and the street-level officers think about the job does not differ significantly, only in some specific situations where it is not clear for the officers with which goal a certain activity is prescribed. In general there is consensus about the work and the organization has a great influence in steering these activities and the behavior of their employees in these activities.

(B) Job-specific attributes

H4: If job-specific attributes are in line with the expectations of the management of the organization, there will be little differences between individual street-level bureaucrats.

Almost all tasks, routines and professional norms are the same for the street-level officers with the same function. These job-specific attributes are mostly stated or institutionalized by the organization and are therefore in line with the organizational expectations. Most officers have the same ideas about how to execute the job and this is also needed in order to have a predictable and safe work environment when

working together. Although some officers have different ideas about methods or actions, in most situations it has been prescribed how they have to act by the organization and most street-level officers act according to this and expect their colleagues to do the same. Differences in how they do their job hence does not depend on the job-specific attributes.

H5: The influence of the higher management on the content of street-level work, depends on the clarity of tasks, the institutionalization of routines and on professional norms.

In the case of street-level work of police officers, the tasks are clear, there is an institutionalization of routines and professional norms are overall the same and give guidance in how to do the job. All these job-specific attributes come more or less from the organization, they are initiated by the organization. The higher management can have a big influence on the tasks, since they are defined by the organization and the authorities responsible for the police tasks. There are not many extra tasks that do not come from the organization, although it is sometimes hard to establish which tasks belong to the police or to other partners. Also the institutionalization of routines and of professional norms are done through education, experience in the organization and extra courses. This is all very organization-bound.

(C) The specific situation

H6: The specific situation will have a larger influence on street-level bureaucratic behavior if street-level bureaucrats feel more connected to the client than to the organization.

In the case of street-level workers in the police organization, there is a lot of contact with the client, although this client is not always the same person and the nature of the client changes a lot. A client is someone who comes to the station to report the loss of a wallet, but a client is also the shooter in an armed robbery. The target group consists of citizens and bad guys. This makes that quite often the street-level officer does not feel connected to the client, especially if there is no frequent intensive client-contact. The client is not the main incentive in the decision-making process and most situations are tried to be seen as a category in order to take the appropriate action. Street-level officers are more inclined to make decisions based on the organizational tasks and goals, than to take the client into account. They do look at the specific situation and the reaction of the client, but since there is foremost professional empathy it is easier to take the appropriate action that might not be in favor of the client.

In some functions there is more frequent intensive contact with the client, for example in the case of the neighborhood director. In these cases the client becomes more leading the decision-making process and officers change their action to what they think is best for this specific client because they know the person. If someone else had to deal with the same case, the history of the client would not have taken into account and other decisions might be made. The upside of the function of neighborhood director is the fact that they

know the neighborhood and can take these situational factors in account. Their methods and actions might make a bigger difference, especially since the residents know the officer in person. They know where to go with certain problems. This local position can also be a downside. The officers can become too involved in the neighborhood and might not take objective actions. The policy on neighborhood directors is therefore that they have to be relocated every six years, to prevent them from becoming too close and subjective.

H7: The more behavior is laid down in rules, laws and protocols by the organization, paradoxically, the more other clusters of factors than the organization can explain behavior, especially situational factors.

This assumption does not stand in the case of the police. Many actions and decisions are laid down in rules, laws, regulations, and protocols. All these different rules are very leading in how street-level officers do their work. They are inclined to follow these rules because there are consequences if they do not follow them. The rules make the work predictable and uniform. There are many rules, but it is most often quite clear which rules have to be followed in which situations and not following the rules needs a good explanation. Some situations do not fit with the specific rules, but taking different actions has to be explained and taken account for. In the case of the police the assumption that more rules lead to more discretion and more ways to shirk the rules does not hold up for a great part.

However, in some cases other rules that might actually not been created for the specific situation, can give some freedom to take a different action in a particular case. Fines for different offenses can be given in order to lower the fine, because the specific officer does not find the actual fine proportionally to the crime. Or different authorizations can be used to get something done. In these cases situational factor play a big role, because the particular situation demands a different action. In most cases, however, there is control on the rule following in situations. Many actions are being tested on proportionality and rightfulness, especially when violence has been used. The many rules do not create a bigger influence of other factors but it creates a bigger variety of rules for different situations.

(D) Individual characteristics

H8: Individual characteristics can foremost explain behavioral differences between street-level bureaucrats.

There are always differences between individuals, in what they think is right, differences in their work methods and their beliefs about their work. Although in the police organization the influence of many of these individual characteristics has been eliminated because of the rule bound behavior and the professional norms that streamline the behavior, there are always differences between officers. These differences can for the biggest part be explained by looking at their individual characteristics. Especially the way they think about the effect and goals of their work can differ between people and thus the work methods they use. Some

people see more use in strict methods and other in verbal methods. Also the way officers look at their target group can differ and can influence their behavior. However, it can be said that the work force of the police is rather homogeneous and that most officers have the same idea about their work and society in its whole. People with somewhat the same nature are selected for the training. Also per station are people with the same work ethic selected. Some stations require different skills and ideologies than others.

The worker ideology most often fits to the organization, however personal beliefs and ideology might not fit to the organization and play only a small role in the behavior. There is little place for these individual characteristics because of the many rules and regulations that streamline the behavior. Officers are supposed to act and make decisions in certain situations and what they think about the client or the situation cannot play a big role. However, when they think that a certain situation needs a different action, this notion might come from their gut feeling, inspired by their personal beliefs.

Main assumption

If it is clear for street-level bureaucrats what is expected from them by the organization, there is consensus about the work and street-level bureaucrats have the feeling that they have enough professional autonomy to do their work, the differences between street-level bureaucrats are not problematic and less apparent.

With this research this assumption still holds. In the case of the police, it is very clear what is expected from the street-level officers by the organization and in particular by the lower-level management in the stations. Through the laws, regulations, protocols and working agreements, it is clear how the organization expects the officers to execute the job. The way this is formulated by the organization can be connected to the worker ideologies and professional norms from the officers. There is consensus about the job, which is in favor of the execution of the job, since most officers do this the same. Moreover street-level officers have the feeling that they can act as professionals and the organization trusts for a great deal on the professional norms, although these come mostly come from the organization itself. "They respect each other's position without becoming locked up in it" (Tops, 2007). Withal, it becomes clear that the differences between street-level officers come from the specific situation and in some cases from the personal beliefs officers have about the job and the client. This is in most cases not problematic, as long as it does not inflict the safe work environment and considerations can be argued. Problematic are those cases where the organization has no sight on the activities and the officers do not act according to the professional norms. There will always be differences between street-level officers, but these differences are limited through the selection of aspirants at the beginning of the study trajectory, the study itself and the rule-bound day-to-day practices. The police has a rather uniform workforce with room for professional judgment to avert rigidity. The differences are due to different personalities and preferences towards methods.

6.6.2 Overall analysis

In the next table the most important findings of this analysis are summarized. Per cluster of factors is assessed how important the factors are for explaining street-level bureaucratic behavior, namely actions, decisions and discretionary behavior. In the extra comments the factor is further specified in how it influences behavior and which part of the behavior of street-level officers it can explain.

Table 3: Street-level bureaucratic behavior and the influence of different factors

	Decisions	Actions	Discretion
<i>Cluster of analysis</i>			
Organization			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory context: Rules, laws and regulations 	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Prescribed steps and decisions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Prescribed actions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+ -</p> <p>Discretionary authority.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational tasks and goals 	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Some differences if this is not clear.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Some difference if this is not clear.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+ -</p> <p>Institutionalization of mission and expectations.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management 	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Rules as control mechanisms.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+ -</p> <p>Little control over non-visible actions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+ -</p> <p>Through trust in professionalism.</p>
Job-specific attributes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasks 	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Prescribed decisions – institutionalized in behavior.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Prescribed actions – institutionalized in behavior.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">–</p> <p>Discretionary authority.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional norms 	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Guidance in different situations.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Predictable and safe work environment.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Radar for different situations, leading in making discretionary decisions.</p>
Specific situation			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macro-context: societal context 	<p style="text-align: center;">+ -</p> <p>Influence only when institutionalized or pressure.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+ -</p> <p>Influences some considerations of action.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+ -</p> <p>Influences more acting within the rules than outside.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working circumstances 	<p style="text-align: center;">+ -</p> <p>Some constrains.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+ -</p> <p>Restrains the ability to take action in some cases.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Influences discretionary behavior, letting things go.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurring situation: client encounter 	<p style="text-align: center;">+ -</p> <p>Influences the prescribed decisions if the decision does not fit the situation. Client less influence.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Every situation is different and has to be approached like that.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Special situations require an eye for the context and bending the rules.</p>

Individual characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal beliefs 	<p style="text-align: center;">—</p> <p>Little influence over the prescribed decisions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">—</p> <p>Little influence over the prescribed actions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+-</p> <p>Some influence over the considerations to act in a certain way.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worker ideology 	<p style="text-align: center;">—</p> <p>Little influence.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">—</p> <p>Little influence.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Professional norms and preferences towards methods and target groups. Differences between street-level officers can be explained for a great part by the worker ideology.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dimensions of professionalism 	<p style="text-align: center;">—</p> <p>Eventual decision not dependent on professionalism</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+-</p> <p>Experience leading in actions</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>The more professional the easier it becomes to act autonomously.</p>

7

Discussion and Conclusion

7.1 Discussion

Here I will discuss this research, the way it was conducted and the results it has generated. First of all it should be noted that this research was conducted in one street-level bureaucratic organization which might not be representative for all street-level organizations. The police is a rather specific organization that has a rather regulated work environment and institutional setting. This might not be the case for other street-level bureaucracies. Although the specific details in the answer on the research question might differ in other organizations, I believe that the overall conclusion assessing the influence of the organization and how this can be established might be the same in other organizations. In order to avoid negative coping behavior and a lousy execution of the policy it is important in every organization to create uniformity in behavior and to stimulate the use of professional norms. Street-level organizations have to depend highly on the professionalism of their employees especially in organizations where the activities and results have little visibility. However, the police organization has an advantage for creating uniformity, because of the education that is part of the organization. This is different in other organizations, but it creates a rather uniform work force and a uniform execution of the rules. This might be an important notion for other street-level organizations, to incorporate the education within the organization. Finally it must be stated that this research does not claim to generate universal knowledge about street-level bureaucracy; however, it creates understanding about street-level bureaucratic behavior, mostly within highly regulated work environments.

Furthermore I want to address a methodological issue that is apparent in this research. The research is mostly based on interviews with officers, resulting in stories about their behavior. This gives a good picture of what happens on the street-level and how street-level officers make decisions about their actions. Especially when telling examples, it clarifies for the researcher how decisions are made and which cluster of factors plays a role. However, this research makes mostly use of second hand information about behavior. The observations were not extensive enough to systematically look for regularities. It would be useful to conduct large scale observations to systematically map behavior. Only through really seeing what happens on the street-level and accumulating behavioral considerations true valid information would be generated. A large scale systematical research bases on observations would be highly contributing to street-level bureaucratic theory. This research however makes a step in seeing what happens on the street-level, since the stories of the street-level officers do contribute to a better understanding of their considerations while working. Although they might sometimes not realize it, most examples let clearly see how their considerations have been made. This research could be followed by the same of research in other field of street-level bureaucracy and furthermore by large-scale observations to get a good picture of the whole field of street-level bureaucracy. Nonetheless this research creates a better understanding of the behavior of street-level officers in the Netherlands. In the following conclusion this will be further addressed.

7.2 Conclusion

In this research report the behavior of street-level officers has been examined and an explanation for variety in this behavior has been researched. By looking at different clusters of factors and with a special emphasis on the street-level organization, street-level behavior could be assessed. This has been done by collecting data in the police organization, mostly through interviews with street-level officers. The police is a classic example of a street-level bureaucracy and has been a great organization for conducting this research. The conclusion in this chapter is based on the police organization and might be different in a different street-level bureaucracy as addressed in the discussion above. However, this research with the police as its focus can definitely contribute to the street-level literature and research since it gives insights in the workings of a particular street-level organization and its employees.

At the beginning of the report the central question for this research was stated as follows: *Why do street-level bureaucrats do what they do and how can we understand this from an organizational perspective?* This question has been the guideline throughout the report. With help of the theoretical framework the data has been analyzed. The focus in the analysis was on the street-level organization as the main cluster of factors influencing street-level bureaucratic behavior; however other clusters of factors have not been disregarded and could explain variety better since the organization mostly created unity in behavior. The influence of job-specific attributes, the specific situation and individual characteristics have also been discussed. There is not one answer why street-level officers do what they do, but there can be found a certain pattern in all the different situations that they encounter and how they handle these situations. Understanding variety means

looking at all behavior – actions, decisions, and discretionary behavior – not only special out of the ordinary actions. I have made a distinction between 'normal circumstances' and 'special circumstances' since this gives a clear view of how street-level officers behave and it can show variety and why this occurs.

7.2.1 Normal circumstances: black and white

In police work there are many situations that the officers encounter on a daily or weekly basis. A lot of the client contacts are clear-cut and need a standard procedure. Some situations are black and white although every situation is different according to the officers: in the end they have to categorize the situation in order to take the appropriate action. In most cases this can easily be done, the officers can put it in black and white, since the circumstances are not special and the situation can be handled according to protocol. In these situations, with normal circumstances, the main guidance are the rules and regulations that are prescribed in most situations. In almost every situation that street-level officers encounter the actions are laid down in steps in protocols. Most often street-level officers do what they do because they 'have to'. It is prescribed by the organization and the different laws and protocols. Especially if the situation fits these rules and it feels like the right action, police officers will follow these regulations. The rules are embedded in their behavior and it is logical to act according to the rules. The organization expects this from them and the street-level officers also know what is expected from their behavior so they try to act accordingly. Acting according to the prescribed rules causes clarity in the work, for both the organization, the employees, and between colleagues.

The police organization might be special to a certain extent in the way the rules organize their behavior. Almost every aspect from their expected behavior is laid down in rules and through the education the rules are institutionalized in their behavior. In the case of the police the regulations and organizational rules regarding their actions are institutionalized from the beginning and do not differ significantly between different departments since the organization in its whole has to deal with the same situations and problems. The behavior of the police officers and consequently of the organization is rather uniform, and it will have consequences if this is not the case.

Concluding, in the normal circumstances the laws, regulations and protocols are of great importance for the behavior of street-level officers. They structure the *WHAT*, *HOW* and *WHEN* of the behavior of street-level officers. The rules come first of all from the Ministry of Safety and Justice. Furthermore the police is instructed by the municipality to enforce laws and policies. Hence, most rules that the police has to deal with come from the government. There are also rules that come from the organization itself, such as certain protocols (many protocols are made up by the public prosecutor) and foremost the working agreements. The police organization also creates certain behavioral codes and tries to institutionalize professional norms through the education of their officers. The organization plays an important role in the behavior of the officers in normal circumstances, mostly because of the importance of their rules and regulation in the work

of their employees, but also because of the education of the officers that is part of the organization. This creates a uniform work force that knows how to put the regulations into practice.

7.2.2 *Special circumstances: scales of grey*

Although most situations are clear-cut, every situation is slightly different, there are different scales of grey. Here the variety in behavior becomes more apparent, especially variety in actions and discretionary behavior. There are situations that do not fit the protocols and where the officers have the feeling that a different action than prescribed might be better for the specific circumstances. Officers try to encounter every situation as an individual case. They try to sense what is going on and which steps would be best to reach their goal. They could be of the opinion that a different approach could have a better result. The specific situation is highly leading in these cases. The context of the offense counts for most officers when deciding what to do. How they in the end act depends on the context but also the reaction of the offender or the belief of the officer about the goal of their work.

Outside of the normal circumstances decisions are made differently, especially less based on the rules and protocols. The organization tries to provide their employees with tools to make their own considerations about situations and to act according to what they think is right. Street-level officers have discretionary authority to act differently in some situations. The discretionary authority is a certain freedom structured by the organization. The use of *discretion* is allowed in some situations such as traffic offenses. It is a regulated freedom by the organization, in the cases where they can regulate this. Officers can decide to give someone a ticket or not if the offense is not severe, but they cannot choose to not arrest a robber.

There are however situations where the organization cannot control the behavior of their employees and there is still freedom for the officers to take certain actions. The *autonomy* they have in almost all situations they encounter and where they think another action is more suitable is hard to structure by the organization. However, this autonomy is not negative and is important for a lot of police work. It causes that police officers can take some actions that are more practical than acting within the rules. It also makes the execution of rules less rigid and more applied to the specific situation. Most decisions in these special circumstances are based on professional norms and the organization trusts for a great part on the professionalism of their employees. Professional norms are institutionalized in the behavior of the officers through the education and promoted by the different stations. The organization is forced for some part to depend on the professionalism of their employees since they are most often literally outside of the organization and the organization has no visibility over the actions. The organization does not have a lot of control over the autonomy of their street-level officers, which can be 'dangerous' if every street-level officer would act differently and according to different standards. Especially for police work it is important to act uniform towards the client. In the case of the police most actions and decisions are uniform since most officers have more or less the same professional norms.

Nevertheless there are still differences between officers and how they fulfill their tasks, although these are minor and in most cases not with mayor consequences. The differences are mostly because of different personal preferences and different work methods. Some officers believe they can reach their goal with different methods than others. Some officers have different ideas about the work than others. However, these differences cannot be highly apparent since in many cases officers have to work together and will be held account by their colleagues. There are different control mechanisms in the police organization that cause the behavior to be more or less uniform. Reports of the different actions, control from colleagues, but also public control through new media and technologies are a watching eye. These different sources of control are kept in mind during actions, although most actions are taken according to the rules.

7.2.3 Concluding remarks

It can be said that street-level bureaucrats, in particular street-level officers do what they do because of the regulation that structures their work and because of professional norms that are institutionalized in their behavior. The rules and especially the institutionalization of these rules are part of the organization. The core of the behavior of street-level officers is founded by the organization. The more the rules are institutionalized the more uniform the behavior of the officers and this is beneficial for both the organization as the employees. However, rules are not the single most important in street-level bureaucratic behavior.

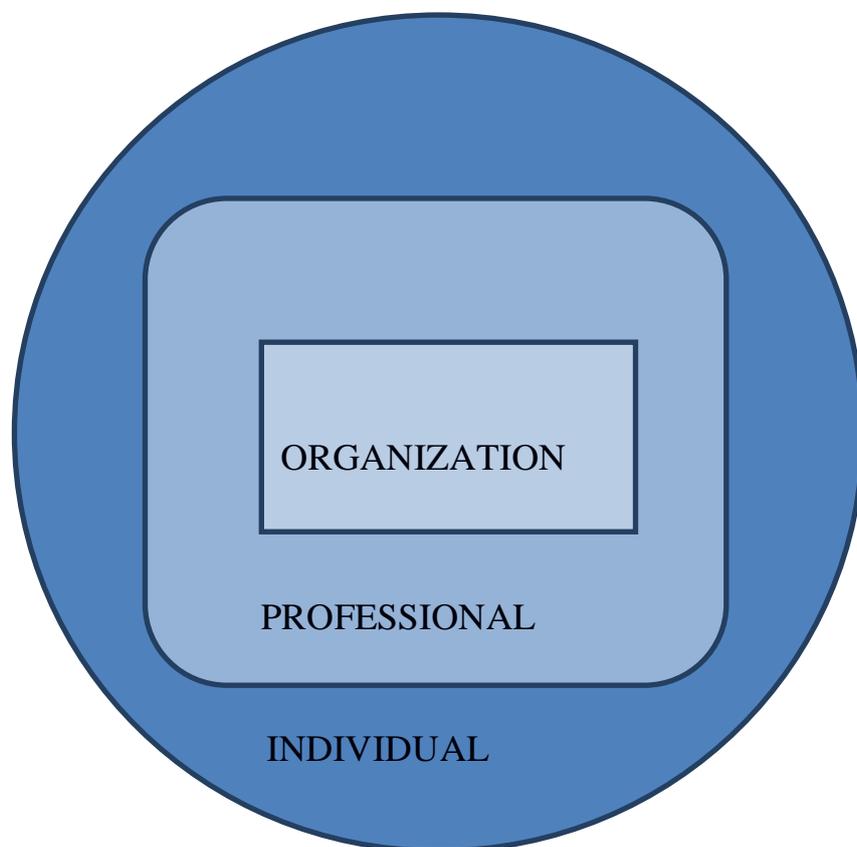


Figure 4: Behavioral scale: organization, professional, and individual.

As can be seen in the figure above, the organization is the core, making the conditions of the work through the rules. The rules are important in the more clear-cut situations and in creating a sense of what is expected from the work of street-level officers. Since not all situations are so clear-cut, the conditions the rules create for behavior might not always suffice and might need an addition of human sensitizing of the situation. This happens through professional norms on the one hand, and through personal preferences on the other hand. The professional norms are most guiding in the eventual action, but the personal preferences instruct a moral compass, that gut-feeling. Acting according to the rules might not reach the wished goal or the best outcome according to the officer. In the figure above the different influences are presented in a way to present the influence of different clusters of factors from the core cases to the more outside special cases. The model shows the behavior scales, starting with the organization as the core of all behavior, the professional as the nuanced officer in special circumstances, and the individual as the moral compass and the ultimate source that creates variation and makes the police not just blue but a scale of blue. The different scales of grey become different scales of blue since they are handled by the blue force of the police.

8

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9

Appendix

Content

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Appendix I

List of respondents

Respondent number	Short description
R1	Retired chef. Multiple management positions within the police, mostly in Amsterdam. Male, 60+
R2	Professional. Amsterdam. Since 10 years in service. Focus project youth. Male, 30-35.
R3	Head officers since one year. Amsterdam. Focus project offenders direction. Female, 25-30.
R4	Neighborhood director. Amsterdam. 30 years of service in different stations, mostly as neighborhood director. Male, 55-60.
R5	Neighborhood director. Amsterdam. 30 years of service in different stations. Motor agent. Functions in the board as well. Male, 55-60.
R6	Head chief of a station in Amsterdam. Still operational active. Member of the QRT. Male, 45-50.
R7	Head inspector. Amsterdam. Member of the criminal investigation team since one year. Former head officer. Male, 45-50.
R8	Head officer. Brabant. Since 9 months finished with the Academy. Only emergency tasks. Male, 25-30.
R9	Head inspector. Brabant. Not with thesis but already active as a full time member of the investigation team. Specialty child porn. Male, 25-30.
R10	Head officer. Amsterdam. Since five years in service. Focus project B&E. Female, 30-35.
R11	Head officer. Amsterdam. 30 years of service, different stations. Male, 55-60.
R12	Motor agent. Friesland. First head officer. Five years of service. Male, 30-35.
R13	Brigadier. Amsterdam. Since several months brigadier before head officer. Same station. Focus project high impact crimes. Female, 30-35.
R14	Officer. Amsterdam. Motor agent working for the DCIV. Several other stations and tasks before this. Female, 30-35.
R15	Officer. Amsterdam. Motor agent working for DCIV. Since 5 years in service. Male, 30-35.
R16	Head officer. Brabant. Since 3 years in service. Focus project youth. Male, 25-30.
R17	Head officer. Brabant. Since 6 years in service. Focus project high impact crimes. Male, 25-30.
R18	Brigadier. Amsterdam. Twenty years in service for several stations. Male, 50-55.
R19	Head officer. Amsterdam. Since 10 years in service. Focus project squares. Female, 35-40.

Appendix II

Topic list with indicators

Street-level bureaucratic behavior

Indicator	Method	Specifics
<i>Discretion</i>	Document analysis	Discretion in determining the nature, amount and quality of benefits and sanctions (services) provided by the agency. How do the actual benefits and sanctions correspond with the planned policy?
	Observation	How do street-level bureaucrats see discretion and why do they 'use' it?
	Interviews	
<i>Decisions</i>	Observation	On what are decisions based? How do street-level bureaucrats come to a decision?
	Interviews	Which steps are completed in order to come to a decision?
<i>Actions</i>	Observations	What are the tasks of street-level workers? What actions can they take and which do they take?
	Interviews	How do the street-level workers come to a certain action? Are there cases where they decide not to act
<i>Coping mechanisms</i>	Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationing services • Controlling clients • Reducing the consequences of uncertainty • Husbanding worker resources • Managing consequences of routine practice.
	Interviews	To what extent are these coping mechanisms found within the organizations in the daily work of street-level bureaucrats? What are the reasons that street-level bureaucrats have to cope?

Street-level organization

Indicator	Method	Specifics
<i>Organizational rules, laws and codes</i>	Document analysis	What are the formal rules, laws and codes within the organization that form the formal regulatory environment?
	Interviews	In what way do these organizational rules, laws and codes regulate street-level behavior and how are they followed?
<i>Type of agency</i>	Document analysis	How can the work on the street-level be specified? To what degree are the activities and results visible? Can the organization be reckoned

	Interviews	under production agency, craft agency, procedural agency or coping agency? What are the consequences of this for the daily work of street-level bureaucrats?
Organizational tasks	Document analysis Observation	What are the official tasks that are performed in the organization? Is there a difference between the official organizational tasks and how it is executed in practice?
Organizational goals	Document analysis Interviews	What are the official organizational goals? Can there be made a distinction between a general goal, operational goal and contextual goal? Is it clear for street-level bureaucrats what the official goals are and is there consensus on what these goals should be?
Management	Interviews	How are the street-level bureaucrats managed? What does the manager do to endorse organizational values on the work and to create a coherent workforce? How is this experienced?

Job-specific attributes

Indicator	Method	Specifics
Tasks	Document analysis	What are the specific tasks according to the job description?
	Observation	How can these tasks be seen in the daily practice of street-level bureaucrats?
	Interviews	What is the perception of the street-level workers of the tasks? What do they see as their task?
Routines	Observation	Which routines can be observed? Are these routines the same for everyone? What is the source of these routines?
	Interviews	Where did the street-level workers learn their skills and routines and how can differences between routines be explained?
Professional norms	Observations	Are there tasks or rules that can be seen as professional norms? What routines and tasks are specific for this line of work?
	Interviews	What are professional norms according to street-level bureaucrats? How are the professional norms experienced?

Situational factors

Indicator	Method	Specifics
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<i>Institutional setting</i>	Document analysis Observations Interviews	What is the cultural, social, economical and political environment the street-level workers work in? How can we see this institutional setting in the behavior of street-level workers? Which pressures do the street-level workers feel from outside? How do they explain the context in which they operate?
<i>Accountability</i>	Observations Interviews	Different types of accountability that play a role in the daily decision-making processes of street-level bureaucrats. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public administrative accountability - Professional accountability - Participatory accountability How do the different types of accountability influence street-level bureaucratic decisions? How does the organization deal with these different types of accountability?
<i>Work circumstances</i>	Document analysis Observations Interviews	What are the overall work circumstances in the organization? How is the work organized and which restrictions are put on the work? How are the work circumstances perceived by the street-level worker? What do they see as restrictions?
<i>Resources</i>	Document analysis	What are the available resources the organization and therefore the street-level workers can use?
<i>Expectations of peers</i>	Interviews	How and to what extent do expectations of peers influence the decision-making process and street-level bureaucratic behavior? Does the organization stimulate peer consultation? What is the place of peer consultation within the organization?
<i>Occurring situations</i>	Observations Interviews	Which kinds of situations are out of the ordinary and need special attention of different actions? When do street-level workers decide to take ad hoc action and which factors are leading? Which situations are seen as special?
<i>Client encounters</i>	Interviews	How and to what extent does the client influence the decision-making process and street-level bureaucratic behavior? When do street-level bureaucrats decide to use their discretion with a certain client? Is there a difference between organizations how clients are approached?

Individual characteristics

Indicator	Method	Specifics
<i>Personal beliefs</i>	Interviews	What are the individual personal beliefs about the

<i>about the job</i>	Observations	job? Do these beliefs differ among colleagues? Can these beliefs be seen in client encounters? Are decisions influenced by the personal beliefs?
<i>Worker ideology (professional norms)</i>	Interviews	Which ideological preferences do street-level workers about their job? Which values are most important? Where do these values come from?
	Observations	How can we see these values in the actions of street-level workers?
<i>Personal ideology</i>	Interviews	What are the personal ideals and preferences of street-level workers regardless of the job they do?
	Observations	Can we see these ideals in the actions of street-level workers?
<i>Worker preferences towards the target group</i>	Interviews	What kind of client do street-level bureaucrats prefer?
	Observations	Are there differences between types of client in how street-level bureaucrats treat them?
<i>Dimensions of professionalism</i>	Interviews	Profession (institutionalization), organization (working conditions) and professional (individual characteristics). To what extent is the street-level bureaucrat seen as a professional and how does this influence the work? Can there be made a distinction between different types of professionals and why does this occur? What are the consequences for their behavior?