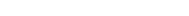# Cop culture and its transmission within police organisations

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Abstract

Aim: To study the way in which cop culture is transmitted, by examining the phenomena and cases that have been identified in the main areas of police culture: professional characteristics, values, canteen culture, code of silence.

Methodology: The author uses qualitative research, document and content analysis.

Findings: Research in the main areas of cop culture shows that deviant behaviour is rarely achieved by immediate action, by showing 'example'. One possible mode of transmission is mainly through verbalisation, which may be a kind of testing phase, followed by deviant behaviour. The detection of such cases is made more difficult by the characteristics of the police profession – (uncritical) loyalty, need for trust, conformity or empathy – thus helping to maintain and reproduce an inappropriate cop culture.

Value: Describes the role of morale in cop culture and police profession.

Keywords: cop culture, moral, transmitting cop culture, cop behaviour

Introduction

The field of cop culture, in my opinion, includes phenomena related to the activities carried out in the police profession, individual and human responses to challenges and organisational frameworks, and often to the different ways in which formal measures are implemented. The emergence of such a culture – phenomena that may or may not be in line with the aims and values of

the organisation – can be identified not only in police organisations, but in any organisation. In case of police organisations, however, it is particularly important to study this area because of the role they play in society and the legitimacy they have received.

In the majority of cases, new recruits have no practical experience of the police, many of them choose the police profession because of crime films, the hope of an exciting and eventful life (Kovács, 2020). However, the films do not adequately reflect on the expectations of the police in a democratic state, the background knowledge and the formal boundaries that are necessary to perform police duties, to ensure unity of action and to maintain public trust.

The examination of the field cop culture provides an insight not only into the phenomena – it's appropriate or inappropriate forms – but also into the way in which it is transmitted. Last but not least, the study of the phenomena reveals the conformity of the members who enter the organisation and the need and importance of belonging to the group in the police service. The identification and appropriate management of behaviours that are inconsistent with the organisation's aims and values, and the promotion of the right phenomena, are in my opinion of crucial importance in police organisations.

Cop culture and its transmission

The separation of organisational culture – police culture and cop culture – gives a broader insight into the police profession and the everyday life of the police than the official rules and regulations of the organisation (police culture). The focus of such studies is mainly on observations related to everyday activities, and the target group is mostly the police officers in the field of executive policing.

In the field of cop culture, I think we can distinguish three main areas: (1) the professional characteristics and values of the police officers, (2) the canteen culture (story-telling), i.e. the transmission of stories and anecdotes, (3) and last but not least, the blue wall of silence, which explores the withholding of information and the silence of police officers.

While in the international literature the cop culture is seen as the main obstacle to change (Chan, 1996; Benson, 2001), in Hungarian research in this area is still underrepresented in the police science literature. However, the research, studies and observations of Hungarian researchers, experts in the field of police science confirm the phenomena observed worldwide in the case of professional members, police officers of the Hungarian Police, since the police profession can be said to be universal in many aspects. In most cases, the difference is the

area of police culture, the social structures of the country or the challenges the police face and responses given to them.

In the police profession, we find countless values. *'Values are people's opinion about how things should be done well – that is their preferred norms and forms of behaviour.'* (Horváth, 2012). In most cases, the organisation defines values for its members to follow, such as professionalism, integrity, compassion and dedication, which guide individuals in their daily work. However, the values defined are not equally distributed within the organisation. *'The organisational culture also selects these according to what the community needs to do and what form of cooperation is required. Activities that require professionalism emphasise talent, while others demand loyalty, perseverance, discipline and tolerance of monotony. A body whose task is to prevent danger cannot be without courage. In the case of complex organisations based on the division of labour, there may be a need for all of the values above.'* (Finszter, 2014).

Different values are highlighted along the different service branches. In the public safety branch, *early conflict detection, avoidance of violence, cooperation*, in the law enforcement branch, *risk-taking, courage, will to win*, and in the criminal branch, *hiding, false appearances, intuition, tolerance of tension, analytical and evaluative skills* (Finszter, 2014) are values that facilitate the performance of the members' role in the organisation.

The organisation also tries to reflect its values to the outside world, since the police's slogan – e.g. *'We serve and protect'* in Hungary – conveys values such as safety, empathy, support and sacrifice. In order to exemplify the profession, the police forces, including the Hungarian Police, include the necessary moral values in codes of ethics.

The values identified in the observations and research – such as courage, comradeship, loyalty, or the negative values of being closed, cynical, suspicious, etc. – can also be distinguished by taking into account whether they are more related to the organisation or its members (which civil society members identify with the professional personnel so with police officers). A closer examination reveals that we are mainly confronted with values derived from the behaviour of the members of the organisation, which do not always correlate with the values of the organisation. On the other hand, individuals within an organisation may move towards different values, as with any other organisation.

When society perceives bias or police brutality, for example, researchers tend to focus on the negative values revealed in the field of cop culture, although there are also many positive characteristics. It is not the aim of this article to list and explain all these characteristics, but I believe that the separation of external observations and internal experiences contributes most to understanding

both the transmission process and the (human) response of members of the organisation to the police profession.

Positive attributes such as safety, camaraderie, empathy, support, caring, teamwork, loyalty, sacrifice or negative attributes such as cynicism, closed-mindedness, biases, prejudice, non-scientific tactics, and overly conservative, alienated, suspicious, authoritarianism, all only make sense in context (McCartney, 2015).

The safety that the organisation provides for society, for citizens, has a different meaning for the police officers within the organisation. On the one hand, it means the safety (job safety) that comes with the profession, and on the other hand – and this is the more pronounced interpretation from the point of view of cop culture – the support that (more experienced) members provide to their peers/partner, a kind of safety nets. For new members, this is even more important, because it helps them to avoid dangerous situations, protects them from critical mistakes, helps them to cope successfully with daily professional challenges and stress, and provides stability and safety, knowing that they have the support of more experienced colleagues to rely on. Not least, the information they share can often be a lifesaver in a more critical situation later on.

Positive attributes such as camaraderie, solidarity, sacrifice, *'logical thinking, perseverance, courage, obedience and discipline, organisational loyalty, helpfulness, self-control, sacrifice, service,'* (Kovács, 2020), teamwork, empathy and caring, all contribute to an individual feeling comfortable and safe in the organisation. They are protective factors, allowing police officers to survive, cope with stress and process what they have experienced.

Police officers take an oath that '*they shall carry out the duties assigned to them in accordance with the law, obey the orders of their superior officers... and protect public safety and public order, even at the risk of their lives.'* (URL1).

In the case of police officers, the adjectives 'alienated' and 'closed' take on a different meaning if we are familiar with the police culture of the country, the rules and expectations of police officers, such as the impeccable conduct of life test in Hungary, which (usually) makes police officers selective about whom they trust and with whom they maintain contact. These standards determine all aspects of their lives.

The perceived suspicion and mistrust on the part of police officers also takes on a different meaning when we consider that, as a result of what they have lived through, experienced – or heard from their colleagues – they see many more situations and phenomena as potentially dangerous than civilian members of society. Last but not least, they are also trained to recognise, react quickly and manage conflicts, and are bound by professional secrecy. These examples highlight the complexity of the topic and the importance of context.

Research that examines prejudicial behaviours manifested by members of the police force – assaults, use of language, and disproportionality in action – often focuses on the 'negative' characteristics of cop culture and examines these characteristics only in a negative context. I think this can lead researchers astray because it lacks the perspective of members of the police organisation, whether individual (human) or professional. Of course, the support, camaraderie, loyalty and solidarity that members of the organisation can count on and trust each other in almost any situation, the 'bonding' between police officers takes a negative form when this interconnected set of 'values' covers up unethical or illegal deviant behaviour within the organisation, often even in front of the head of the unit.

Uncritical loyalty to more experienced members can put the newcomer to the organisation at risk. Loyalty has a very high importance in police professional but uncritical loyalty means being loyal to someone just because of their membership of the organisation (police), without taking into account their actions and the (negative) consequences of those actions on oneself, the group or the organisation (police). So, I think that if the newcomer is not critical about the more experienced member and his/her actions, and chooses to be loyal to him/her because of his/her membership in the group (police), it can lead to unwanted situations.

The values and characteristics shared in the organisation and in a given group – appropriate and/or inappropriate from the point of view of the organisation – are, I believe, passed on by positive and, less often, negative 'example' on one hand, and on the other – and in my opinion the more dominant one –, mainly through verbal transmission, through storytelling. This phenomenon is what the literature calls 'canteen culture.'

As well as values and norms, it is natural in the life of an organisation to transfer work experience, especially from older colleagues to younger ones. *'Memories, successes and shared experiences are both indelible and immutable. That is what makes them unique. Traditions and legends keep them alive. Those who follow enrich the legacy of those who have passed on through their experiences, their values. However, new knowledge and practices can strengthen or weaken the previous knowledge.'* (Horváth, 2020). The stories that police officers tell each other not only have a social function, but also a purpose.

As there are no formal standards for everything, members of the police often use tried and tested practices based on daily experience, informal tricks that are not always shared with other members of the organisation but may be shared by the instructor earlier in their training, or even by a fellow student. This is why, in my opinion, training is an area of key importance, so that members entering the organisation are critical of even the 'informal' tricks and methods told by

more experienced police officers and compare them with the knowledge they have acquired in training.

The analysis of storytelling often leads to the conclusion that such stories are mainly oriented towards action, extremism and the telling of 'war stories.' (Rantatalo, 2018). (Any) member of an organisation observes his or her environment closely and tries to follow the values and norms that are transmitted to him or her by other members of the group (this is called conformity). If the organisational culture relies strongly on respect for authority and conformity, then, for example, the prejudices fostered by the organisation soon become the beliefs of the newcomers (Finszter, 2018).

On one hand, stories can convey value and experience, serve as an example to follow or *'show the way in a difficult situation,'* (Kovács, 2020). and thus, an experience heard can be a life-saver in a critical situation in the future. On the other hand, the narration of an incident experienced can also help members to process a traumatic experience, as police officers are often confronted with events that are not or rarely shared, so the detailed discussion of experiences and opinions of others can also play a supportive role in their lives, acting as a protective factor in their lives. With other words a storytelling has knowledge, value sharing and transmission function on one hand, and a 'therapeutic' function on the other.

Storytelling can also have a different role depending on to whom, what and why is being told, and in what context or field it takes place. It is also important to observe the use of terminology. Each job or profession has its own specific language. Police officers also use jargon, which is *'the uniqueness of terms used in the organisation; the use of abbreviations, acronyms, understood only by members of the organisation.'* (Kovács, 2020).

In the 'internal' space, when police officers talk among themselves, we can also observe negative expressions and cynical comments. The purpose of the humour used by the police officers, whether it is to relieve tension, to entertain or to detach their own feelings from the stories, remains to be explored by researchers. Story-telling becomes a negative activity mainly when a story is shared that contains an incident or revelation (e.g. a prejudicial expression) or value which is legally, morally or ethically reprehensible from a police professional and organisational point of view. I believe that such situations can lead to a belief in the rest of the group, and especially in a new member of the group, that the story told is accepted in the organisation and thus may become fixed as accepted behaviour (or values) at police activities. Such a (verbal) situation may subsequently create a normative environment that may provide a basis for deviant behaviours that are not accepted either by society or by the organisation, the police.

Smith, when police officers frame their stories in reports according to the law and evidence, notes that he is not suggesting that they are lying, but that they need to learn how to phrase them in order to avoid getting in trouble in court (Smith, Burnett, & Petersen, 2014). Scalia presents the negative canteen culture through a case, in the four dimensions created by Robert Reiner – isolation, cynicism, police mission, political conservatism – by analysing the case documents, police reports, audio recordings, court hearings (Scalia, 2021). In his opinion, isolation manifested itself in the labelling of people and situations, and the description of physical appearance – in the studied case – revealed the racism of the police officers. And the statements made by the police in court in relation to the case contain a dimension of cynicism and police mission.

However, Waddington warns that the verbal culture of police officers should not be confused with what they do. Being verbal is necessary for them to make their own interpretation of their actions and their role (Waddington, 1999). The story told by the police officers reveals a lot. The values of the individual, the practices he/she follows and, in my opinion, how the narrator interprets the role of the police in society, the philosophy behind that role for them. Last but not least, through storytelling and 'role modelling', unfortunately, it also enables the transmission of inappropriate values and behaviours within the organisation.

The group's misconceptions of solidarity, camaraderie, loyalty, and the need and necessity for support, the absolute trust – based on often uncritical loyalty – required to face dangerous situations, often encourage members to remain silent in everyday work, which the literature calls the 'blue wall of silence'.

In the police literature we can find several terms such as 'Blue Wall of Silence', 'Blue Curtain' or 'Blue Code of Silence' which refer to the observed phenomenon of police officers (blues) not giving out the information they have (especially information about their work or about each other).

We can also find the right and wrong manifestations of this within the organisation. From the point of view of the police and police officers, this silence may have a (positive) policing purpose *'...when we do not make a statement or occasionally disinform, in the interest of the investigation, we are not »silencing« or »misleading«, but protecting the interests of the community, under a legal mandate.'* (Janza, 2010).

The Police guidelines are also very clear in this aspect, lying or using information or events for other manipulative purposes is not allowed in situations inside or outside the organisation. *'Without being exhaustive, it is necessary to speak of those that have a specifically destructive effect, the effects of which cannot be counteracted by the collective. It is unacceptable to exclude employees from information, to use it manipulatively or to lie; it is unacceptable to make communication one-way...'* (Horváth, 2020).

The reason why police officers in most cases do not disclose the cases they have experienced is related to the police culture and regulations, since police officers are (legally) bound by confidentiality (Horváth, 2016; Janza 2010). Last but not least, members of the police also have a duty to preserve the reputation of the police (a 'rule' that can also be observed in other organisations).

The negative form of silence is most often manifested when police members do not report or disclose to their superiors acts or deviant behaviour that they perceive to be incompatible with police professionals or organisational values (Kozáry, 2017), or do not make incriminating statements to the court, thus concealing the truth.

This, however, has several dangers for both the individual and the police. Such behaviour can put an individual into unwanted situations that can result in the loss of their job. They can also damage the integrity of the police as an organisation and undermine public trust in the police. According to Behr's approach, in such cases, both speaking and listening are related to trust. The most prominent reasons why police officers choose silence being the 'Code of Honour', not to reveal their colleague to others, and fear of ostracism, exclusion, and dependence on the discretion of others to tolerate certain things – and often not big things – implicitly and not to report them mutually (Behr, 2009).

I think a more serious case is when a group culture develops within an organisation – and we don't need to think of a large group here, it could be a group of two patrol officers – that deprives those who speak out against the unethical/deviant behaviour they are experiencing of the opportunity for promotion or even makes the person unable to progress within the organisation until they are 'quit' (dismissed from service).

Of course, to understand negative silence, I think it is equally important to take into account the nature of police work, that in certain departments – e.g. riot and response services – police officers spend a lot of time together, almost living together in the police areas they are assigned, and during operations this interdependence is further enhanced, sometimes literally protecting each other's lives, so that in the course of their daily work they develop a very strong bond of trust (which they need and require to perform their duties).

On the other hand, they are also aware of the consequences that by making (allegations) against their partner, they risk their advancement within the organisation, or in the worst case, their livelihood, because the individual may lose their job and last but not least their support in carrying out daily tasks.

Nevertheless, there are cases where members (of the right values) break this silence, and there are examples worldwide where the inappropriate cop culture is exposed by them.

With regard to the regulation of police forces, including the Hungarian Police (police culture), the only theoretical option for an individual following the correct behaviour, based on the organisational framework and regulations, is to report deviant behaviour to his/her superior, which the police officer above also used.

In practice, however, according to Kardos' research (in the field of corruption) and my experience, there may be several cases, ways where a person does not identify with the wrong values represented by the group. On one hand, he/she may give informal feedback directly to his/her colleagues, or he/she may remain silent or even leave the group, e.g. goes to another unit.

I think his/her decision and reaction will be determined by factors such as the size of the group, the nature of the activity they are doing, the morale and experience of the individual, the procedures the organisation has in place for such cases and, last but not least, his/her personal situation (e.g. where he/she lives, his/her marital status).

Kardos, in his research on corruption, notes that as a consequence of reporting deviant behaviour openly and formally, in many cases the group will ostracise the member, the way he describes it is *'if he reports to his commanders, the »old foxes« who are more experienced in the service will ostracise him, discrediting him with made-up reasons in front of the leaders. All in all, they give the impression to their commanders that the person in question is not a person to work with, i.e. they do their best to get their colleague out of their team.'* (Kardos, 2016).

This also suggests, in my opinion, that older members with lower morale are using the so-called 'imprinting' method. The leader is misinformed about the individual, so the leader will have an established image of the person before necessary steps can be taken to protect themselves (and the organisation). This means in practice that the individual with lower morals informs the supervisor first (misinforms). This information contains misinformation about either the incident or the values of the higher moral person. A (false) image of the event or the (higher moral) person is thus formed (imprinted) in the supervisor's mind. When the individual with the right morals takes the necessary steps to protect himself (and the organisation), he/she will have a much harder task, if he/she succeeds at all, to change the supervisor's opinion. This can only be avoided, in my opinion, by the supervisor looking behind the incident and revealing as many objective facts as possible about the incident (or the individuals). Perhaps by listening to both members at the same time about the incident from the beginning.

So, despite the theoretical possibility of reporting deviant behaviour to a superior, practice shows that in such cases – if the group culture/moral is not right – the follower of good morals rarely emerges as the 'winner'. The (more routine)

persons involved usually question the values of the individual with higher morale that are considered paramount to the survival of the day-to-day within the organisation and by its members – e.g. loyalty, camaraderie – or, in milder cases, note that the individual is 'disrupting the group-dynamic,' and try to make him or her 'look bad' to the supervisor/leader. Yet I believe that an individual must signal his or her disagreement at the time of verbal expression, primarily informally to his or her colleagues, or else he or she may fall into the situations I have outlined above.

In Behr's view, there are few protected opportunities within police forces for officers to pass on information without revealing their identity, so an independent investigative body, a complaints office, would be needed (URL2). However, a recent British study has suggested that negative silence may also be due to lack of trust in the process itself, i. e. how to report perceived abuse? Anonymously or by name? The results of the research showed that British police officers are more willing to put up with working with a 'whistle-blower' than to trust an anonymous system (Westmarland & Conway, 2020). A further question is whether those who report will be 'punished' for their silence so far? Is disciplinary action taken only against the 'offender' or also against the one who remains silent? As a possible outcome of the proceedings, will 'only' the 'offender' be dismissed, or also the one who remained silent? The answers to these questions, however, point back to the area of police culture, to the regulated nature of the police and require further research.

The transmission of cop culture is rarely addressed by researchers, who usually formulate their theses in one of its fields.

According to Smith and his fellow researchers (Smith, Burnett, & Petersen, 2014), it is the practice of storytelling in the police that generates and re-produces organisational knowledge, sometimes promoting organisational learning. To this end, they have developed a model for the use of storytelling by members of the police force in the following cases and for the following purposes: (1) political field: organisational learning, 'big man' stories, hero stories, war stories, stories of power or oppression; (2) educational field: organisational re-learning, work-based, morality tales, 'dumb cop' stories, investigative stories; (3) social field: stories by a café, good cop/bad cop stories, resourceful cop stories, (with a superior) rebellious cop stories, acceptable stories; (4) legal field: laws, regulations, codes, narratives set in a legal framework; (5) evidence field: investigation, police reports, logic and reasoning, oral evidence, how to be fair; (6) therapeutic field: learning from bad stories, re-telling mistakes, repentance, telling new stories, ontological (existential) fitting.

In their view, these six areas are closely linked, because the political field is the ideological basis of the organisation, the educational field covers the main

stories and how they are learned, the social field covers how they fit into the organisation, the legal field shows how the official stories are developed and the evidence field covers how they are told. And the therapeutic area deals with the recovery process, if that is needed (Smith, Burnett, & Petersen, 2014). These six fields are practically in circulation and serve organisational renewal through storytelling.

Kardos, in his research on police corruption, notes that small police communities – the immediate police-professional milieu – are created within the organisation, with the police officer's norm-following or norm-breaking behaviour being formed by adopting the general patterns of behaviour there. *'The strength of the collective effect means that the professional community will not tolerate a person who does not accept the community norms for a long time.'* (Kardos, 2016). *'... if the police officer who is prone to norm violations is placed in a norm-following environment, where the commission of violations is not a practice, he will, in the course of his duty, become a follower of the community's rules and commit norm violations to a lesser extent than his own »inclinations«. The converse of the »theorem« is also true, of course. So, in the case where a norm-abiding policeman is placed in a small police community where norm violations are accepted and practiced, then over time the individual will be »integrated into the norm violations« and will give up his own moral order.'* (Kardos, 2016).

Kardos thus also shares Finszter's theory of conformity, i.e. that the adaptation to a group, the will to fit into it, will have an effect on the development of appropriate or inappropriate behaviours.

In my opinion, in the case of deviant behaviours, transmission is rarely achieved by 'leading by example', as police officers are well aware of the appropriate and inappropriate behaviours through their training. I suggest that it is more through a process whereby the deviant first makes a verbal statement. So he/she tells (verbal) stories or makes comments in the presence of the newcomer, if he/she doesn't respond, or joins in with his own stories, or even laughs at them – then he/she goes through this 'testing phase' – and later he/she may be drawn into deviant behaviour.

On the basis of the above, I think that one possible way of transmitting the cop culture can be represented as follows. Verbally telling deviant remarks and stories that are incompatible with police values, which is also a 'testing' opportunity for the new recruit. In other words, the transmission of the values represented by the group through a 'canteen culture' and then, in the event of a 'successful test', the translation of this verbalisation into action, usually in the form of abuse or omission in the presence of the new member. It is then more difficult for the

new member to stop the process, because the 'code of silence' is triggered by the expectation of uncritical loyalty from the new member by members with lower morals or, in the case of protest, the removal of the new member from the group. This exclusion, in most cases, is achieved by questioning values (loyalty or comradeship) that are central to the lives of police officers. In such cases, the member with lower morals will often use the so-called 'imprinting' method to cover up his own deviant behaviour. It means that he (or she) will inform the leader first about what has happened or about the 'character' of the new member (with higher moral), so that the leader already has a (false) image of the incident or the individual with higher morals, which is much more difficult for him/her to change – if possible at all, as a new member.

The same model of transmission naturally occurs in the case of the right values, through verbal narratives and correct behaviour/examples and 'critical' loyalty, which always represent the interests of the organisation.

There may also be cases where deviant behaviour is not preceded by verbal behaviour and verbal behaviour does not always end in deviant behaviour.

Several factors contribute to the deviant behaviour, such as the norms of the members actively or passively involved in the activity, the control by the group or the organisation, the possible consequences for the participating member on the part of the group and on the part of the organisation, due to the police culture of regulation. On the other hand, stress, frustration, disposition, a given life situation/crisis, or even a lowered blood sugar level can be important factors in the conversion of an attitude into a deviant act. Exploring these will play a role in the assessment of individual cases.

If I look at cop culture from a moral perspective and consider the police culture as the moral framework that underlies the appropriate and inappropriate values and behaviours of the organization, I clearly conclude that individuals who follow an inappropriate cop culture have lower morals than the organization. Failure to recognise these processes, the dominance of individuals following the inappropriate cop culture, the removal of a member following the correct (higher) morality, or the perpetuation of the inappropriate cop culture, not only causes problems in effectiveness or the external perception of the organisation, but also can become a determinant of who stays with the group/organisation. This will ultimately affect the future moral composition of the organisation and lately the trust in the police.

There are, in my view, several key intervention points to prevent this process.

On one hand, it is the individual's responsibility to distance himself or herself from verbal manifestations and to recognise deviant behaviour as soon as possible (which can be developed through training).

It is the responsibility of the supervisors/leaders, especially the middle management in daily contact with the executive officer, to recognise and respond appropriately to perceived i.e. verbal/written or action bias, to recognise and support the member with higher morale, to create a normative environment in the group or organisation that is in line with the police culture (the legal and ethical standards of the police).

At the organisational level, there is the possibility to identify and develop an internal system, accepted by the members, which allows the reporting of what is detected by the member with higher morale, without consequences.

In my opinion, it is not enough to punish inappropriate behaviour; an objective system for rewarding appropriate behaviour should also be developed. Last but not least, the responsibility of those who train people for the police profession can prevent the spread of inappropriate and help to spread the right cop culture in the organisation.

Conclusion

If I consider police culture as the moral framework of the organisation, then the member who follows the inappropriate cop culture clearly has lower morals than the organisation. Many narrow the field of cop culture to the observed phenomena of appropriate and inappropriate behaviours, only to identify and disseminate the phenomena and classify it as part of the field of police ethics.

I am convinced that the education of this area belongs much more to the field of leadership theory, because it is not 'only' about the knowledge of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour or phenomena, but rather about the whole process of transmission and the recognition and proper management of processes within the group, which clearly belongs to the tasks of leadership.

Research in the main areas of cop culture – police professional characteristics/values, canteen culture, code of silence – shows that deviant behaviour is rarely achieved by immediate action, by showing 'example'. Their transmission, their 'inheritance', is mainly achieved through the creation of a normative environment – created by the members – and small groups, even of two or more (e.g. two patrols), which allow deviant behaviours to be carried out and concealed within the organisation. In most cases, the mode of transmission is verbal communication first, which can also be seen as a testing phase. The reporting of later deviant behaviour is often blocked by the code of silence, which can be seen as uncritical loyalty, which means being loyal to someone just because of their membership of the organisation (police), without taking into account their

actions and the (negative) consequences of those actions on oneself, the group or the organisation (police). Further research is needed to identify the other factors behind silence in some cases and in some groups, such as conformity, empathy for each other, the same 'fate', the same morality etc.

Both police officers and leaders need to be prepared to recognise and interrupt the processes underlying inappropriate cop culture, inappropriate behaviours, not least the misinformation often used by members of the police force who follow inappropriate cop culture.

I am therefore convinced that education in this field should play a prominent role for future police officers and police leaders in particular. In order to further support the existing supportive institutional background, I consider it of the highest importance that members of the police force receive adequate training in this field before they join the organisation, i.e. before their first practical experience.

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