
POLITICAL CULTURE AS A BASIS FOR CONCEPTS OF LOCAL SECURITY AND CRIME PREVENTION.

A COMPARISON OF THE CONDITIONS IN GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS

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Abstract

In the present discussion about the actual and supposed necessity of new concepts of local security, one fact is often neglected: the success of these concepts strongly depends – apart from the legal and institutional circumstances, the amount of resources and the qualification of the staff involved – on the adaptation of these strategies to the respective national political culture. How pronounced is the citizens' need for safety and order? Which role, in the people's opinion, should the state play with regard to the maintenance and restoration of safety and order? Do the governmental institutions measure up to the citizens' expectations concerning security and does the population have trust in these institutions to fulfil the task properly? Are the citizens willing to participate or do they even wish to? What are their conditions for participation? We will analyse and compare the national shapings of the political culture of Germany and the Netherlands with regard to four distinctive elements in the following article: the comprehensions of state,

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democracy, citizenship and safety and order. The aim of this article is to demonstrate the relevance of these elements with respect to concepts of local security using an example of a two-nations-comparison.

1. Introduction

Since the 1990s the topic of local security in many countries of continental Europe has been increasingly brought up for discussion. Moreover, it has been discussed under different circumstances. Due to its tight connection to reforms of public administration and the police – with the key words *governance*, *new public management* and *Neue Steuerungsmodelle* – the issue has gained growing attention. The municipal level as a locality characterized by a multitude of social and economic problems is especially becoming a matter of great importance. Security becomes a local task, local crime prevention even advances towards a key issue of rehabilitating and integrating local politics (Prätorius, 2002: p. 76). Certain incidents which reduce the quality of life of the local citizens and spoil the appearance of the community (graffiti, neglected public areas, insufficiently lighted spaces, etc.) lead to rising pressure to meet the expectations of the citizens and, additionally, to a growing interest of the community to improve the local security situation.

Accordingly, the concepts of fighting and preventing crime receive more of a local focus. The key words *community policing* and *community crime prevention* stand for a development within which local security strategies undergo a completely new form of articulation and acceptance. Behind that, many different measures are concealed in order to stop the rising fear of crime and/or crime rates. Just as heterogeneous as the extensive measures are the institutional conditions, the practical implementation, the personnel line-up, the thematic emphasis and, finally, the volume of resources. The focus on the cooperation of local participants in particular is new in these developing arrangements. *Crime*

prevention committees are institutions which mainly initiate, support and reinforce inter-institutional cooperation. Several forms of cooperation exist between the police, municipal authorities, private security services and citizens as well. Many of these projects in Europe, however, are still in a testing phase.

How successful the few, already established and institutionalised cooperation projects actually are – with respect to the fight against and the prevention of crime, disorder, incivilities and fear of crime – can often not be statistically proven. Scientific evaluations are rare and often face great methodical problems. From nation to nation there are at times very different political-administrative and legal-institutional conditions, so that the scope of certain models and measures is *a priori* limited and a one-to-one-transformation is only rarely possible.

One important factor often neglected in the discussion on the transference of particular strategies, in some countries successfully applied, and their prediction of success, is the respective national *political culture*. Often it provides the binder to harmonize all other factors and, accordingly, to build the basis for success especially of cooperative security strategies. The goal of this article is to examine the importance of the prevailing political culture for the initiative, the formal principle and the successful outcome of security strategies.

In this article, we will analyse within a two-nations-comparison which enhances the cultural conditions of local security strategies, their differences and similarities as well as their possible influences on the arranging of local security, especially those elements which establish a connection between the cultural configuration of a political system and the authorization and function of the respective national system of security. In this respect the term political

culture can be analytically divided into four elements: the comprehension of government, the comprehension of democracy, the comprehension of citizenship and the comprehension of safety and order. We will compare Germany and the Netherlands according to these criteria. Germany and the Netherlands were chosen because both nations embody highly developed and differentiated democratic systems which are based on different institutional patterns and dissimilar ways of political process. As far as the research methods are concerned, the political culture of a particular nation can be reconstructed from the observation of political behaviour, analysis of speech, symbols and the evaluation of survey data (Rohe, 2003: p. 113). However, this article is confined to the analysis of scientific literature dealing with the moulding of the political culture in Germany and the Netherlands with particular respect to the four elements mentioned above.

Firstly, definition and concept of political culture and its connection to local security are analysed. This is then followed by a comparison between Germany and the Netherlands after a short overview of their respective national historical backgrounds and the cultural bases – the shaping of the four elements in Germany and, in a second step, in the Netherlands. This comparison of the German and Dutch political culture sometimes may appear too sweeping a statement to the reader. However, this is necessary as fundamental statements concerning a national political culture cannot be made without general wording. Finally, the results are juxtaposed in the conclusion. The article concludes with a prospect for further usability of the results with respect to future arrangements of local security strategies in relation to the respective national political culture.

2. Political Culture – Term and Concept

In their pioneering study "The Civic Culture" (1963), the American scientists Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba were the first to align culture with political science. The intention was to understand the citizens' attitudes and views concerning political subjects, structures and processes. Their comparatively broad understanding of political culture was later specified in various directions. Apart from an extensive understanding of political culture as the totality of structures and functioning of political institutions, an understanding in the narrow sense exists stating that political culture describes the way societal conflicts are settled politically (Lehmbruch, 1967: p. 13). The notion that political culture implies not only orientations and attitudes towards certain political regimes, but also patterns of recognition and decisions, which form the basis of these attitudes, was widely accepted.

The political culture strongly interacts with the respective political system it refers to. With regard to David Easton's (1965) functional model, a political system can be described as follows: any political system receives inputs from its environment and converts them into political decisions (outputs), which, in turn, produce feedbacks and thus in turn become inputs to the political system. Under these circumstances, the political system shapes the political culture and vice versa. Thus, attitudes, norms and behaviour are institutionally manifested. The political culture is a relative constant of a political system in so far as it is subject of historical changes and a certain temporal dynamic (Berg-Schlosser, 2003: p. 8; Rohe, 2003: p. 124). Gerhard Lehmbruch (1967) uses term and concept of political culture in a special way: he uses political culture to denote the subject-matter of political conflict and rules of the game concerning dealing with these conflicts. He differentiates between two democratic models: the

competitive democracy and the consociational democracy. A competitive democracy is understood to be a type of democracy wherein dealing with conflicts and political decisions is dominated by the principle of majority rule and competition between political parties. In a consociational democracy, however, conflicts and decisions are not primarily attended by competition and majority rule, but, according to the Latin term, *concordia*, by negotiation, compromise and matters of proportion. The salient difference is that a competitive democracy allows the majority of parliament and the executive sole political shaping and focuses on the majority rule, whereas the consociational democracy limits the majority's and executive's room to manoeuvre in favour of a sharing of power with certain minorities and thus is founded on principles of consensus. Salient features of a consociational democracy are therefore broad coalition governments which include all major groups, a cultural autonomy within these groups, a system of proportional representation and a right of veto of the minorities (Lehmbruch, 1967: pp. 7-8; Lijphart, 1977: p. 25). Furthermore, another important feature of consociational democracy is the fact that the political elites decisively contribute to the conflict-solving, which is only possible because of the willingness of the elites to make concessions and a pragmatic reflection on political facts (Lijphart, 1975: p. 103). The political culture in consociational democracies shows procedures of bargaining among the elites and a strong identification of the electors with their own group (Lehmbruch, 1967: pp. 15, 30).

National standard patterns of conflict solving especially are found in these outlined theoretical categorizations which add another elementary mark to the political culture of a nation. All in all, political culture is an expression for the subjective dimension of the societal basis of political

systems and encompasses the politically relevant characteristics of personality, the state of political awareness and mentalities as well as the predispositions to political behaviour which are rooted in attitudes and norms and actual political conduct.

As far as the usage of the term political culture in connection with security policy is concerned, a thematically relevant focus of this concept is necessary. The framework of the comparison between Germany and the Netherlands is marked by four already mentioned cultural elements which are shortly explained in the following paragraph.

The present shaping-processes of the political culture in Germany and the Netherlands are first analysed with regard to the comprehension of state. Of which significance is the state to the respective citizens, which role is attributed to the state, with what expectations is it confronted and of what character is the connection between state and citizen? With regard to the comprehension of democracy the respective national governmental shaping and, in analogy to this, the democratic rules of the game and procedures and the general attitude of the citizens towards the democratic system are emphasized on the basis of the theoretical typology of the principle of competition and consensus. Directly connected to this matter is the comprehension of citizenship containing the national ideas, perceptions and estimations of one's own opportunities, on the one hand, of influencing and participating and, on the other, the extent and type of the actual political commitment. Finally, the comprehension of safety and order deals with the following questions: which ideas concerning security, safety and order predominate among the population, which status do they occupy and to whom are competence and responsibility ascribed in this area? Additionally, the historical background of the respective national political culture is taken into account first; it is meant to form a framework

which is kept within the collective memory and thus lasts up to the present. The observation that the respective attitudes, behaviour and mentalities are manifested within the institutional structures and for their part produce these structures is true also for the four elements focussed on in this article. They are tightly connected and mutually dependent.

As the term political culture can be used normatively as well as descriptively (Berg-Schlosser, 2003: p. 7), it is important to point out that we start out from a descriptive, analytical comprehension of political culture. Even if one can understand political culture in an individual dimension and regard it in interaction to the collective moulding, in this article only the general national political culture is examined. Political culture is thus understood as general consensus which is supported by the whole of society and, as a kind of unwritten constitution (Rohe, 2003: p. 124), controls political life.

3. Germany

3.1 Historical Background

Before the Federal Republic of Germany was founded, German history was characterised by many changes in the system and radical changes from the empire to the Weimar Republic and finally to a National Socialists' dictatorship. Until the end of the World War II in Germany a conservative, authoritarian tradition prevailed, which was based on the principle of command and obedience and authoritarian attitudes and ideas (Gabriel, 1994: p. 98). Germany was characterized by a general differentiation between society and state, an absolute compliance in the face of governmental authority and a conspicuous lack of interest in political participation.

After World War II the allies installed in Germany a political system based on democratic principles. However, although the political leadership was determined for democracy, the citizens had not yet been socialised in the political culture of a democracy (Lepsius, 1990: p. 63). As a consequence, the political culture in the first years of the Federal Republic was extremely *output*-orientated (Berg-Schlosser and Schissler, 1987: p. 23), meaning that the Germans confined themselves basically to a passive pursuance of political events and the participation in elections. As far as the relations between citizens and state are concerned, the element of fulfilling one's duty was predominant. Civil rights had their roots in this fulfilment of duty (Vollrath, 1990: p. 277).

The prevailing view, characterized by the conviction that no great achievements could be made by participation, the conviction of one's own incompetence in matters of political questions and the abstinence from political discussions, led for the time being to a low extent of political commitment as far as membership in political parties and organised groups or participation in citizen's initiatives were concerned (Almond and Verba, 1963). Not until the early 1960s did the Germans start to become more interested in politics and began to see themselves as fairly politically competent (Niedermayer, 2001: pp. 19-33).

The failure of the former political systems and the establishment of the present democracy from outside offered the Germans only few opportunities to develop democratic values and behaviour and a fundamental understanding of democracy. This divergence between the political system on the one hand and the political awareness on the other continues to have its effects today.

3.2 Comprehension of State

Even today the state is considered to be the central point of

reference of the German political culture, with the consequence that nearly the whole of politics is completely identified with the state (Vollrath, 1990: pp. 270-275). A large part of the German population does not regard itself as being a part of the state, but remains rather distanced from the state; Vollrath (1990: p. 270) characterises it as an apolitical adoration of the state. An alternative expression to characterise this attitude towards the state is the phrase authoritarian political culture, which took the place of the term subservient spirit; the latter was used until the late 1960s to describe the German attitude (Gabriel, 1994: p. 117).

Along with the dominant role of the state, a distinct public demand towards the state to meet the requirements of the citizens has been developed. The strong position of the state is, on the one hand, linked with great confidence in the state and its ability to regulate and control, on the other hand arise high expectations concerning the state's capabilities (Gabriel, 1994: p. 118). The citizens judge the state and its institutions by the extent to which their expectations and demands are being fulfilled (Gebhardt, 1999: p. 24). In times of increasing crises in the labour market and the social welfare system the Germans tend to interpret societal crises as a failure of the state. Accordingly, growing societal crises call into question the state's capacity and ability to control.

One reason for this specifically German comprehension of the state is the deeply rooted legitimacy of the constitution: the fundamental identification of the citizens with the institutions and the meaning of the German constitutional state is based on this document (Gebhardt, 1999: p. 18). This loyalty to the constitution shapes the political process in terms of a tight bond with the law and the tendency to treat political questions as legal conflicts. The Germans are prone to regulate all problems in detail by resolutions,

principles and legal sections. This "legalism" and the endeavour to transfer political questions into legal questions demonstrates once more the state-centred German political culture. The sphere of law is primarily assigned to the state and thus also the resolving of political or legal conflicts.

Finally, the comprehension of state reveals itself in the relation between citizens and public administration as well as between public administration and the state. The German population experiences the public administration as an organ implemented and governed by the authority. The administration authorities themselves seem to look upon their rules and norms as absolutely definite, unalterable and determined by the state. Especially in cases of conflict, the administration authorities are inclined to cling to legal norms instead of trying to solve a problem by means of discussion and debate. This behaviour has a strong impact on the relation to the citizens: it conveys the notion that the legal norms and regulation, which form the basis of the administrations' actions, do not allow any discretionary powers concerning exceptional cases and adequate operation (Lepsius, 1990: p. 78). The German civil service which is regarded as particularly tight and loyal to the state, emphasizes the distant attitudes to governmental institutions and political power (Greiffenhagen, 1984: pp. 54-68).

3.3 Comprehension of Democracy

The Federal Republic of Germany, which is strongly characterized by federalist structures and local self-administration, cannot be clearly assigned to a certain type of democratic system. At the national level representative democratic structures prevail, whereas at a local level certain elements of direct democracy exist, such as the election of the mayor by the citizens, the public petition or

the public decision. Whereas at the local level some features of a consociational democracy are discernable, at the national level elements of a competitive democracy exist, for instance that the lack of plebiscites and majority decisions in parliament predominate and furthermore a willingness by all parties to compromise. Consequently, no distinct preference for the principle of competition or consent exist, but a certain predominance of the principle of competition cannot be denied. This is reflected within the political culture. A salient feature of the comprehension of democracy is the way of dealing with political conflicts. Particularly with regard to discussions between different political parties and societal organisations, a culture of conflict with emphasis on competition is revealed. Thus, the evident rejection of the respective party opposition is not only part of a special rhetoric of conflict (Lepsius, 1990: p. 81), but also an element of a political manner characterized by "all or nothing".

In principle, a lack of aptitude of conflict is ascribed to the Germans. Aptitude of conflict in this context includes, among a sceptical basic position concerning politics, characteristics such as willingness to compromise and the ability to cope with disappointments (Greiffenhagen, 1984: p. 65). Symptoms of these lack of aptitude of conflict are, for instance, an insufficient understanding of political opposition and little respect for minority groups. Among the Germans the widely held opinion is that politics exists in order to avoid arguments instead of dealing with conflicts and finding a compromise.

The fear of conflicts and the tendency towards harmony have a long tradition in Germany. Presumably, this has its origin in a distinct respect of the Germans towards rank and sovereignty of the state, its institutions and public employees. According to the German political tradition only "a man of action" is regarded as a strong politician

(Greiffenhagen, 1984: p. 66). Political debates are not treated as necessary elements of democracy, but weakness. But since the existence of abilities to carry out conflicts and to find compromises are necessary requirements for life within a democracy, this denotes an obvious weakness of the political system in Germany. Consequently, there is a reason for optimism, if, in comparison to previous years, the tendency emerges that the Germans nowadays seem to gain more capability of conflict. The prevalent need for harmony seems to dissolve gradually and thus makes room for a better understanding of institutionalised political opposition of interests, political conflicts and compromise (Gluchowski et al., 1993: p. 184).

3.4 Comprehension of Citizenship

Within the first decades of the Federal Republic, the willingness of the population to any form of political participation was very modest, not least because of a lack of identification with the democratic system and a state-centred political culture. In comparison with the 50s and 60s the demand as well as the willingness to participate in the political process outside of elections has clearly increased.

Whereas Germans in the meantime show relatively constant participation as far as conventional ways of political commitment are concerned (polls, political discussions, etc.), the participation in rather unconventional forms (strikes, demonstrations, etc.) is strongly dependent upon a particular event. On the whole, however, the unconventional forms have become increasingly popular (Niedermayer, 2001: pp. 215-217). The preferred form of commitment is the temporary and thematically limited project-orientated participation (Roth, 1999: p. 81). The conventional forms of participation, however, seem to lose popularity. The poll, which has been fairly constant during

the past decades (Niedermayer, 2001: pp. 163-185) as well as increasing party activities since the party-related activities (Niedermayer, 2001: pp. 186-212) are decreasing.

Consequently, a change is indicated: the citizens seem to attach more importance to unconventional forms of political commitment than they did in the past (Weidenfeld and Korte, 1991: pp. 105-106). Altogether, political interest and commitment have become stable on a relatively high level (Weidenfeld and Korte, 1991: p. 100). The Germans have lost their passive obedience concerning politics, however, they still estimate their influence on the political process to be very little (Gluchowski et al., 1993: p. 185). This ambivalence is revealed in the way of commitment: Germans do become committed, though in a pragmatic way, less out of political conviction (Weidenfeld and Korte, 1991: p. 142).

3.5 Comprehension of Safety and Order

The Germans have a strong requirement of safety and order (Weidenfeld and Korte, 1991: p. 81). Security and the political task of crime-fighting are themes in which the citizens in Germany are highly interested (Reeb, 2003: p. 19). The state has the function, in regard to the execution of safety and order, which goes beyond the citizens' interests, and is regarded as competent for this.

Thus, Germans have high expectations for the jurisdiction, which correspond with their trust in function and proceedings of the judicial system and the administrative institutions (Niedermayer, 2001: pp. 55-79; Weidenfeld and Korte, 1991: p. 111). More than two out of three Germans have faith in the jurisdiction and the police (Dörmann and Remmers, 2000: pp. 13-26; Gabriel, 1994: p. 116, 1999: p. 213).

An indicator of the high demands for security by the Germans, is the relatively high fear of crime which,

however, seems to have decreased in the last years (Dörmann, 1996: p. 22; Dörmann and Remmers, 2000: pp. 26-28). The consequential demands refer to the understanding that only the state is responsible for taking action against insecurity. The citizens lament that the police do not do enough to protect them, and they would like more police presence on the streets, harsher sentencing and that cases are dealt with faster (Dörmann, 1996: p. 23). Whereas the number of sceptics in some political fields (e.g. labour market politics), who have lost their faith in the state's ability to govern, has grown since the 90s, other spheres, where the state carries a special responsibility, are less criticised (Greiffenhagen, 1997: p. 321), especially where public safety and order are concerned. Here the state seems to be increasingly adopting the role of insurance carrier, especially for prevention (Greiffenhagen, 1997: p. 322).

4. The Netherlands

4.1 Historical Background

The birth of the Dutch state and the development of a national consciousness began with the eighty years long war for freedom from 1568 to 1648, after which the Netherlands became independent of the Spanish dominion. Particularly due to the influence of the reformation, the Netherlands developed a culture on which liberal characteristics of religious tolerance and plurality are built today (Lepszy, 1984: p. 270). This plurality was accelerated by the absence of a strong central state-run authority. Seen under the perspective of public law, the Netherlands form a group of independent federal states without a national centre of decision. The French occupation in 1795 was connected with many renewals such as the creation of a unitary law and a national administration, which still existed until the establishment of constitutional monarchy.

1848 was the year of birth of the liberal stamped constitution which introduced the process of democratisation.

Many of those societal elements of structure still exist today. Mostly characteristic for the Dutch society is the "pillarization" ("verzuiling"). This term perfectly illustrates such a structure in which ideologically and religiously differing groups (Protestants, Catholics, socialists, liberals) each exist in a different pillar, coexisting in harmony without any remarkable interaction or communication between them. The basic idea of this structure is the most complete possible integration of the citizens into the whole structure of the concerned pillar (Lepszy, 2003: p. 362).

Until the 1960s the Netherlands case with its ideological pillarization, provided a clear picture.(Righart, 1993: p. 57). The political power was divided between all important political forces of Dutch society, who participated equally in all political processes of decision and decision-making. On this basis the Netherlands were successful at establishing a durable stability in the system in spite of a strongly religiously and economically strong segmented society. The consociational value in the Netherlands has mainly historical roots. Originally, strongly segmented societies have had to develop patterns of compensation in order to make the particular societal groups – at least their elites – willing to compromise. The pillarization was over many years a useful political arrangement for the Dutch pluralistic and ideologically segmented society (Righart, 1993: p. 60).

Since the late 1960s the consociational democratic structure of pillars began to break up ("depillarization"), which ended in the beginning of the 1980s (Wielenga, 2004: p. 62). The confessional lines of separation – once

constitutive for the pillarization – lost their meaning, the social settings lost their formative influence and the fixation with parties became looser (Lepszy, 2003: p. 365). This meant that the state took on a new value, too. Since the early 1990s the corporate integration with the state has been criticised again und again (Righart, 1993: p. 58).

4.2 Comprehension of State

The Netherlands place special value on the orientation of community. They trust the societal capital. Thus, in the Netherlands it is less the state than society that is seen as a link within a pluralistic community of values and interests. The citizens accept the state as a necessary frame-setter, the function of state as a "guardian of public morals" appears strange to them (Kennedy, 2004: p. 193). In this aspect nothing has changed, although in recent years the number of people who would like to see clearly defined rules and harsher political authority has grown (Kennedy, 2004: p. 237).

The reason why the Netherlands are ready to follow the decisions of the political elites, is their traditional mentality of regents (Lepszy, 1984: p. 275; von der Dunk, 1998: pp. 42-43). This doesn't mean an aloof and authority-oriented subordination under the policy makers, but rather certainty and trust that the political leadership will adequately represent all the particular interests. Because of the increasing complexity and lack of transparency of the processes of decision and negotiation – pushed by the cultural revolution in the late 60s – the citizens' scepticism of the elites and experts is growing (von der Dunk, 1998: p. 45).

4.3 Comprehension of Democracy

The Dutch understanding of democracy is stamped by consensus, compromise and inclusion of as many participants as possible. A "politics of accomodation"

(Lijphart, 1975: p. 103) dominates. Behind the orientation to consensus stands the opinion, that in principle every problem can be solved through detailed conversation (Kennedy, 2004: p. 193). Tolerance of ethnic, political and religious minorities does not embody a national virtue, based on voluntarism and piety, but a cultural value, developed over time due to pragmatism and necessity (Zahn, 1993: p. 43). Up to now the acknowledgement of pluralistic structures, the consideration of minorities and the historically found national self-consciousness still exist and are held together in a deep national consensus in spite of regional differences (Lepszy, 2003: p. 365). This again determines the handling of political conflicts and different opinions. The preparation, meeting and realisation of decisions in the Netherlands happen in forms that can be described as "civilized", "serious" and "consequent".

All this shows that the political system of the Netherlands stands under the sign of the principle of consensus. In the Dutch *Overleg-democratie* deliberation, consultation and making compromises between government and opposition takes priority. The expression *Overleg* has no exact pendant in German or English, but can be translated as "common pre-considerations" or "frank consultation", where many parties participate and almost always attain an often vastly vague agreement, but not necessarily an obligatory resolution. The emphasis of leadership and decision making by the government – "the government's right to govern" – and the character of experts and the lack of transparency of the political processes of decision, however, point to elements of consociational democracy too (Daalder, 1995: p. 9-10). Moreover, the purely proportional representation, the fact that the mayor is elected by a nationwide aspect of proportional representation and that all communities have the same law are examples of characterising system of proportional representation until today.

Thus, the Dutch answer to political provocations is rather moderate and pragmatic and is dominated by the search for consensus and similarities. This often admired orientation to consensus has however its dark sides. There is a tendency for those problems to be repressed in which no consensus could be reached (Wielenga, 2004: p. 106). Because of the "compulsory" compromises and coalitions many problems are factored out or discussed again and again without any result (Lepszy, 2003: p. 369).

4.4 Comprehension of Citizenship

With the process of depillarization in the Netherlands grows the political trust in the possibilities of participation and influence within the population (Lepszy, 1984: p. 285). Until then such a support was not necessary due to the pillar structure. Unconventional forms of participation are becoming especially more popular. Citizens stage events such as demonstrations and other actions of protestations, organise themselves in citizens' coalitions and seek out direct contact to the mayors and community parliaments (Gabriels, 1999: p. 134; Lepszy, 1984: p. 288).

An interesting fact is that community politics become more and more important; citizens take the lead in caring about problems in their direct neighbourhood (Gabriels, 1999: p. 136). In the Netherlands community politics as an arena of direct meeting of state and citizenship traditionally have a lesser meaning than national politics. The debate of community politics was dominated by national parties, themes and lines of conflict (Derksen, 1994: p. 119). Thus, a new development has begun.

4.5 Comprehension of Safety and Order

The Dutch tolerance and liberality show only one part of their political culture. Another part is the fear of disorder and insecurity (Kennedy, 2004: p. 193). Security has, in the eyes of the population, the character of a social civil right

that is ordered to the general commission to care for the state. In a general view the maintenance of security is understood as a main task of the state. The citizenship trusts the police and takes their advice often when in direct contact (Gabriel, 1994: p. 116). The role of the police can be defined as a service and advisory board in questions of security.

A combination of the awareness of problems and controls is responsible for the fact that circumstances and occurrences that affect public security and order, are not pushed to the background. The Dutch want them under societal control. They expect that many things concerning the public order ought to be possible. There are borders that nobody is allowed to cross. Within these borders many things are possible (Zahn, 1993: p. 24), but only as long as control is kept (Meershoek, 2001). For the Netherlands, rationality and prevention, and not repression and punitiveness, are decisive in dealing with crime (Kennedy, 2004: p. 193). The fact that they shun hard punishment and authoritarian methods of punishment can be explained by their shocking experiences during the national-socialistic terror in World War II (von der Dunk, 1998: p. 51). A good example for the Dutch liberality is their drug policies, which is criticised inland and abroad.

The Dutch comprehension of safety and order is specific in the way that they are completely conservative in their care about safety and order, but confront this care liberally (Kennedy, 2004: p. 194). While the Dutch agree that the state should regulate and sanction deviant behaviour as little as possible, they expect the citizenship to be competent and ready to take part in solving the problems. If somebody disturbs the public order, it is, in the Dutch point of view, less an offence against the state, but more an offence against law and humanity, so that what follows is appropriately less a lawful and formal sanction, but rather a

societal and informal sanction (Zahn, 1993: p. 27).

The trust in the societal power has increased, however, significantly in the last years and is being replaced more and more – mainly in the large cities – by a diffuse feeling of insecurity. The Dutch have growing distrust of and doubts about the administrations' ability to still guarantee public security (Kennedy, 2004: p. 235). Security is mainly a valve for the identity crisis and disorientation in the Netherlands, from which the call for a political authority, for strict norms and values and for *law and order* leak more and more (vgl. de Beus, 1999: p. 114; Kennedy, 2004: pp. 235-237; Wielenga, 2004: p. 108).

5. Conclusion

A short look at the *historical background* of the neighbouring nations, Germany and the Netherlands, anticipates – with regard to political culture – only few similarities and rather more eminent and deep-seated differences. The Netherlands are an example of a mature democracy with a stepwise, but continuous modernization of politics, society and economy, whereas Germany symbolizes a late democracy, created only with foreign help after some strong political frictions and eruptions.

The differences which concern the *comprehension of state* lay in the different historical backgrounds. The fact that the Germans are in a relatively early stage of their democratic socialisation becomes obvious if one, for example, looks at their strong orientation to rules with which they don't negotiate political conflicts in *political* discourses, but transform them into lawful discourses and by do so order them into the sphere of the state. The German political culture is extremely centred around the state. The state is associated with authority, neutrality and the competence to

regulate in questions of security. It is not perceived as a part of society, but as a part divided from society. Today one can still see the tendencies of a comprehension of state that can be characterised as a strong belief in authorities. Therefore, Germans have many expectations of the state to provide security. On the contrary, in the Netherlands there is a narrow connection between the state and society. The Dutch trust the societal forces of self-regulation. They identify with their state and support it, but its role can be characterised as only providing a framework, not as an authority. Whereas the Netherlands take *society* as a community of values, in Germany the *state* is in this position.

With regard to the *comprehension of democracy* the German political culture is very multifaceted. The institutional arrangements cannot be clearly assigned to consociational and competitive democratic political culture. Whereas on the federal plane, competition oriented processes are dominant, on the plane of the communities, there are only some competition oriented elements. In principle, Germans lack the ability to manage conflicts and find compromises. They always try to avoid a frank political negotiation of conflicts, because for them conflicts are not a necessary part of the policy process, but an avoidable deficiency. This might be the reason why they delegate political conflicts to the courts. In the Netherlands the principles of orientation to consensus and compromise that exist within structures of consociational democracy stand in the focus of political negotiations. Traditionally, political decisions are discussed with participation of as many particular interests as possible until a compromise is reached which is acceptable for all interlocutors. Most Dutch people are of the opinion that every problem can be solved if there is a long enough discussion with experts about it. The Dutch *culture of conversation* stands therefore

in opposite to the German *culture of rules*. The German democratic behaviour is established by constitutional rules, the Dutch by informal processes of compromise (de Beus, 1999: p. 103). Concerning the actual tendencies – such as a growing ability to cope with conflicts on the German side and a decrease in tolerance, an increasing critique in the lack of transparency of decision making and the wish for stricter norms and their adherence on the Dutch side – both nations seem to approximate each other.

Regarding the *role of the citizen*, it can be said, that though the readiness of Germans to participate in political life had been very low for a long time, there has been a change to a relatively constant political involvement. According to their understanding of state and democracy, the Netherlands can expect more responsibility, competence and willingness to participate from its citizens. Here one can see the longer democratic tradition and the greater trust in society. The differences between both nations with regard to the willingness and extent of political participation are not significant and, in an international comparison, are relatively high. The main difference is the lack of trust of the Germans in their possibilities to influence policy and their retreat to temporary event-oriented participation.

The Dutch, as well as the Germans, have a strong desire for safety and order. In their *comprehension of safety and order* they differ on the point of *how* they cope with their requirement for (more) security. Whereas the Germans, according to their pronounced loyalty to law, try to regulate safety and order by very detailed and copious regulations and laws, the Dutch go by way of very frank confrontation with situations that have a bad influence on public safety and order, in order to accept them as a part of society. Prevention as a possibility to reduce structures of opportunity and situations of risk leading to crime is more pronounced than in Germany where repressive und punitive

attitudes dominate. The incarceration rate, which is higher than in the Netherlands, is an indicator of a stronger punitiveness of the German population. Independent from the intensity, frequency and kind of contact with the police, the citizens in both countries are very satisfied with the work of the law enforcement. The police in Germany are seen as law enforcement officers, in the Netherlands as an instance of service and advisory. Consequentially, the distance between police officers and citizens is in Germany much greater than in the Netherlands.

6. Prospects for local Security Strategies

What conclusions for the national possibilities and restrictions of local concepts of security can be drawn from all of this, especially from those that concentrate on the cooperation between private and public actors? The answer to this question is not only interesting for the policy-analysis of security, but, in practice, for the police and the local community. Here is where the already drawn lines between the political culture and security should connect.

If one looks at the results of the analysis, one can see that especially those concepts of security based on cooperation and prevention, strike against many political-cultural barriers. First, they must cross the distance between state and citizens. A cooperation between public and private institutions symbolises a new level of confrontation within the German political culture which is centred around the state. Such cooperation mean new claims with regard to the behaviour and role of the citizens for which they must practice. Citizens have to overcome their traditional passive attitude towards the public actors giving safety and order. Moreover, there is a need for many lawful regulations for cooperation within the political sector of security, as the German political culture is built on a strong trust in the law. In Germany there is a lawful netting of competence

between the police (belonging to the federal state) and the office of public order (belonging to the community). The high degree of formalisation and the strong obligation to law make it hard for German police to be near to the public and to work with American community-policing-concepts (Behr, 1998: p. 194, 2002: p. 178).

This explains why cooperation between the police and the office of public order ("Ordnungspartnerschaften") and between the police and the public ("Sicherheitspartnerschaften") have been so far limited to particular federal states and have no nationwide enlargement. Cooperation between the state and the public in Germany boils down to citizens being institutionally "encapsulated"; they cannot act autonomously and or as intermediaries because they are bound to instructions, as Wurtzbacher (2004) exemplifies with the "security patrols" ("Sicherheitswächter") in Bavaria. But the proliferation of crime prevention committees indicates a change in Germany, at least concerning the cooperation between the actors from the public sector. Thus, up to now citizens are scarcely represented in those arrangements (comprehended with further references van den Brink, 2005: pp. 64-67) which points out the strong differentiation between citizens and state still present.

The frankness of the confrontation with problems, the participation of societal groups as much as possible in solving the problems and the trust of the citizens in their own power in solving problems are the basis of the Dutch political culture on which cooperative security concepts can be built. The participation of the citizens and the transformation of responsibility to society embody an important element of the Dutch political culture. Any kind of community policing is in the Netherlands much more possible than in Germany. The main reason is that the Dutch police officers are not bound by the principle of

legality, but by the principle of opportunity (for further differences in the law see Schulze, 2005). This means more options for the officer to manage conflicts, deviant behaviour and crime. The police not only react flexibly by paying regard to the individual circumstances, but prefer to act with prevention, because the Dutch are used to frank confrontation with nonconformity and demand this from their police, too. The close feedback from the police to the population guarantees that the police have the function as a institution wherein people can receive advice and rely on police services. That is the basis for trust in the police on the one hand, and for the closeness of the citizens on the other, which makes the work of the police easier and provides good conditions for cooperation. This is favoured by the mayor's responsibility for public order and referring his authority towards municipal administration *and* police.

When security strategies for local government are conceived, the more the knowledge about the political culture in Germany and the Netherlands, summarised in this article is considered, the better the prognosis is that the subsequent measures are successful in practice. The "closer" to the people the concepts planned and realised are, the higher the probability that they will reach the people and act in their interests. As places of political decisions and direct realisations, communities are attested a close proximity to problems and citizens, which predestines them to take over the tasks of public safety and order, which do concern organised (economic) crime and international terrorism. An argument for a more local design of concepts of security and prevention in Germany is that the increase of political participation of citizens in the communities is very strong and steady (Greiffenhagen, 1984: p. 68), therefore there exist relative good possibilities for citizens to become engaged. On the contrary, in the Netherlands due to the low meaning and attractiveness of local policy and the

low level of contact of the municipal administration to the citizens (Derksen, 1994: p. 127), they have to work further to create the conditions necessary for a local approach. But the newest developments show a trend towards more participation in the community.

With this article we have tried to clarify that the political culture as a "soft" factor for conception, implementation and realisation of security relevant measures plays a significant role and makes a national culture specific agreement necessary. The field must gather further knowledge and make this available to those concerned. Especially a "zooming down" of the political studies' understanding of political culture from the national to the regional level could be useful. Such a differentiated understanding could place new emphasis on political culture by focusing on questions of social psychology in the context of local policy on security and on the *rise* of a political culture through local socialisation instead of on their single actual *forms*. From this – continuing and modifying the debate on the necessity of a new structure of the community as the communitaristics like Etzioni (1993) postulate – starting-points could be developed especially for Germany to promote a conflict-forming instead of a conflict-displacing political culture. Thus, the urgent necessary mobilization of citizens to help to give security to the community will only be successful if there is a strong public consciousness to feel responsible and self-assured enough to solve the actual problems in the public domain, standing in a direct or indirect context with crime.

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