Coordination practice

INTERVENTION TEAMS AND THE COLLABORATIVE APPROACH: ENFORCEMENT PROPERTY AND PERSON IN THE CITY OF ROTTERDAM

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This case describes the intervention teams that have been operating in the city of Rotterdam since 2001. These teams aim at contributing to public safety by making house calls and checking on people's private situation in an integrated approach that combines enforcement with offering care. From 2004 till 2013, intervention teams have operated within an integrated coordination structure that was established in order to improve coordination between different types of intervention teams, and between the teams and the city services that had to follow up on the information that was provided by the intervention teams. The intervention teams continue their work, but the coordination structure ended on 1 January 2013. However, there are still lessons that can be drawn from this.

Preface

This coordination practice is a result of research within COCOPS Work Package 5: The Governance of Social Cohesion: Innovative Coordination Practices in Public Management.

The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme under grant agreement No. 266887 (Project COCOPS), Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities.

The COCOPS project (Coordinating for Cohesion in the Public Sector of the Future) seeks to comparatively and quantitatively assess the impact of New Public Management style reforms in European countries, drawing on a team of European public administration scholars from 11 universities in 10 countries.

The specific objectives of Work Package 5 are:

- To search and identify emerging coordination practices and related steering instruments in public management in European public sectors.
- To compile a case study catalogue of such coordination practices with direct utility to public managers and the research community.
- To analyse the functioning of such coordination practices and to assess their value in countering public sector fragmentation and delivering public value.

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1. THE COORDINATION LANDSCAPE	
Main country characteristics: NETHERLANDS	
General political-administrative structure	The Netherlands is a parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy. It has an elected government and a head of state, the king (Queen Beatrix and, starting in April 2013, King Willem-Alexander). The Netherlands is a decentralised unitary state with three tiers of government: the central government, provinces and municipalities. The central government is the highest administrative level. The provinces and municipalities have their own independent powers and also implement policies of the central government. The country has 12 provinces, each headed by a governor (*Commissaris van de Koningin)*. They have an elected provincial assembly *(Provinciale Staten).* One of the provinces' tasks is to coordinate policies of municipalities and other actors within the province when it comes to policy areas such as nature, recreation, monuments, planning etc. There are over 400 municipalities in the Netherlands. This number changes frequently due to frequent mergers to improve administrative capacities. Municipalities are governed by a mayor, the Council of Mayor and Aldermen (the municipal executive), and the municipal council. They can make policy in all areas unless this competence has been explicitly allocated to other levels of government. The mayor is the chairman of the municipal council and also chairman of the municipal executive. The mayor makes sure that decision-making is respectable, correct and proper. The political process is left to the aldermen and the municipal council. Mayors are appointed for a six-year period by the government and are, amongst other responsibilities, responsible for the general coordination and for public order and safety. He is also the head of the police. For these reasons, the mayor is a crucial actor in local safety policy. The municipal council is elected by the local citizens every four years. It represents local residents, oversees the Council of Mayor and Aldermen, which is charged with the day-to-day running of the municipality, it formulates the main thrust of policy, approves the budget, and adopts local ordinances (bylaws). As a rule, mayors resign when they are no longer supported by a majority of the municipal council. Rotterdam is part of The Randstad, the country's largest conurbation located in the West of the country and containing the four largest cities: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht. It is the 6th largest metropolitan area in Europe. Rotterdam is one of the world's most multicultural cities. Rotterdam is home to about 611,000 people, who represent 174 different nationalities. The majority of the population is of Dutch origin, but there are significant numbers of ethnic minorities from

	Indonesia, Turkey, Morocco and Surinam, Antilles and Aruba. Flowing from East to West, the New Meuse River *(Nieuwe Maas)* cuts the city into two sections: North Rotterdam and South Rotterdam. Rotterdam houses one of the largest seaports in the world and one of the biggest industrial complexes in Europe.
	Currently (2010-2014) Rotterdam has a 7-member municipal executive that consists of representatives of the Labour Party, the Conservative Party, the Christian-Democrats and the Social-Liberal Party.
	The municipal executive governs the whole of Rotterdam. However, it has delegated many matters at the district level to 12 municipal-district governments. This devolution of power aims to bring local government closer to the public. The 12 municipal districts are not independent entities, but an integral part of the city government.
	The city government of Rotterdam has merged municipal departments and services into the clusters social, physical and economical in order to tie all kinds of activities together and to establish an integrated approach in management. Processes are supposed to be leading, not services or departments.
Coordination discourse	Dutch policy-making is sometimes labeled "*poldermodel*", referring to the age-old tradition of consensus-based maintenance of the dykes in Dutch polders (which required constant pumping) that otherwise would have flooded. It refers to a decision-making style that is characterised by the recognition of pluriformity and cooperation despite differences. Many traits of this "*poldermodel*" still have a strong influence on political process and institutional arrangements. This would explain the strong preference for the use of governance networks in policy-making, in which a variety of actors collaborate. Such networks follow a consensual model, and coordination is achieved through wide collaboration from a variety of stakeholders, both public and private.
	A similar development has occurred in local safety policy in the past decades. Since the 1980s, national government has favoured a so called "integral approach" to public safety to be carried out at the municipal level. In this approach strategies of prevention and repression are applied to a wide variety of public safety problems. The integral approach emphasises the multifaceted characteristics of public-safety problems and the necessity of the involvement of a wide variety of actors to effectively deal with these problems. The integral policy approach has led to the emergence of various local public-safety networks. Networks have been created to solve problems like disturbances of the peace, troubles around pubs or juvenile delinquency.
	More recently, a trend towards a firmer grip of national government on local safety policies can be observed. At the national level, unconditionally (financially) facilitating local governments in dealing with societal perils such as crime and safety has changed into operating with obligatory

	contracts. That is, top-down steering has been intensified. This strategy goes together with a facilitating strategy, which includes providing know-how and supporting research to local governments. National government has designated local governments, more specifically the mayors, as the coordinators of these local safety networks. A law which gives the mayor the legal power to direct and coordinate integral safety policy is under scrutiny by parliament.
Policy area	From 1990 onwards, national government has been trying to encourage local governments to develop local safety policy plans and programmes. The biggest cities were the first ones to adopt, what was called, an "integral safety policy", later on smaller ones followed. In the 1990s, Rotterdam's local government launched its first integrated public-safety programme. From then on, the city has developed a variety of instruments and measures in a broad approach to local safety policy. Providing safety was and still is one of the top priorities of the city government. Characteristic for the Rotterdam approach is the mix of area-oriented, individual-oriented and phenomenon-oriented strategies that are fine-tuned and laid down in five-year action programmes. These programmes are evaluated and adjusted each year and have to be approved by the municipal council that has shown serious concern over safety issues in the past few years. Intervention teams are part of the area-oriented approach, like the city mariner. The city mariner is a senior civil servant with authority to command municipal departments in problematic districts and on the so-called "hotspots". He serves as a kind of crisis manager to resolve acute problems on so-called hotspots: areas experiencing serious problems. The city mariner and the municipal district government are considered the co-directors of safety in the municipal districts. The individual-oriented approach is aimed at subject groups such as addicts, repeat offenders, illegal immigrants and criminals or nuisance-causing juveniles. Lists are compiled of these groups, describing any previous penal or social records. Any person on these lists may opt for care or penal treatment. An example of the phenomenon-oriented approach is the programme addressing violence against public officials. These strategies are embedded in a concept of steering in which getting concrete and measurable results are of crucial importance. Municipal districts must meet concrete targets that fit the overall safety programme, and they are being held accountable for their results. They have significant freedom in implementing their own safety programme, but the format of their programme is obligatory for all municipal districts. This way of rather strong, centralised steering at the city level is an important pillar of the Rotterdam approach. Contract management, transparency and measurable targets are considered stimuli for a better performance. The biannual Safety Index (between 1 and 10) shows how safe or unsafe a district and

the city as a whole have become and classifies them into 5 categories. The Safety Index is used to evaluate the programme results at the city and district levels. In all of this the influence of New Public Management is clearly visible: a strong local government with steering and executive power; contract management and result-based steering, transparency and measurable results that have to be accounted for.

These rather top-down-oriented strategies are accompanied by a facilitating strategy that aims to stimulate public and private parties and citizens to work together in order to tackle crime and safety in loosely coupled networks and alliances, in particular within municipal districts and neighbourhoods. In Rotterdam, providing safety is considered not an exclusive task for the city government but a co-production between public and private actors and between agencies and citizens. The commitment of citizens and organisations is seen as indispensable. For that purpose, the city government put a lot of effort in mobilising other parties. The police are considered a last resort, though still a very important actor.

2. COORDINATION PRACTICE: Intervention teams and the collaborative approach: Enforcement property and person in the city of Rotterdam

2.1. Substance

Country	The Netherlands
Area	Local public safety and health
Main characteristics of the practice	Since 2001, intervention teams have been operating in the city of Rotterdam. The general idea behind these teams is that public-safety problems on the street can be tackled better if the private situations of people are taken into account. This can be done by making house calls.
	During the house calls the teams are trained to spot a variety of signals, so they get an integral picture of the (often interrelated) problems concerning property and person. Several aspects of a house and its inhabitants are investigated in an integrated approach. Besides checking on these aspects, care is also offered when necessary, i.e. enforcement and care are practiced in combination. Following the observations of a house call the signals are briefed to involved departments, and actions are planned as soon as possible.
	There are municipal teams as well as municipal-district teams.
	The municipal intervention teams are part of City Surveillance, a municipal service department. The municipal teams, or Database teams, make house calls for other services. Mostly they check people that want to move into or

	move around in hotspots based on the Municipal Personal Registration Database. Their house calls are based on requests by Public Affairs, City Development of Social Affairs and Employment. In certain instances they also perform special investigations, e.g. data of vacancies of houses (commissioned by Public Affairs) or checking why children are absent from compulsory education (commissioned by the department of Youth, Education and Society).
	Since it turns out that people move around a lot in the hotspots, not all public-safety issues and neighbourhood deterioration could be deterred. The municipal intervention teams gradually developed into teams that checked the living situations of people wanting to enter the Municipal Personal Records Database, and were hence nicknamed Database teams. These municipal intervention teams have been checking all hotspots since 2004. Since then they gradually started checking on illegal housing to get a grip on the unwanted portion of the housing market and thus to eliminate forms of nuisance, crime, drug-trafficking, fraud and exploitation relating thereto. Cleaning up the Municipal Personal Records Database was part of this approach. From the beginning the Database teams registered other data like welfare payments, illegal residence, hazardous filthiness, et cetera. In 2005 agreements with several governmental services were made to let the Database teams perform extra tasks for different governmental services.
	Most house calls by municipal-district intervention teams are responses to signals in the municipal districts of possible abuses at certain addresses. It may involve messages directly from citizens, but also signals from other organisations such as police, City Development and Social Affairs and Employment, but also private partners such as housing associations and Eneco (an electricity supplier), that something is wrong with a building or its occupants. The municipal-district teams consist of a project manager (and possibly an assistant), an employee of the City Development organisation, and a policeman is standing by.
	The municipal-district teams are headed by project leaders that work for the municipal district. These teams perform house calls based on information either from signals and reports from citizens or other services. In contrast to the municipal teams, the district teams do not announce their house calls beforehand.
	There are also other intervention teams, from Bureau Frontlijn and from Social Affairs and Employment. These have a different position and are not considered here.
Background and initiation of the practice	In 2001, one of the municipal districts, Feijenoord, saw a serious deterioration with shootings between Antillean gangs as the ultimate climax. After this incident both the city council and the municipal-district council decided that quick, drastic measures had to be taken at different levels. Besides organising collaboration between different organisations,

	house calls were introduced. Until that time, safety policy had been focused only on the exterior. Initially the house-call project started as a pilot lasting one year. In the beginning intervention teams consisted of 20 people, but this amount was quickly reduced to 5 or 6 because the situation with so many parties was unworkable.
	After a positive evaluation of the pilot the city council supported the idea of active intervention. The intervention teams were implemented in other streets and locations, especially in "hotspots" in unsafe neighbourhoods. In 2006, there were nine municipal-district intervention teams. They were initiated by the Safety Program Office and later taken over by a project manager of the municipal district.
Time frame	The intervention teams were initiated in 2001. After a 1-year pilot intervention teams were implemented in more streets and districts. Since 2004, all hotspots in the city of Rotterdam are being checked by the municipal intervention teams. From 2004 till 2013, all intervention teams were coordinated in the Collaborative Approach Enforcement Property & Person (CAE). Since 2006 the municipal districts that want to be able to pay house calls and look behind the door have intervention teams.
	In mid-2011, due to the financial crisis, the city of Rotterdam was confronted with serious budget cutbacks. The municipal districts had to reduce the number of municipal-district teams to five in 2012. One of the consequences is that fewer house calls can be made, i.e. not all signals will have a follow-up. Another consequence is that several municipal districts joined forces and have one intervention team for two or three districts, or certain municipal districts "hire" intervention teams from other municipal districts. And lastly, certain signals that used to be input for the municipal district teams are put through to the municipal teams that make the house call instead.
	Budget cuts also had an impact on the coordination structure of CAE. One of the directors in the steering committee was no longer allowed to spend his budget on CAE. This caused friction in the steering committee, and cooperation became more difficult. The steering committee became somewhat adrift. Hardly any decisions were taken. Instead, the steering committee indulged in rather futile debates on its core tasks and the structure of CAE. Even the responsible alderman joined the discussion, but to no avail. An interim president of the committee was supposed to get everything on track again. However, he gave back his assignment after a couple of months because he was missing sufficient backing.
	In 2011, the director of the Safety Directorate was appointed as the new director of CAE. Also a new manager was appointed. In the view of the new director, CAE has contributed a lot in the beginning by bringing people together and solving start-up problems, However, CAE had lost its value and added nothing extra to the results and just consumed a lot of time. His idea was to bring the several existing projects under the header of the

	different services. All the intervention teams would become part of City Surveillance. In the longer run municipal districts will become clients of the municipal intervention teams.
	In his letter from 18 October 2012 to the municipal council the responsible alderman announced that CAE would end on 1 January 2013 as it had accomplished its task in bringing parties together and establishing collaboration. The steering committee is to be replaced by another, standing consultation on local safety issues between directors of municipal departments. They will coordinate and steer the different projects related to safety like the intervention teams.

2.2.   Structure and actors

Basic features	The intervention teams were jointly initiated at the district level during the pilot by the municipal and municipal-district governments. After the pilot, intervention teams were implemented at other districts as well as on the municipal level.
	In 2004, both types of intervention teams became part of the CAE, in order to improve coordination between both types of teams and between the team and the city services that have to follow up on the information that is provided by the intervention teams.
	CAE consisted of four entities: an information node, the frontline approach, intervention teams that pick up signals and services that work on these signals. The teams provided input for the teams of services such as the local care networks of the public-health services and thereby contributed to the work within CAE and beyond.
	CAE was a collaboration of six municipal departments, municipal districts and other organisations. Public Affairs, Social Welfare, City Development, Customs, City Surveillance and the Safety Directorate are all part of CAE. Municipal-district governments and other services were also involved in CAE.
Main tools	The intervention teams operate within houses of citizens based on the protocol and the checklist. This means all teams consist of three people and operate in a uniform manner. All members of all intervention teams have to strictly follow the protocol and checklist that is designed by the municipal government. Entering houses is done only after clear voluntary permission by the inhabitants. The protocol includes rules of conduct and guidelines for careful treatment when entering somebody's house.
	The protocol and even more so the checklist have seriously been altered and upgraded after a careful examination by the Ombudsman in 2007. The aim of the municipal government is that all teams work in a uniform manner. Since the last examination (2010), the protocol is incorporating legitimisation requirements that have to be met by the member of the

	intervention teams. All teams consist of a maximum of three people and use the same protocol and checklist.
	The checklist must be filled out (mostly by the project leader) during a house call. According to the checklist all teams should:
	- aim at care, prevention, repression and communication,
	- store all information in an electronic database,
	- process and communicate all information in the same manner to both inhabitants and services;
	- a flyer with information including name and telephone number of the project leader is given to the inhabitant after the house call.
	All data used are stored in the database of CAE. The different, relevant partners can draw their information from this database and base their actions on this. These actions are then stored in the database so everybody can see how signals have been followed up and by whom.
	Since 2011, a few analysts at the Safety Directorate analyse data from this database to recognise patterns in the signals in order to be able to send the intervention teams in a proactive manner to the possible problematic houses. This broadens the perspective to not only hotspots, but also revitalising areas, which is in line with the working method of the intervention teams.
Main actors	The alderman for the cluster of city maintenance was politically responsible for CAE (till 2013). He is also responsible for the intervention teams.
	Several municipal services participated in CAE. CAE was governed by a fairly broad-based steering committee. This committee consisted of directors of municipal services and met every three months. The committee was accountable to the aldermen. Since 2008, a director was responsible for directing CAE. He was also a member of the steering committee. The director was supported by the CAE-manager from City Surveillance.
	There was a working group at the level of senior policy advisors that met once a month. All partners (also partners not represented in the steering committee) of CAE were represented in the working group. The CAE manager chaired the meetings of the working group. He was the linking pin between the working group and the steering committee.
	The working group acted as a gateway to the steering committee. The executive committee prepared and drafted up proposals that were passed on to the steering committee for decision-making. Ideas and suggestions were supposed to flow into the opposite direction: from the steering committee to the working group.
	Project leaders of the municipal district teams and employees of City Surveillance were responsible for the database teams meeting on a regular basis. These consultations were chaired by a manager from City

	Surveillance. Two project leaders acted as linking pins with the working group.
2.3. **Impacts and effects**	
	CAE was initiated by a few directors of municipal departments, on an informal base. Gradually, CAE gained more structure and steering power and became formalised. Its budget was coming from the budget of the services and departments that participated in CAE. At first, services functioned autonomously and operated as equal partners within CAE. Later on, participation became less voluntary and control became tighter. As a result, enforceable agreements could be made between the different partners within CAE, thus contributing to an integrated approach.

The connection between the "front line" and the "back office" has improved. This was also due to the database system; i.e. signals were recorded and stored better and the (recording of the) follow-up was improved.

In working-group consultations information was exchanged in an open manner; problems were openly discussed with all members. The different forms of consultation were better matched. As a consequence, the steering committee was in a better position to make decisions. The different services, also the social ones, became involved in the consultations, making it easier to handle difficult cases. Partners learned about which partners to approach when in need of assistance.

Over the years, intervention teams have been surrounded with controversy. The supposed authority of local government to intervene behind the door was heavily debated and contested by more than one political party. In the end, the controversy that surrounded the intervention teams has faded away, not least because of several reports made up by the Ombudsman (2007 and 2011) in which the protocol, checklist and the actual house calls were investigated. This has led to considerable adjustments of the protocol and checklist. Since the first report, not more than three people enter a house following procedures from the protocol. The second report has caused the protocol to be adjusted, i.e. the legal character of house calls and how to behave accordingly are now in the protocol.

The municipal council has the power to call the alderman who is responsible for the intervention teams to account. In the CAE structure the political responsibility for the intervention teams was clearly marked out, contrary to the past. But the municipal council is more inclined to hold the mayor accountable in case of incidents with intervention teams, because of his authority in ensuring public local order and safety and his (intended) authority in directing the local integrated safety policy. This has happened |

on more than one occasion.

The municipal districts are accountable to the municipal district council for the municipal district intervention teams, but the semi-annual reports on their performance are also made available to the municipal council and discussed. The new database system gives more detailed information on what subsequent actions different partners have taken based on the signals from the house calls. However, a one-to-one relation between these actions and the outcomes is still hard to establish.

2.4.	**Lessons learned and policy recommendations**

Lessons can be drawn from this practice at the operational level as well as at the strategic (coordination) level.

The first and foremost lesson was that teams should be small (three members) and that all teams should behave in the same manner and approach citizens respectfully. Entering a house is a big deal for the inhabitants so the teams have to follow the protocol and work by use of the checklist. Team members have to be trained properly in this respect, and their activities need adequate monitoring.

Enforcement and care are two core tasks that should be performed simultaneously, but they are still quite separated. Network-like structures within municipal districts are needed that enable all sorts of connections with both care and enforcement partners, supported by well-functioning ICT. The networks that have been created are still very fragile because they depend solely on personal contacts.

Processes within CAE needed to be attuned and supported through an automated system. The automated system contained information that could be used for analysis and a more efficient and proactive working style. However, these features have not been fully utilised.

At the strategic level, this case shows that the intervention teams and the coordination structure they were operating in were new and rather complex arrangements that made quite a few demands of alignment between professional workers themselves, of the link between policy and implementation, of the flow of information and information systems, and of mutual adjustment between municipal departments and services. On 1 January 2013, CAE was dismantled because too much time and energy went into cooperation and coordination, though the city government did acknowledge that CAE and its coordination structure had borne fruit.

Time will tell whether this will prove to be an opportunity missed. Maybe it would have been wiser to carefully balance the benefits and the costs and to redirect the focus of CAE towards more robust and efficient functioning and better results instead of merely dismantling it under pressure of the precarious financial situation. Surely, the need to co-operate is now more

	urgent than before because of the financial constraints. There are fewer people to perform tasks and there are fewer resources. Tasks need to be carried out more efficiently and "smartly" with a better use of each other's capabilities. However, in practice budget cuts often lead to concern about the crossing out of tasks and projects of the own organisation and therefore to less interest in pursuing the common interest.
	CAE was established when the resources were more than sufficient and it was not necessary for parties involved to make painful choices between the interests of the own organisation and the common interest. CAE has fallen short of proving its robustness in times of adversity when it was put to the test. What has really been its added value? Should it have made more of an effort in demonstrating that the sum of the whole was greater than the sum of the constituent parts? These questions become topical in times of financial crises.

2.5. Further information

Data and references	This study is based on a research by Arie van Sluis and Peter Marks, both assistant professors at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands. The study was commissioned by the Collaborative approach Property & Person and the Directorate Safety. The study has been done by doing a literature research, but mainly by conducting 23 interviews with members of the intervention teams, project leaders, members of the steering committee and heads of collaborating services. Also participative observations have been made during project-leader consultations. The material has been updated by David Berg, general manager of Districts, Knowledge and Communication of the Directorate Safety
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