

# Abstracts

***E.R. Muller and U. Rosenthal***

## **The crisis in criminal investigation analyzed**

In the beginning of 1996, the Enquêtecommissie Opsporingsmethoden concluded that the Netherlands suffered from a crisis in criminal investigation. This crisis had three components: a crisis of standards, a crisis of authority and a crisis of organization. The authors analyze this crisis with the help of three policy science perspectives. The crisis of standards is analyzed from a legal perspective at the level of the state (macro-level), the crisis of organization is analyzed from the framework of politics (meso-level) and the crisis of authority is analyzed by means of the conceptual framework of the 'street-level bureaucracy' (micro). The three perspectives are connected with each other. The crisis of authority, for example, manifests itself in the actions taken by CID-inspectors, but cannot be seen in isolation from the imprecise hierarchical relations in this organization and the political tensions. The expectations regarding the future are not very positive. Despite many attempts at improvement many different structural elements of the crisis in criminal investigation in the Netherlands remain.

***M. Bovens, P. 't Hart, S. Dekker, G. Verheuver  
and E. de Vries***

## **IRT and the media**

In Western societies, mass media are pivotal in the process of identifying political scandals and policy fiascos. Their role has evolved from a political lapdog to a watchdog or even a 'junkyard dog'. Using work by Vasterman and Aerden (1995) on publicity waves, hypotheses are formulated about the intensity, focus, normative context and political significance of media reporting in the first six months of the public scandal about crime-fighting methods in the Netherlands. These are then tested against evidence obtained from a content analysis of the reports of four major newspapers in that period. The analysis reveals mixed support for the publicity wave model. The theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed in the concluding section.

**M. Bovens, P. 't Hart, S. Dekker  
and G. Verheuve**

**Polymakers and defensive rhetoric**

In this article an attempt is made to elaborate Schütz's (1996) typology of defensive rhetorical styles of polymakers who are besieged by negative publicity and critical scrutiny from investigative bodies. Using the Dutch crime-fighting scandal as a case example, the defensive tactics and specific arguments used by four main protagonists are outlined. The case study results allow for a further development of the typology, and calls for reflection on the effectiveness and appropriateness of policy elites' defensive rhetoric.

**T. Weggemans, G. Tertoolen and I. Veling**  
**Behaviour, made to measure**

In the development of traffic measures by the Dutch Ministry of Traffic behaviour of individual travellers is merely analyzed from a system point of view without considering the motivational perspective of the individual. Too often only rational motives for behaviour are considered, while irrational aspects such as habits and impulses are neglected.

The authors discuss the limitation of the model of reasoned behaviour as developed by Ajzen et al. (1980; 1986). Ten lessons from recent research are presented to show the deficiencies of this model. Next to reasoned behaviour two other types of behaviour deserve more attention: habits and impulsive behaviour.

In addition to the description of these three types of behaviour, the authors discern different policy strategies for each type of behaviour. Reasoned behaviour can be influenced by changing the interests that are part of the balancing of alternatives, such as financial consequences. Habits may be influenced by removing the 'trigger stimulus' in order to prevent the 'auto-pilot-state', by changing the behavioural context in order to confuse the 'auto-pilot', or by influencing the evaluation afterwards in a negative direction, in order to encourage a renewed reasoned approach. Impulsive behaviour may be influenced by replacing the triggering stimulus for other stimuli that invoke alternative responses. By considering this spectrum of strategy options the traffic policy will in general become more effective.

**M. de Jong**  
**Rijkswaterstaat (1798-1998),  
ready for a revolution?**

Rijkswaterstaat, the Dutch national authority responsible for the construction and maintenance of transport infrastructures and waterworks, was established in 1798 under French rule. With the benefit of hindsight, it can be claimed that this and the following years have been a 'critical' juncture, a crucial and irreversible crossing point of institutional paths. Whereas many French traces can still be found in Dutch Rijkswaterstaat, the French have long modernised their system. This article suggests that 1998 might be the beginning of a new critical juncture and that foreign models may help to adapt Rijkswaterstaat to a new era.