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Crime Prevention Research in the Netherlands

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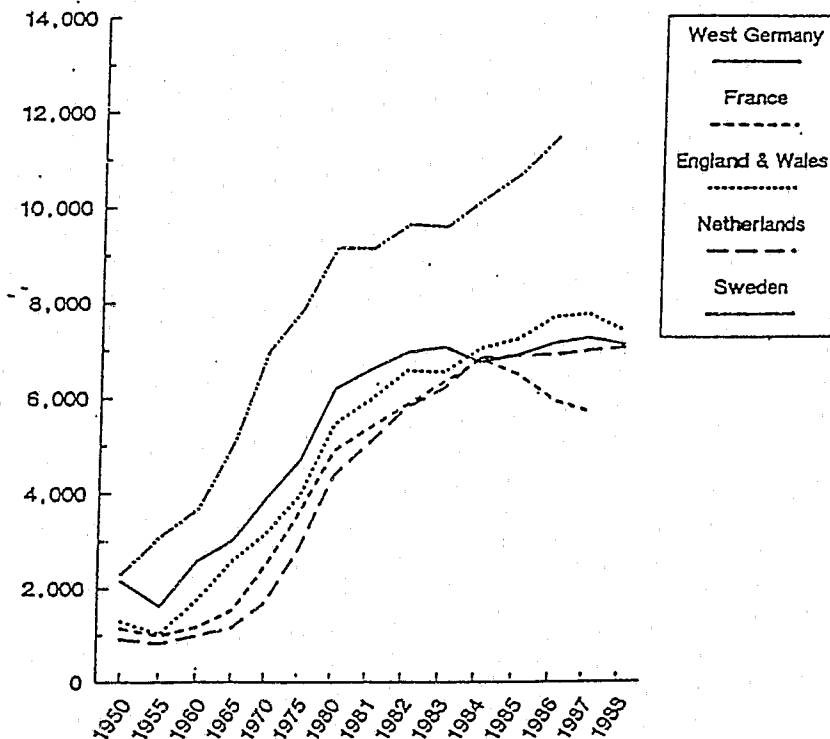
Introduction

In this paper I will try to give an overview of developments in crime prevention policies and research in the Netherlands. In a separate paragraph some information is given about the Dutch drugs policy.

Crime and victimization rates

In order to put the crime policies in Europe in a proper perspective, it is essential to look at national crime figures first. Many inhabitants of European and other industrialized countries tend to see rising crime rates as a sort of national curse. This opinion is not born out by the facts, as can readily be seen from a survey of the statistics on recorded crime of five European countries since 1950 (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Registered crime in five European countries per 100,000 inhabitants

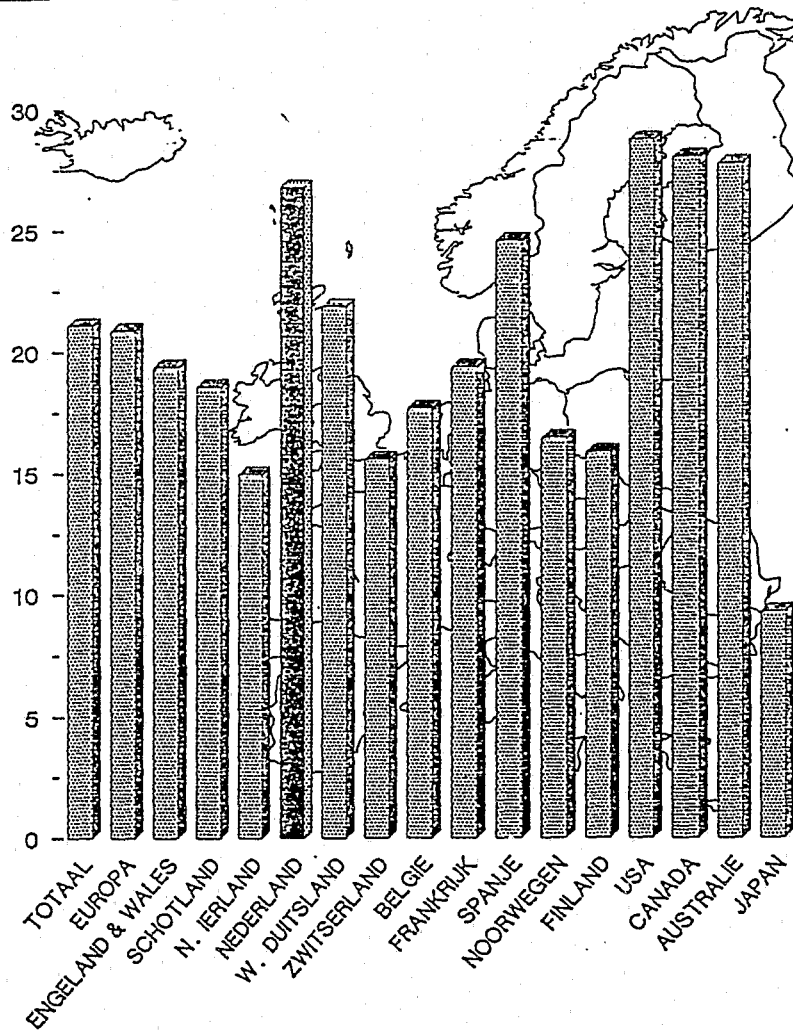


It goes without saying that police statistics do not reflect the true volume of crime. A large proportion of crime is never reported or recorded. These dark numbers may differ considerably across countries. For this reason, no firm conclusions can be drawn from these figures concerning the crime situation in the various countries. The only way to find out what is really going on in

terms of crime in Scandinavia and other countries is by mounting a fully standardized victimization survey amongst cross sections of the populations of all European countries.

In the beginning of 1989 such a survey has actually been conducted in fifteen different countries nationwide and in two other countries locally (Warsaw and Surabaya) (Van Dijk, Mayhew, Killias, 1990). In figure 2 and 3 we present the key findings of the survey.

Figure 2: Percentages of the population victimized by any crime in 1988, in fifteen countries



Source: Van Dijk, Mayhew and Killias, 1990

Figure 3: Victimization rates for fourteen different types of crime in seventeen countries

	Total ¹	Europe ²	England & Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Nether- lands	West Germany	Switzer- land	Belgium	France	Spain	Norway	Finland	USA	Canada	Australia	Warsaw	Surabaya	Japan
Theft of car	1.2	1.3	1.8	0.8	1.6	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.8	2.3	1.3	1.1	0.4	2.1	0.8	2.3	2.2	0.2	0.2
Theft from car	5.3	5.8	5.6	5.3	4.0	5.3	4.7	1.9	2.7	6.0	9.9	2.8	2.7	9.3	7.2	6.9	10.2	4.7	0.7
Car vandalism	6.7	7.0	6.8	6.5	4.5	8.2	8.7	4.1	6.6	6.5	6.3	4.6	4.0	8.9	9.8	8.7	7.6	2.7	2.7
Theft of motorcycle ³	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.2	1.2	0.3	0.6	0.8	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.8	0.4
Theft of bicycles	2.6	2.2	1.0	1.0	1.6	7.6	3.3	3.2	2.7	1.4	1.0	2.8	3.1	3.1	3.4	1.9	1.0	2.7	3.7
Burglary with entry	2.1	1.8	2.1	2.0	1.1	2.4	1.3	1.0	2.3	2.4	1.7	0.8	0.6	3.8	3.0	4.4	2.6	3.8	0.7
Attempted burglary	2.0	1.9	1.7	2.1	0.9	2.6	1.8	0.2	2.3	2.3	1.9	0.4	0.4	5.4	2.7	3.8	2.8	1.7	0.2
Robbery	0.9	1.0	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.9	0.8	0.5	1.0	0.4	2.8	0.5	0.8	1.9	1.1	0.9	1.2	0.5	0
Personal theft	4.0	3.9	3.1	2.6	2.2	4.5	3.9	4.5	4.0	3.6	5.0	3.2	4.3	4.5	5.4	5.0	13.4	5.2	0.2
- pickpocketing	1.5	1.8	1.5	1.0	0.9	1.9	1.5	1.7	1.6	2.0	2.8	0.5	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.0	13.0	3.3	0
Sexual incidents ⁴	2.5	1.9	1.2	1.2	1.8	2.6	2.8	1.6	1.3	1.2	2.4	2.1	0.6	4.5	4.0	7.3	3.6	6.3	1.0
- sexual assault	0.8	0.7	0.1	0.7	0.5	0.5	1.5	0.0	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.2	2.3	1.7	1.6	2.0	1.7	
Assault/threat	2.9	2.5	1.9	1.8	1.8	3.4	3.1	1.2	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.9	5.4	4.0	5.2	3.0	0.8	0.5
- with force	1.5	1.2	0.6	1.0	1.1	2.0	1.5	0.9	0.7	1.2	1.2	1.4	2.0	2.3	1.5	3.0	1.4	0.3	0.2
All crimes ⁵	21.1	20.9	19.4	18.6	15.0	26.8	21.9	15.6	17.7	19.4	24.6	16.5	15.9	28.8	28.1	27.8	34.4	20.0	9.3

1. Total figure treats each country as of equal statistical importance, with an assumed sample of 2000 (excl. Japan)

2. European totals have been calculated by weighting individual country results by population size (excl. Warsaw/Surabaya)

3. Motorcycles include mopeds and scooters

4. Asked of women only

5. Percentage of sample victimized by at least one crime of any type

Source: Van Dijk, Mayhew, Killias, Experiences of Crime across the World, Kluwer, Deventer, 1990

The percentage of persons 16 years and over who had been victimized in 1988 at least once by one of the eleven types of crime covered by the study was the highest in the USA, Canada and Australia (app. 30%).

Countries with overall victimization rates of about 25% were the Netherlands, Spain and the FRG. The high rate in the Netherlands is partly due to an exceptionally high rate of bicycle thefts. A victimization rate of about 20% was found in Scotland, England and Wales, France and Belgium. Rates in the neighbourhood of 15% were found amongst the public of Northern Ireland, Switzerland, Norway and Finland. Japan has a rate below ten percent. The rates in Warsaw (Poland) resemble West-European city rates, although thefts of personal property - in particular pickpocketing - seem more common.

With the exception of Japan, countries with the lowest rates are characterized by a relatively low level of urbanization, e.g. many of their inhabitants live in small villages and few in cities with 100,000 inhabitants or more. Crimes of violence appeared to be the highest in Australia and the USA. Moderately high victimization rates for violence were found in Finland, the Netherlands, the FRG and Canada. In England and Wales the rates were significantly lower than elsewhere.

The ranking of countries on the basis of victimization rates is not vastly different from the picture shown by police figures for car theft and burglary. The rankings for robbery, assault and sexual assault are quite different. However, correspondence was fairly strong, if victimizations which have not been reported to the police are not considered for the rating. The victimization rates for violent crime in England and Wales are, for instance, somewhat lower than was to be expected on the basis of Interpol statistics. This is accounted for by a significantly higher percentage of

crimes reported to the police in the United Kingdom. These findings confirm the thesis of criminologists that police statistics cannot be used for comparative purposes, due to differences in reporting and recording across countries.

This overview of registered crime rates and victimization rates leads to the conclusion that crime has gone up starkly from 1955 onwards across Western-Europe. In the seventies, victimizations by crime reached a level where crime became an important political issue in most European countries.

The organization of social crime prevention in the Netherlands

At national level

In 1985, in order to facilitate execution of the prevention policy, the Interdepartmental Committee for Social Crime Prevention was set up under the chairmanship of the Director General (of the Directorate) for Police and Immigration of the Ministry of Justice. The task of the Committee was to coordinate and stimulate implementation of the policy of prevention which is to be carried out by the relevant Ministries.

In order to encourage public authorities at a local level to develop social crime prevention policies, the Government set up a fund of 25 million dollars from which subsidies could be paid, during the period 1986 to 1990, for promising local authority projects. The Committee's task is to advise the Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs on the allocation of these subsidies. The criteria governing selection for subsidies is a continuing subject of discussion between the Committee and a special committee from the Association of Netherlands Municipalities. One of the criteria used is that the municipality in question must be willing to continue the project at its own expense if it should prove effective.

In principle, the objective is that every local crime prevention project should be carried out under the guidance of a member of the secretariat and scientifically evaluated (Junger-Tas, 1989). Approximately ten percent of the budget is reserved for evaluation. In order to give the policy additional support, the management group publishes a quarterly magazine on crime prevention initiatives, with a circulation of 18,000. This magazine, under the title SEC, is distributed to municipal bodies, schools, sports associations etc. The magazine awards an annual prize in the form of an extra subsidy granted to the best crime prevention initiative of the year (the Roethof Award).

At local level

In a municipality, primary responsibility for social crime prevention rests with the burgomaster. Many of the larger municipalities have set up crime prevention committees comprising the

appropriate civil servants and aldermen, e.g. those with responsibility for youth and town planning, representatives from the police such as crime prevention officers and the public prosecutor.

A survey of the projects

More than a hundred local authorities have applied to the Interdepartmental Committee for funding for local crime prevention programmes. The Committee has selected about 200 different projects for support.

Eighty projects are specifically directed towards the prevention of vandalism, a common element being special courses for schoolchildren. A standardized teaching package has been provided by the State for this purpose. Evaluation studies have observed positive changes in both attitudes and (self reported) behaviour as well as in repair costs. In some cities training courses are part of a wider package of measures to deal with vandalism. In several cities special programmes have been launched for the prevention of thefts of bicycles, including the provision of bicycle sheds manned by formerly unemployed persons. It was found that in the short term Dutch cyclists are unwilling to pay more than a symbolic price for such services. In other cities prevention of shoplifting has been assisted by joint action on the part of retail stores, the police and the prosecutor's office. The take up rate of training courses for owners of small shops was generally rather low. Those who took part in the courses reported lower rates of victimization.

The Committee has also decided to fund several crime prevention oriented urban renewal programmes. In most cases these initiatives combine improved design with strengthening informal social control. Elsewhere, neighbourhood watch projects are sponsored as separate ventures. A preliminary evaluation study in three cities showed that crime levels were indeed reduced after the introduction of neighbourhood watch programmes.

In three other cities the Committee supports comprehensive programmes aimed at preventing truancy and dropping-out from secondary schools. Some new street-corner work projects which provide educational and work facilities are also being sponsored. Many of these projects also assist in the implementation of community service orders.

At last can be mentioned the financial support for documentation. A central computerized databank within the Directorate of Crime Prevention collects national and international literature, now totalling to more than 8,000 entries. This centre functions also as the collection and distribution point for the International Crime Prevention Information Network (ICPIN). This body of information is growing steadily and made available to interested parties across the world.

Other ministries have taken their share of the cost of prevention projects. For example, the Ministry of Welfare, Health and Culture has launched some 25 local projects aimed at the social

integration of high-risk groups. These involve the use of integrated street-corner work with an emphasis on work and education facilities. Six additional projects are geared to youngsters belonging to ethnic minorities. Also 6 million ECU is spent every year on special work projects for permanently unemployed youngsters. The government has set itself the objective of providing training facilities or jobs for all persons between the ages of 16 and 21 in the coming years.

Five cases of dutch prevention

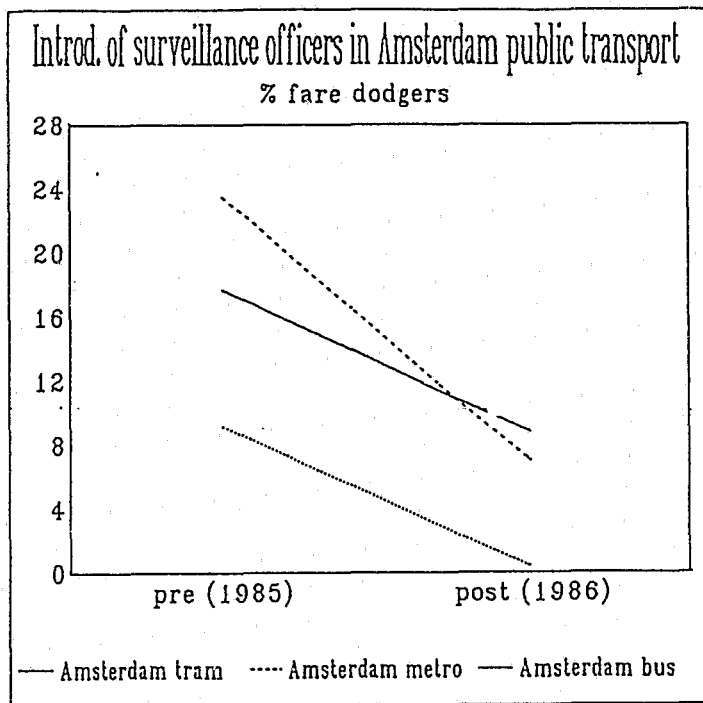
In order to give a more concrete impression of what is done in practice, some of the successful projects will be described. They concern public transport, schools, diversion, public housing and retail stores.

Surveillance officers in Public Transport

The Dutch public transport system experienced since the seventies a steep rise in the number of travellers who do not pay their fares. Also vandalism and aggressive behaviour has increased sharply. To curb these phenomena, a new kind of officers was introduced on tramways and the underground system: the VIC's. VIC is the acronym from the Dutch for Security, Information and Surveillance. In the buses the entry system was modified so that everybody had to pass the busdriver and present a ticket. The system was introduced in the cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague.

It is clear from the evaluation study that the percentage of fare dodgers (passengers without a valid ticket), fell in all three cities after the introduction of the 1,300 VIC's and the change in boarding procedure. The case of Amsterdam is illustrative for this effect (see figure 4).

Figure 4



Also the number of attacks and harassments on public transport decreased during the project. In addition, damage experts, passengers and staff unanimously agree that the introduction of VIC's have stopped the long-standing upward trend in the prevalence of vandalism.

Extra social benefits were drawn regarding the problem of unemployment. The VIC-project created approximately 1,200 new jobs. Many of the jobs were given to disadvantaged groups in the labour market as young people, women and ethnic minorities with a low level of education.

As an exception, in this project financial benefits and costs could be established fairly accurate. The extra revenues from ex-fare-dodgers are estimated at between 5 and 6 million ECU. The increased number of fines imposed by the VIC's generated about half a million ECU per year. Reduction of costs associated with vandalism is estimated at .7 million ECU. Savings on unemployment benefit amount to 9 million ECU per year, although this sum is not a direct profit for the public transport system. The total profit of about 16 million ECU is exceeded by the costs to deploy the VIC's: 21 million ECU. The difference can be seen as an investment in more intangible goals: the cutting of petty crime in general, a reduction of fear of crime, and the promotion of the use of public transport.

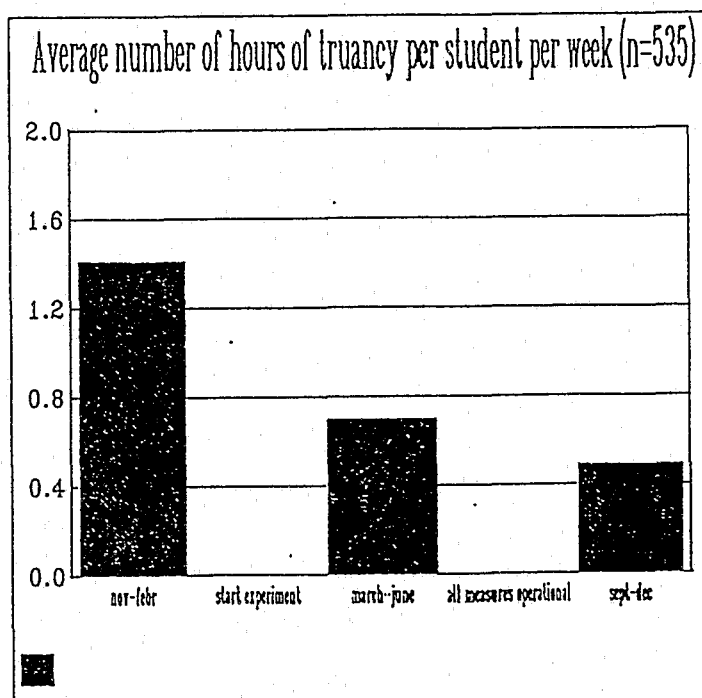
The Ministry of Transport has announced that in 1991 surveillance will be further strengthened by a drastic expansion of the number of ticket collectors.

Schools: the Truancy Project

Truancy is chosen as an approach to the crime prevention of youngsters for two reasons. First, truancy as such is a form of deviance deserving attention as such. Second, spotting truants gives an opportunity to reach predelinquents and early starting delinquents in a rather unobtrusive, non stigmatizing way. For it is a well-established research finding that school failure, truancy and school drop-out are strongly related to delinquent behaviour (e.g. Rutter, et al., 1979; Junger-Tas, et al., 1985).

In this particular project, three lower vocational schools were selected, as truancy and drop-out is relatively high in this type of schools. The first measure was the introduction in the school of a computerized truancy registration system. Using this system, parents were called the same morning or afternoon to report to them the absence of their child. This was supposed to work in a preventive way for incidental and non-serious truants, for whom the lack of control by the school or the parents was too inviting. The second measure was the appointment of an educational worker, who was responsible for the registration of truancy, disciplinary problems and imminent school drop-out. The educational worker discussed with the regular teachers youngsters at risk and advised and trained them in handling them. The third measure was referral by the educational worker to a special class, managed by a remedial teacher, qualified as an educationalist, and a teacher of technical skills. The special program offered in this class was at maximum three months, in order to make re-entrance in the regular curriculum as smoothly as possible. The effect on truancy is as follows.

Figure 5:



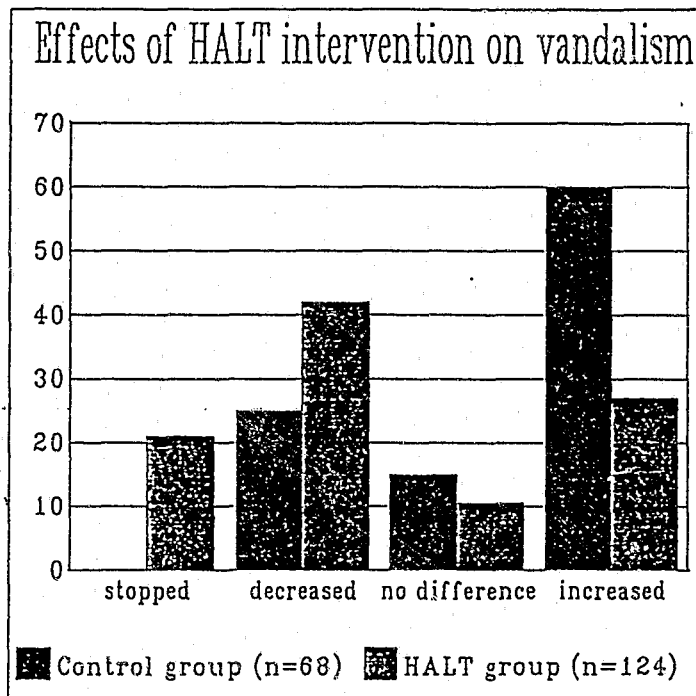
After the introduction of the registration and warning scheme, a considerable reduction of truancy took place. Opportunity reduction by a simple increase in supervision and control appeared to be successful. About the success of the other measures, aiming at the reinforcement of the bond between school and problematic pupils, can be said more when the evaluation study is completed. The Ministry of Education has issued recently new regulations on truancy registration. The Ministry also modified the regulations on truancy registration and replacing teaching staff on sick leave, in order to prevent delinquency during school hours. Secondary schools are being offered financial incentives to introduce measures to prevent vandalism.

Diversion: the HALT-project

HALT, an acronym of "the alternative", is meant as an alternative for prosecution of young offenders in cases of petty crimes, mainly vandalism. In the average case, a youngster caught for damaging or destroying property and referred by the police to the HALT-bureau, is made to clean up or repair the damaged object during his or her free time. Eventually, this task is combined with paying for damages. If the boy or girl does not accept the offer by the HALT-bureau or does not fulfil the obligations as agreed upon in a contract, the informal police report is changed into an official report which is then submitted to the prosecutor. The advantage of the HALT-procedure is that a quick and informal action can be taken and that registration in the judicial documentation system is avoided. At the same time the necessary control function of the public prosecutor is maintained. An essential feature is that the intervention is community based, the juveniles are not excluded from society. From a psychological point of view an additional benefit can be mentioned: the kind of punishment is educative in itself. The responsibility of the youngster is emphasized, both by being held clearly accountable for the act and by working on the basis of an agreement. About 50 HALT-bureaus are now in operation, some as local other as regional institutions. To check if no unwanted net-widening would take place, an investigation was done about the kind of juveniles that ended up in the program. It appeared that the group involved did not consist of just ordinary but unlucky kids who happen to run into a policeman. Self-report data revealed them as far more delinquent than average Dutch youth, not only in turns of vandalism but also in relation to shoplifting, arson and burglary (Junger-Tas, 1989). Apparently a selection of youngsters for whom a clear reaction to their behaviour is appropriate.

What are the effects of the HALT-intervention?

Figure 7:



Compared to a controlgroup of youngsters having committed similar offenses in a city where no HALT-scheme was operating, the HALT-group showed, according to self-report measures, a significant greater decrease in offending after intervention. A positive change in behaviour took place in more than 60% of the HALT-cases, compared to only 25% after a traditional handling by the police. Of the latter group, no one stopped offending. The effect is independent of age, schoolsituation, family situation and the use of alcohol and soft drugs. From interviews it appeared that the boys and girls were very well aware of the moral element in the intervention, the fact that they are held responsible and have to "make good" to the individual victims and the community. The Ministry of Justice subsidises now diversion projects for young vandals of this type in about 60 municipalities on a permanent basis.

Public housing: a neighbourhood project

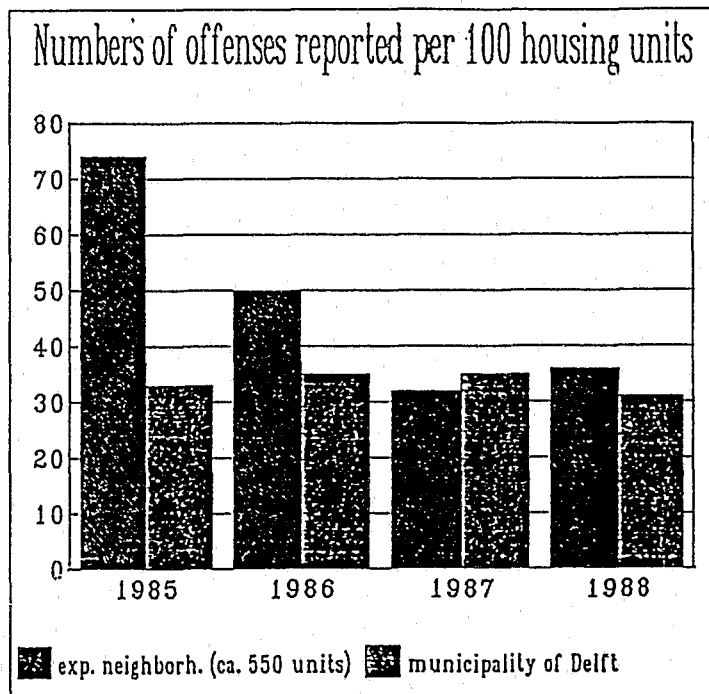
Since the Shaw and Mackay research in the 40's on the spatial distribution of crime in American cities, deprived neighbourhoods characterized by social disorganization and high crime levels have drawn a lot of attention by researchers and practitioners alike. Recent studies like those of Bottoms and Wiles (1986) and Skogan (1986) point to direct parallels with the Dutch housing related crime problems. Some of the subsidized, low rent houses, often in high-rise buildings, are extremely problematic: decay, crime, poor technical quality and back rents are some of the problems for the managers and residents of these estates. The often applied "target hardening" and

environmental design approach appears to have a limited effect. Therefore, new projects were started that in which social, supervisory and administrative measures were added. For the management of the project local and neighbourhood administrative structures were integrated. As an example, in Delft a project consisted of the following measures:

- new recreational facilities for youthful persons were arranged in cooperation with a streetcorner worker;
- seven caretakers were appointed to intensify supervision, to give information, advice and warnings and to keep the buildings clean;
- by redesigning parks and streets were made more surveyable and the buildings more vandalism-proof; entrances of the buildings were made less accessible;
- units were redesigned for one-and-two-person families, so to decrease the disproportionate number of youngsters in the neighbourhood; and last but not least:
- no plans were executed without consultation of the residents.

These measures were in total very successful: the appearance of the buildings is back to an very acceptable level; residents, municipal authorities and the estate management work together in a structural way; the caretakers are able to maintain order and cleanliness; all parties involved are happy with the result. The development of the level of crime is in accordance with this picture.

Figure 8:



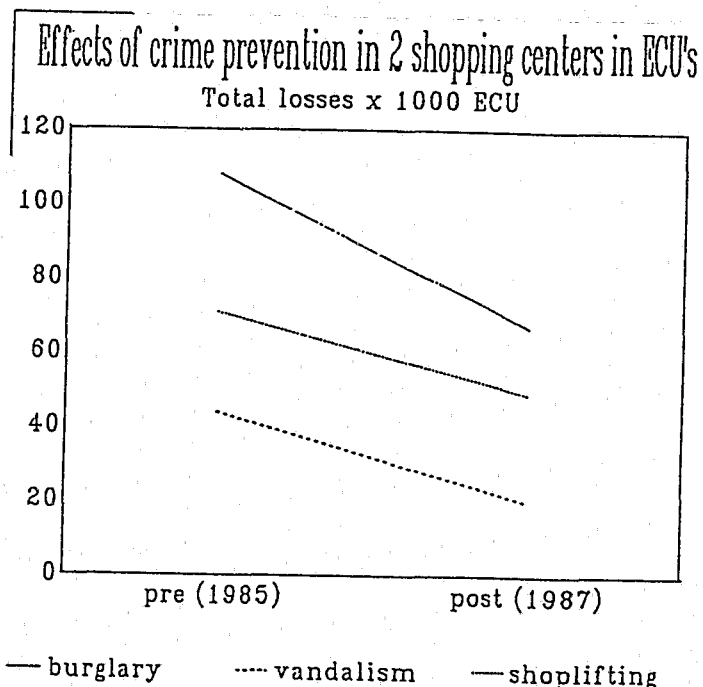
Nevertheless, some unexpected negative side-effects can be observed. The important one-and-two-person families did not integrate well in the existing population: most of them see their home as temporary and are not much interested in the neighbourhood. Their somewhat different lifestyles give rise to complaints of the original inhabitants. Although the caretakers are very well accepted, part of the residents is not able or willing to pay their financial part for this work. A last effect is the not increased tendency of the residents to keep the building clean: littering and pollution is seen as the responsibility of the caretaker and not of the residents themselves (Hesseling,1990). Still, as a prevention measure the project was highly successful. As a consequence, the Ministry of Justice is contributing during three years, in a decreasing percentage, to the cost of 150 caretakers introduced into high-rise flats owned by housing estates and experiencing serious social problems.

Retail stores: an Utrecht shopping centre

In Utrecht a comprehensive crime prevention project was introduced consisting of among others the following measures:

- provision of instruction for personnel and managers of shops concerning shoplifting;
- installation of an electronic alarm system for retailers enabling them to warn each other and the security officer;
- appointment of two security officers for the dual purpose of being consulted by and giving assistance to public and retailers;
- "alternative" penalties for vandals and collective court sessions for shoplifters;
- a press and publicity campaign in support of the project.

Figure 9:



As can be seen from this figure, the total cost of damage suffered by the retailers as a result of crime dropped considerably. Victim surveys among the shopping public indicated that crimes against the public had been reduced by 50% (Colder, 1988).

From an economic point of view the project seems to have been profitable for the retailers. The drop in damage they suffered was greater than the costs of the two security officers. When the government grant came to an end the retailers' association decided to continue the project at its own expense. Also for this kind of problems national measures are initiated.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs has set up a national centre for information on the prevention of shoplifting. In anticipation of an alteration in the law on this matter, the Ministry of Justice has carried out experiments in five municipalities whereby the police may offer first offenders suspected of shoplifting the option of paying a spot fine and thereby avoid being brought to Court. Evaluation has shown that approximately 80% of the suspects take up the offer. In this way, shoplifting can be dealt with far more quickly and efficiently.

Conclusions

On a national scale, since 1984, no fall has as yet been observed in police figures for reported crimes. The level of registered crime has remained constant. Both from the victim surveys carried out and from self-report studies among young people, it shows that the real level of crime has fallen. There has been an accompanying rise in readiness to report crimes. One particularly favourable factor is the stabilization or even fall in the numbers of drug addicts (estimated at 15,000 throughout the country). In Netherlands municipalities there are almost no addicts under the age of 21.

From evaluation reports at present available it would appear that it is particularly those prevention projects in which official surveillance is intensified that are effective in the short term. This is true for surveillance in public transport, in shopping centres and housing estates. A winning combination seems to be to have clear rules and surveillance with a human face carried out by officers who not only maintain the order but also give assistance to the public (Colder, 1988).

Schools also provide an excellent field for crime prevention projects. Much can be done in primary education in the way of information about vandalism. In secondary education, keeping track of truancy and holding special classes for potential drop-outs can act as a brake on the slide towards a criminal lifestyle.

Less successful in the short term have been projects aimed at integrating or reintegrating young delinquents using recreative facilities, schooling and work. The ever-present danger in such projects is that extra facilities will be offered to groups of young people who are not only guilty of serious crime but also continue in such activity. Against this, positive results have been achieved in the

context of community service orders for criminals under 25 years of age (Bol, 1985; Van der Laan, 1988).

Drugspolicy

In its drug policy the Dutch government tries to pursue a realistic and pragmatic course instead of dramatising the issue or moralising about it. This policy has been characterized as one of "normalization". Demythologizing and deglamourizing drug use means decriminalizing it as much as possible, id est defining simple possession of cannabis as a misdemeanour instead of as a crime.

The primary aim is to protect health and social well-being in general and to improve the health of addicts. The government therefore takes the view that drug abuse is not primarily a problem for the police and the courts, but a matter of health and social well-being. In the Opium Act, which conforms to the Single Convention on Narcotic Substances and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and in guidelines for the Public Prosecutions Department, a distinction is made between cannabis products and other more harmful drugs as regards the penalties laid down. A strict distinction in enforcement policies is made between drug users and drug traffickers. The latter face imprisonment for up to 16 years for a multiple offence. In general, the role of the criminal justice authorities is a supportive one: to combat national and international illicit drug trafficking. It is also directed towards the suppression of drug-related crime. While it is realized in this respect that penalties imposed on drug addicts must not be such as to aggravate their drug problem, they are still held responsible for the crimes they committed to maintain their habit.

Policies directed towards drug users provide for easily accessible "street-corner help", help in hospitals and jails, open-door centres for addicts who are prostitutes, the supply of methadon, a medically prescribed heroin substitute, and the widespread needle exchange programmes.

The results of this policy are carefully monitored by the agencies involved. On the negative side, the policy has made the drugs scene in several Dutch cities more public, and therefore more visible, than is the case elsewhere. The burden this places upon the inhabitants of neighborhoods where groups of dealers or users temporarily congregate is heavy.

In many other respects, however, the policy appears to be fairly successful. The prevalence of cannabis use in the Netherlands has decreased, and is at present rather low. Only 2.5% of young people below the age of 19 have ever used cannabis. The number of daily users appears to be one in a thousand. The number of heroin addicts has stabilized at between 15,000 and 20,000 out of a population of 14,7 million. Cocaine use has grown since the South American drugs mafia began

to conquer the European market, but so far the rise has not been dramatic. "Crack" is a rarity. The use of amphetamines and LSD has dropped almost to zero. In 1987 only 64 people died in the Netherlands as a result of drug abuse. Recent statistics indicate a downward trend. Cases of drug-related homicides are few, at most 10 to 20 a year. On the positive side, one of the unexpected side effects of the policy is the low prevalence of AIDS among Dutch drug users. Drug addicts account for only 8 percent of AIDS patients in the Netherlands, as against 23 percent in Europe and 26 percent in the USA.

In the past, drugs policy in the Netherlands was not always been viewed as favourably by the governments of other countries. However, the US-ambassador to The Hague made the following comments with regard to the Dutch drugs policy in the course of a speech given in Amsterdam. "Since my arrival in the Netherlands, I have been very interested in the policies adopted here to try to deal with the problems of the individual drug abuser. Five facts seem to stand out from the Dutch experience:

- the addict population has stabilized;
- the vast majority of young people are not interested in drugs;
- addicts who want treatment get it quickly;
- the drug culture has been brought above ground;
- the incidence of aids is astonishingly low among addicts and other at-risk groups.

Whether this experience is transferable to other countries, I don't know. But I think there are many success stories here that are worth bringing to the attention of people in the U.S. and elsewhere struggling against this common foe."

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