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MINORITY JUVENILES
AND THE DUTCH POLICE

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J. Junger-Tas

Research and Documentation Center, Ministry of Justice, The Hague, 1983

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ACQUISITIONS

I Introduction: some population facts

Before entering the subject of police contacts of ethnic minority juveniles I think it may be useful to introduce the Dutch situation. Although almost all Western countries have their minority groups, the nature and composition of these minorities probably differ among countries. For a correct understanding of their contacts with the justice system, I think it might be helpful to have at least an idea of the actual situation in our country. Contrary to many European countries The Netherlands became an immigration country rather late. In the seventies there was an instream of citizens from the Mediterranean countries. Dutch citizens of Surinam and Antillean origin entered the country massively only in the eighties.

But since 1981 the immigration flow has undergone drastic change (Penninx, 1982).

As far as immigration from Suriname -an ex colony- is concerned, the bilateral agreement facilitating settlement in The Netherlands has ended, and new regulations were introduced in September 1980.

With respect to the Mediterranean countries a restrictive admittance policy has been maintained since 1981: there is already a visa obligation for Turkish people, and requirements for adequate housing and means of support have been tightened. On the other hand the economic recession did decrease immigration and even produced some remigration.

To get some idea, table 1 shows the immigration surpluses in the years 1979 - 1981 (Penninx, table IV).

Table 1: Migration surpluses of some groups of foreigners 1979 - 1981

	1979	1980	1981
Mediterraneans countries	17.687	24.250	11.930
EC-countries	5.780	6.933	4.819
Surinam (Sur. passport)	15.323	16.011	1.906
Total	47.789	56.187	25.437

The nature of immigration has also changed. Since 1980 no workers have been recruited anymore: most of the immigrants are family of workers. In 1981 half of the immigrants were unmarried children of migrants and the majority was under age twenty.

It is estimated that 72% of the Turkish people and 45,5% of the Maroccans have their wives in The Netherlands.

The following table (Central Bureau of Statistics, monthly population statistics 80/12) shows the population growth since 1960 and the rates of the non-Dutch population.

Table 2: Dutch and non-Dutch population 160 - 1982

	Dutch population	non-Dutch population	% non-Dutch on total population
31-5-1960	11.500.000	117.500	1,0
28-2-1971	13.000.000	255.000	2,0
1-1-1976	13.700.000	350.000	2,6
1-1-1978	13.900.000	400.000	2,9
1-1-1980	14.000.000	475.000	3,4
1-1-1981	14.200.000	520.000	3,7
1-1-1982*	14.300.000	544.000	3,8

* estimates by Penninx, op. cit. table 11.

It is clear from table 2 that there has been a stabilization of the foreign population in our country since 1981. Foreigners form about half a million people among which ± 150.000 from Turkey and ± 100.000 from Marocco. About 60.000 persons originate from Italy, Spain or Yugoslavia and the rest from other (neighbor) countries. All in all about 300.000 persons are citizens from 9 Mediterranean countries. If we add to this the ± 180.000 people from Surinam, the majority of which have the Dutch nationality, then we may estimate that ethnic minorities in Holland form about 5% of the total population.

But although the foreign population forms about 3,5% of the entire population, the concentration of foreigners differs among the Dutch cities. The four largest cities in Holland have the largest concentration:

Table 3: Non-Dutch residents in the four largest Dutch cities in 1980 *

	% of total population
Amsterdam	9,3
Rotterdam	8,4
The Hague	6,9
Utrecht	7,2
Total Netherlands	3,4

This is true not only for foreigners but also for those having a Surinam, Antillean or Moluccan origin. Half of these groups live in the four largest cities (ITS, 1981). If we add these groups, but take into account that approximately one third of the non-Dutch population comes from EC-countries, then we may claim that in cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague the proportion of ethnic minorities in the population is at least 10 to 12%.

These minority groups have some characteristics that distinguish them from the Dutch population.

They have in general a higher reproduction rate: in 1981 on a total of 178.600 live births, 14.500 -or 8%- had a foreign nationality, and of these 58,5% were of Turkish or Maroccan parents.

Related to this is a different population build-up: children under 10 years of age represent 23% of the foreign population, and only 13,5% of the Dutch population. Unemployment among these populations, as well as among the Surinam, Antillean and Moluccan minorities is considerable: unemployment rates are about twice as high as among Dutch workers. The following table gives an impression of the growth of unemployment among several ethnic groups. (Source: Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, Penninx, table 24).

* Rates calculated by Penninx on the basis of statistics from the C.B.S. (op cit. table 12).

Table 4: Registered unemployment among some ethnic groups - April 1979 = 100

	Mediterranean countries	other foreigners	Dutch citizens of Surinam origin	Dutch citizens of Antillean origin	Total unemployment
April 1979 (N=10.266)	(N=5.309)	(N=6.970)	(N=1.574)	(N=193.495)	
	100	100	100	100	100
Dec. 1979	99	102,5	97	111,4	112
June 1980	108,5	106	98,9	118,4	114
Dec. 1980	162,5	155	120,8	157,8	166
June 1981	197	180,2	128,6	166,5	186
Dec. 1981	236,8	219,5	144,3	180	244,8
April 1982	260,4	229,8	151,9	181,8	249,4

It appears from table 4 that unemployment has increased considerably for the whole working population since 1979, but it is clear that the situation is more gloomy for workers that come from Mediterranean countries. Recent Surinam immigrants (with a Surinam passport) have the highest rates: they have 6 times as many unemployed now as in 1979. The reasons for the growth of unemployment among ethnic minority groups are rather obvious. Most of them had unskilled jobs in industry, particularly in the food-, metal- and automobile industry, which all suffered severe blows from the economic recession.

As for the youth population it is not realistic to expect that education will rapidly change the situation.

The majority of the children leave the educational system after primary school, or before finishing a professional education. In case they continue they mostly end up in the lower vocational training schools.

The most problematic group are youngsters joining their parents in The Netherlands at age 12 or more.

A study was undertaken to evaluate the international transit classes the objective of which is to enable the children to participate in the regular system of secondary education. It showed that for many of these youngsters the international transit class was the last education they had before entering on the labor market (Bouwmeester, Amsterdam 1979).

Participation of Surinam, Antillean and Moluccan children is more favourable and show better results (Penninx, 1979), which may be related to their better knowledge of the Dutch language and Dutch culture.

So far this general introduction to the subject of this paper.

Summarizing, it may be said that in The Netherlands we are dealing with two broad ethnic groups:

- so-called guestworkers and their families from the Mediterranean countries (+ 300.000)
- immigrants from Surinam, and the Dutch Antilles (+ 180.000).

Ethnic minority groups form about 5% of our total population, but they are heavily concentrated in our large cities where they form at least 10% of the population.

II POLICE CONTACTS OF MINORITY JUVENILES

I now will review what we know about contacts that juveniles of ethnic minority groups have with the police.

I will restrict myself to the four large cities in our country: Utrecht, Rotterdam, Amsterdam and The Hague. After looking at each city separately I will try to draw the overall picture.

1. Utrecht

We here dispose of some data based on a study of police contacts with Turkish and Moroccan juveniles (Remme, 1982).

Contrary to the general distribution of minority groups in Holland, in Utrecht the Moroccan community is larger than the Turkish group. This is because the city's industrial enterprises started to recruit foreign workers rather late. This means that recruitment had to take place in countries further away from Holland. But there are more Turkish than Moroccan youngsters in the age group 10-19 years old, which is related to the fact that family reunion of the Turkish group was completed to a greater extent than was the case for the Moroccans.

Taking the years 1978, 1979 and 1980 the proportion of Turkish and Moroccan children having contacts with the police has stabilized around + 5%. There is hardly any difference in rates of contacts between Turkish and Moroccan youngsters. The number of police contacts with girls from both these minority groups is very limited: in 1978 it is 12% of all contacts, in 1980 17,5%. But it is expected that the number of contacts with girls will grow, as more and more girls refuse to accept their traditional role. In this respect it should be noted that during the three years 18% of the policecontacts were with girls, but only 10,5% of these were offense related.

Most of the contacts concern 14 to 16 years old: this is the case for 41% of the boys and 51% of the girls.

Taking the girls as a whole nearly half of them have non offense related social assistance contact with the police; for Turkish girls the percentage is even higher: 65,5.

The offense most frequently committed is shoplifting: one third of police contacts with Turkish and Moroccan boys concern shoplifting. It also is practically the only offense committed by minority girls. In many instances -37,5% for the boys and about 80% for the girls- contacts with the police are limited to one contact.

Nearly half of the boys commit other offenses such as small burglaries, bicycle-theft, theft from cars and the like.

There is a relation between length of stay in Holland and having police contacts: 58,5% of the juveniles are more than 2 years in Holland when they come into contact with the police for the first time. This is still more true for girls than for boys.

Like in most European countries the Dutch police have an unofficial cautioning policy, which results in the fact that only a minority of youngsters that come to the attention of the police get an official report. Looking at the number of official reports made up by the children's police in the years 1978 through 1980, one sees an increase in the number concerning ethnic minorities: there has been an increase from 5,5% in 1978 to 13,5% in 1980, and about 20% in 1983. It may be possible that with length of stay the delinquency pattern of minority youngsters will diversify and will resemble more that of comparable Dutch groups.

2. Amsterdam

Considering the annual report of the children's police quite a different picture emerges.

A first table shows the number of police contacts of the different ethnic groups broken down in unofficial police "notes" for internal use and official reports to the prosecutor.

Table 5: Distribution of police contacts over ethnic groups -1981-

Juveniles	Reprimanded by police	Official report to prosecutor
	N = 1480	N = 1784
Dutch	61,5	64,5
Surinam	18,5	19,5
Moroccan	11,5	9,5
Turkish	5	3
Other foreigners	3,5	3,5
	100%	100%

Recalling the fact that ethnic minorities form about 12% of the Amsterdam population the proportion of minority juveniles that have police contacts is considerable. This is especially so for juveniles coming from Surinam and Morocco. Turkish juveniles form the exception. Even if one takes into account the difference in population composition between the Dutch and the minority population, and the fact that the latter almost entirely belong to the lower social classes, there is still a sizeable overrepresentation of these two groups at the police level. Unfortunately the annual report does not give a breakdown of the nature of offenses committed by ethnic groups. In general it may be noted that unofficial police cautioning essentially relates to shoplifting, bicycle theft and group theft, whereas official reporting to the prosecutor concerns mainly motorcycle theft, burglaries, violent theft and other violent offenses.

There is some information about the number of juveniles who were already known to the police when they had a police contact in 1981.

Table 6: Juveniles known to the police before police-contact in 1981

	Reprimanded	Official report to prosecutor
	N = 1480	N = 1784
Dutch	17%	71%
Surinam	22%	76%
Moroccan	23%	71%
Turkish	20%	69%
Other foreigners	14,5%	38,5%

Table 6 shows that cautioning usually occurs on first police contact of the juvenile, although nearly a fourth of the Moroccan youngsters were already known to the police. With respect to official reporting the great majority -and even three fourths of the Moroccan kids- had been at the police station before, although we don't know how many times.

Which are the characteristics of the juveniles that have official contacts with the police, that is, contacts that are reported by the police to the prosecutor.

As we all know boys have more contacts with the juvenile justice system than do girls, and this is still more true for Mediterranean minority groups than for Dutch and Surinam juveniles.

At the level of cautioning a little more than 10% of contacts with Turkish and Moroccan juveniles relate to girls; this is one fifth of all contacts of Dutch youngsters and one third of the Surinam group.

In the case of sending an official report to the prosecutor girls are almost absent: practically no girls from the Mediterranean groups, 3,5% Dutch girls and 6,5% Surinam girls.

There is a difference in number of children in the family: Dutch juveniles come from families with an average of 3 children, minority juveniles live in families with 5 to 6 children.

In most of the families of Turkish and Moroccan boys the father is present, although he is absent in twice as many cases in the prosecutors group than in the police (cautioned) group. The situation for Dutch and Surinam

juveniles is rather different : 40% of the Dutch group has no father present, and this percentage is nearly 60% for the Surinam group. The latter is related to the fact that many Surinam families are female-headed, but even so 60% seems a large proportion.

A last important variable is education. As we know, youngsters that enter the juvenile justice system generally come from the lower social classes and they have little education.

The question is however, if minority juveniles form an even more defavorized group in this respect than the Dutch juveniles.

The Amsterdam police have collected some crude data on the educational level of those who still go to school.

Table 7: Education level of juveniles with police contacts - 1981-

	Dutch N=910	Surinam N=275	Moroccan N=174	Turkish N=78
Primary school	15	23	50	16,5
Lower vocational training	37,5	48	45	60
Junior second school	25,5	23	4,5	19
Senior second school	12	6	0,5	4

Unfortunately the Amsterdam police have not collected data on age-distributions, but if we assume that we are dealing in most cases with adolescents, then we note some interesting differences among the ethnic groups. It appears that the Moroccan group is the most problematic one with respect to education: nearly no member of this group penetrates in the secondary education system. The Turkish group seems better off: more of them entered vocational training schools and the junior secondary school. Finally compared to the Dutch juveniles all minority groups are disadvantaged: considerably more Dutch youngsters enter the secondary school system than do any of the other groups. As a whole the Surinam group resembles most the Dutch group and the Moroccan the least.

3. Rotterdam

Here we dispose of a study on contacts of juveniles with the children's police occurring in 1979 (Van Loon, 1981). In that year there have been 2688 contacts, 86,5% of which were property offenses, and only 10% aggressive acts. Although ethnic minority juveniles form approximately one fifth of the total youth population (0-17y) of Rotterdam, 28% of police contacts in 1979 occurred with minority juveniles. But the distribution of police contacts varies among the different groups.

Table 8: Offenses committed by ethnic groups in relations to their distribution in the youth population - in % -

	Dutch N=100.000	Surinam/ Antilleans N=6.500	Turkish N=7.500	Moroccan N=3.000	other foreigners N=7.500
Property offenses	1,64	6,02	1,72	2,03	1,64
Aggressive offenses	0,23	0,30	0,10	0,10	0,18
Other offenses	0,07	0,22	0,03	----	0,08
Total	1,94	6,54	1,85	2,13	1,90

As we can see the rates for Dutch juveniles and Turks, Moroccans and other foreigners don't differ much but for the fact that Dutch youngsters commit more aggressive acts than do Mediterranean children. Surinam juveniles on the other hand have considerably higher rates than the others, specially with respect to property offenses. Most of the property offenses are petty theft: about half of stolen goods are worth less than f 50,-. The violence is vandalism in two thirds of cases, and beating up other persons in one third of cases.

Much like in Amsterdam 85% of all offenses coming to the knowledge of the Rotterdam children's police are committed by boys. Participation of Mediterranean girls was almost negligible. Girls hardly commit violent acts and their activities are mainly limited to shoplifting. In this

respect the participation of Dutch and Surinam girls is highest, that is 14% and 20,5% respectively.

As far as age is concerned delinquent activities increased after age 14, another well-established fact. An exception is formed by the Turkish group: 40% of them was below age 12.

Most of the juveniles are still in school (70%). Of those who are not, about one third has some sort of job and two thirds are unemployed.

As in Amsterdam we find in Rotterdam a high percentage of incomplete families, especially among the Surinam group and to a smaller degree among the Dutch group.

A first contact will hardly ever be followed by an official report to the prosecutor. When an official report is made, the number of preceding contacts is generally mentioned.

Table 9: Police contacts by ethnic group -in%-

	Dutch	Surinam	Turkish	Moroccan	Other
	N=930	N=400	N=141	N=61	N=133
First offender	66	58	77	67	70
Repeated contacts	34	42	23	33	30
	100	100	100	100	100

Again the Surinam group distinguishes itself from the others: 42% of them have had repeated contacts compared to about one third of the other groups.

A second finding of Van Loon was that about two thirds of all offenses were committed in groups. But of course we don't know to what extent both findings are related to selective police practice.

Some indications in this respect can be found in the differential ways by which offenses come to the knowledge of the children's police.

Taken all the groups together it appears that 70% of all cases are reported by other police services, mainly patrol officers working on the streets. However, this is especially true for Dutch juveniles (76%) and much less so for the other groups where it is between 50% and 65%.

Table 10: Source of cases reported to the children's police -in %-

	Dutch	Surinam	Turkish	Moroccan	other
	N=930	N=400	N=141	N=61	N=133
Victims	24	44	50	33	39
Other police services	76	56	50	67	61
	100	100	100	100	100

Part of the cases are reported by victims or third parties: this occurs in 24% of cases in the Dutch group, but in one third to half in the other groups.

It could be possible that victims and third parties (shopkeepers) are more willing to settle cases unofficially when they are dealing with Dutch kids than when they deal with ethnic minority members.

4. The Hague

We have some information about police contacts of ethnic minority members on the basis of two studies.

The first is a study of police records (Junger-Tas c.s., 1981). A random sample of 1 to 3 has been drawn of all juveniles contacting the children's police in 1976, totalling 877 cases.

According to statistics from the municipality, about 3.3% of The Hague population are Mediterranean originated and 5,2% have a Surinam background.

The Mediterranean juveniles were not overrepresented in the sample. But the Surinam kids formed 12% of the sample, a heavy overrepresentation.

Of both groups -Dutch and Surinam- about half had only one contact and the other half had had several police contacts. Juveniles with only 1 police contact had less family members known to the police than youngsters with several contacts: two thirds of Dutch, but 78% of Surinam juveniles with several police contacts had family members known to the police.

As far as the nature of police contacts is concerned we note some interesting differences among both groups.

Table 11: Nature of offense by ethnic origin and number of policecontacts
- in %-

	Dutch juveniles		Surinam juveniles	
	1 P-contact N=138	several P-contact N=161	1 P-contact N=25	several P-contact N=24
Property offense	89,5	79	92	87,5
Aggressive offenses	10,5	21	8	12,5
	100	100	100	100

Although both groups mainly commit property offenses, this pattern is still more apparent for Surinam than for Dutch juveniles. Another notable difference concerns the fact that among youngsters having had several police contacts, nearly twice as many Dutch than Surinam kids do commit aggressive acts. If we add non offense-related police contacts such as problem behavior or running away from home, it appears that Dutch children have more of such contacts than do Surinam kids. A second study was based on self-report and official data of about 1000 juveniles (Junger-Tas, 1983). This sample was based on the random walk method. Although minority representation was adequate -c.q. 7%- the age distribution was biased: there were too many youngsters and too little older juveniles in the The Hague sample. This means that delinquent behavior probably is underreported.

According to self-reported behavior there is no difference between Dutch juveniles and minority juveniles. About half of both groups declared to have committed at least one or two offenses during the last year, and about one fifth of the offenders admitted having committed 3 or more offenses. However, it is difficult to reach firm conclusions considering the limited absolute number of minority members in the sample.

5. Summary

- Both Amsterdam and Rotterdam police claim that about one third of all police contacts with juveniles concern ethnic minority members. As for The Hague, minority members are also overrepresented. This is mainly due to the share of Surinam youngsters in the overall offender population.
- Although it would seem that Surinam juveniles have less language problems and better educational opportunities they form by far the largest minority group getting into trouble with the police. They also have the largest rate of repeated contacts.
- Turks and Moroccans rank second, but Turkish participation in delinquent activities still appears to be minimal.
- The nature of delinquency is essentially property oriented. There is little violence, and most of it is vandalism. There are indications that delinquency activities of minority youngsters are more often reported to the police than are the same activities of Dutch juveniles.
- Participation of Mediterranean girls is minimal.
- Participation of Surinam girls is comparable to that of Dutch girls.
- Characteristics of minority juveniles are: large families, little education, much unemployment.
- It is expected that in the near future the delinquency rates of Moroccan and Turkish juveniles will increase.

III POLICE REACTIONS TO MINORITY JUVENILES

Unfortunately here again we only dispose of scattered research results. In 1976 we have conducted an observation study of patrol officers working in two cities and two rural districts (Junger-Tas c.s., 1977). 70 day shifts and 21 night shifts were observed, and all incidents of some length of time and involving citizens were recorded.

We found that personal characteristics of involved citizens are related both to type of incident and outcome.

Coloured people, long haired youngsters and persons noted as untidy are significantly more often involved in what the police define as "suspect situations". Although there were hardly more arrests made among coloured than among white persons, they were more often stopped for control. This seemed to indicate that the police pay selective attention to coloured people in general.

We also noted that "long-haired" and "untidy" persons -mostly juveniles- scored higher on hostile and aggressive behavior. But the police showed more belittling and authoritarian behavior to these groups and to coloured persons. The latter were also treated in a more unkind and moralizing way. The results did suggest that racial prejudice shows in the behavior of police officers.

The reach data on the Rotterdam police show that about 60% of all juveniles contacting the police are reprimanded and sent home. Two exceptions are being made: the Turkish and the Surinam groups. Recalling the young age of the Turkish kids having police-contacts, 88% are simply sent home and no official report is made. Of the Surinam kids on the other hand about half are sent to the prosecutor on the basis of an official report. One of the reasons for this situation is that many youngsters of this group have repeated police contacts, and we know that the number of police contacts is related to disposition. Although both the Dutch and the Moroccan group have the same rate of reprimanding (60%) there are significant differences: the Moroccan group is of a lower average age; the boys more often operate on their own and not in groups, and the average value of stolen goods is higher. Another interesting finding is the number of juveniles remanded in custody. The rate is 10% of Dutch

offenders, but 17,5% of the Surinam and 23% of the Moroccan offenders. Practically no Turkish kids have been remanded in custody. The high rates for Moroccan and Surinam juveniles may be related to the higher number of repeated contacts (Surinam).

In about 70% of all cases the children's police have contacts with the parents of the juvenile. The Moroccan group forms an exception where contacts took place in only 55% of cases. It is possible that language problems are an obstacle for useful interaction.

In Amsterdam both the Dutch and Surinam juveniles have the highest number of official reports to the prosecutor namely 56%; for the Moroccan group the percentage is 50% and for the Turkish group 42%. These rates of course refer to all recorded police contacts. We know that many contacts by patrol officers or even the children's police are never recorded, which makes the number of unofficially handled cases much higher than what figures in official statistics.

In The Hague the children's police seem even more liberal: 71% of all property offenses and 64% of all aggressive acts are reprimanded and the kids are sent home. There is, however, some variation according to the number of police contacts. When it is the first contact, 90,5% of cases are unofficially disposed off; when there are repeated contacts the proportion of police reprimands drops to 73%.

However, according to the statistics no relations could be found between police disposal and ethnic origin: all Turkish and Moroccan kids were sent home after a reprimand, and this was the case for 74% of all Surinam youngsters, the same percentage as for Dutch juveniles. When there were repeated contacts the number of official reports was somewhat higher for the Surinam than for the Dutch group (50% against 42,5%).

This information is based on records and dates from 1976. More recent information (1981) based on interview data does indicate that minority youngsters have more contacts with judicial authorities than do Dutch juveniles (Junger-Tas c.s., 1983).

Table 12: Ethnic origin and judicial contacts -The Hague 1981-

	Dutch	Surinam/Turkish/Moroccan
	N = 1042	N = 58
Reported delinquent behavior	45,5	45
Reported policecontacts	29,5	19
Officially recorded police contacts	12,5	19
Contacts with the prosecutor	12,5	17
	100	100

Ethnic minority members did not differ from Dutch juveniles with respect to nature or frequency of delinquent behavior. Yet more of them -36% against 25%- had official contacts with the juvenile justice system. Although the absolute number of minority members in our sample was small, the results seem to indicate some selectivity of the police in the handling of minority juveniles. The data suggest that the police tend to handle minority cases more often in an official way, whereas they deal with Dutch youngsters more frequently in an unofficial manner.

IV Policy and research

1 General policy issues

In the light of the ongoing economic recession and the dramatic increase in unemployment during the last years, the government's policy may be characterized by 2 main themes:

- a restrictive admittance policy so as to stop immigration flow of ethnic minorities;
- a more socially oriented policy towards ethnic minority resident groups.

But as Penninx rightly observes (Penninx, 1982, p. 35) both these policies affect the same population: many of them are uncertain whether they will be allowed to stay in the country, and there is a considerable "Underconsumption" of their formal rights because of ignorance and fear. One of the problems is education: most of the children leave the educational system after primary school or before finishing vocational training.

With respect to race relations on the local level, there have been some riots in Rotterdam in 1972, and in Schiedam in 1976. Since then there have been no riots, and although the economic recession causes some extra tensions between Dutch citizens and minority members, it probably is fair to say that on the whole general public opinion still is fairly tolerant.

A study of Utrecht university -reported by Penninx- found in a number of old neighborhoods of the city that there were tensions and irritations as well as social mechanisms pacifying and mediating between ethnic groups. No relations were found between the degree of concentration of ethnic minorities and the degree of conflict. The researchers concluded that group tensions are not related to concentration of minorities but to the degree of cohesion, social organization and homogeneity of the neighborhood: homogeneous areas with their own social organization and subculture appeared to resist better to large inflows of ethnic minority members than did heterogeneous areas.

As far as general policy is concerned one might say that the emphasis actually lies on the restrictive admittance policy. This has been

partly achieved by requiring visa for Surinam and Turkish citizens, and a tightening up of requirements concerning means of support, adequate housing and permits for temporary residence.

As for social policy, the responsibilities in this respect have been more and more shifted from the central government to the local authorities. But as the municipalities in general and the large cities in particular have had to cut their budgets quite substantially, one must admit that prospects for large scale social policy do not look too bright.

It is expected that most efforts will be concentrated on an adequate education policy in order to promote better integration in Dutch society as well as better chances on the job market, and on a better housing policy in order to promote better living conditions and to avoid ghetto forming.

2 Police policy

It is of course a sad truth that whenever people get into trouble, the burden of solving the immediate problems often are shouldered on the police.

If problems rooted in economic and social conditions are acted out in troublesome ways, society expects the police to restore order and to keep the peace. As noted before problems with ethnic minority members have specially increased in our large cities: contacts with minority kids constitute actually 35 to 40% of all contacts with juveniles in Amsterdam, one third in The Hague and about one fifth in Utrecht. This means that during the last couple of years the police have been confronted with a number of problems to which they had no ready made answers.

Several police departments are now trying out new solutions: some of them have established links with welfare organizations for ethnic minorities, others have developed a specialization within the department to deal more effectively with minority juveniles.

On the whole, however, one cannot say that clear guidelines have been developed that support the police in this respect: each department works on the basis of trial and error to find out how they can achieve a better understanding of the problems at hand.

Among the police departments that have tried to develop a real policy in dealing with minority members, the children's police of Utrecht rank

first.

They have a field specialized detective who handles minority cases on the basis of the firm conviction that reintegration of the child in the family is of paramount importance.

As noted before, the minority group in Utrecht is essentially composed of Turkish and Moroccan citizens.

Their children, especially the adolescents, do easily come into contact with the police.

Relatively much more minority boys than Dutch boys have police contacts for shoplifting. The reason is that, due to more negative stereotyping, personnel do trace them and catch them more often, and once caught they do not know how to handle them and thus turn them over to the police. We have observed earlier that the same phenomenon occurs in Rotterdam.

Girls often have police contacts because they have run away. There are various reasons for this: a marriage planned by the family with someone the girls does not know; the father does not allow her to go to school; or the father beats her regularly.

Whatever the reason for the police contact, the objective of the children's police is to return the child to the family and to restore or safeguard the fathers authority and status.

Although sometimes children are placed in institutions, the experience shows that they then acquire very rapidly Dutch norms and values and become estranged from their family and their culture. It is felt that this does not promote their happiness as they become lonely and isolated without the backing up of their family and their cultural group.

The parents are always invited to the police station, if necessary an interpreter is provided for. A dialogue is established with the objective to work out a solution that protects the father's self image as head of the family and sole authority, and yet meet the child's needs in a way that allows him to continue to live in the family. It is essential for the father's position in his group to have the child back at home. This is what makes him prepared to accept a compromise, allowing for instance the child to go to school or to choose herself a marriage partner in the same ethnic group.

Sometimes the agreement is put on paper -like an official contract-

and officialized by the signature of the police officer and a number of seals. But always there is some control, or aftercare, by making home visits to make sure that the agreement is kept and functioning well. Most of the problems arise from the fact that the parents have but a limited capacity to adapt or integrate in Dutch society.

Once these limits attained, they put enormous pressure on their children to preserve the native cultural habits. But their children change and adapt to Dutch norms and values much more rapidly and resent their parents pressures.

The Utrecht police try to bridge some of the gaps by creating gentleman's agreements and compromises that enable families to stick together and slowly accept some change and show a little more tolerance towards different ways of living.

The Utrecht police department is still rather exceptional in this respect. Other departments are growing more concerned about the problems at hand and are trying out different solutions. Thus the The Hague police has just started a diversion program with special attention for minority kids in collaboration with a number of social agencies in the city. The difference between the Utrecht department and most of the others resides in the fact that the Utrecht police take action themselves and have developed a more social or welfare approach, whereas the other police departments try to develop a proper referring system to existing social agencies.

3 Research problems

Police research presents certain typical problems.

Some of these are related to the organization of the police. Although formally a rigid, bureaucratic and hierarchical organization, there is considerably discretionary power at the lowest echelons. Much of the work of the patrol officer and the detective is essentially uncontrollable. Much of the work is not recorded in any form, and when it is recorded incidents are reformulated in legal terms which often makes the reality behind impenetrable.

The consequence of the discretionary power of the individual police officer is that the reality of police work is often widely discrepant from the

goals officially stated by the police organization. Of course local and group norms do develop, but they lead to large variations in police policy all over the country (Van de Vijver and Broer, 1978).

Another problem is that the police have several functions: order maintenance, crime fighting and assistance to the population.

There is a lot of uncertainty about the priorities that should be set, as well as doubts on the possibility to reconcile these three functions. Can one really mix the peace keeping and the service functions, and how does this affect the expectations and citizen's appreciation of the police.

Other problems relate to questions such as centralization versus decentralization, generalization versus specialization, the development and social control function of team-policing, the sensitivity of the police to social problems and social needs.

All these problems do affect the children's police, perhaps in a more apparent way than other police services, because the dilemma of social control and peace keeping on one hand and social assistance and even guidance on the other hand is much stronger when one has to deal with children. One can see the dilemma clearly reflected in the sometimes entirely different policies developed by various police departments on this matter: in some cases the emphasis is strongly put on social control and law enforcement, and in others the police assume themselves to some extent a social service function.

Now what can research do to assist the police in seeing more clearly where they go and how effective they are?

Limiting myself to the children's police and to their dealings with ethnic minority juveniles, I would like to suggest the following:

- In the first place: inventory-, fact-finding or quantitative studies do seem necessary to me. It is impossible to change police practice as long as one has no idea of actual practice. Moreover, knowledge of actual practice has to be concrete. It is insufficient to use qualitative research techniques, because although they enable the researcher to penetrate more deeply into the nature and problems of police work, it remains a necessity to have a clear view of number and nature of cases handled by the police, of the prevalence of certain problems and the solutions usually found. We all

know that people's perceptions of reality are coloured and distorted, that attitudes often do not reflect behavior, and that people not always do what they say they do. So objective measurement of police activities do seem to me to be essential in any police research.

The question then arises: what do we measure? Can we rely on police reports or even on informal police notes? I do not think we can. If official police reports constitute only a fraction of all police contacts, this is also true for the more informal police notes in the case of police dismissals. There is still a portion of police contacts that are handled without any recording.

The method we choose for is observation; not just walking along with the police but observation on the basis of structured instruments.

Structured observation offers both the advantages of a more intimate knowledge of what really happens and of registration and quantification of police work.

To end this paper let me briefly sketch one of the studies that we are actually undertaking and the possibilities it will offer to improve police practice. The study is concerned with police contacts of ethnic minority juveniles and is conducted in three cities with rather high concentrations of different ethnic groups.

The main questions the study wants to answer are:

- the number and nature of police contacts of ethnic minority juveniles compared to contacts with Dutch juveniles;
- handling of the cases: if the police do dismiss the case do they refer the juvenile to specialized agencies or do they offer help themselves; if so what kind of action do they undertake.

Two researchers will join the children's police in each city during about 6 months, and a time sample will be taken from the total number of shifts during which observations will take place. Every police contact will be registered and when contacts are elaborate and take more time, one of the researchers will go with the detective while the other continues to register the intake contacts. Both types of observations will be recorded in a structured fashion.

Interviews will be held afterwards with a sample of juveniles and their parents, and with schools and local social agencies.

On the basis of the outcomes of the study, different police practices will be compared. Recommendations will be made for potentially more effective ways of dealing with these groups of youngsters. We will then propose an experimental set-up of a modified action scheme, try out the scheme and accompany it by an evaluation study as to its effectiveness.

This was just a simple illustration of the contribution police research may make to improve police practice.

Although it is by no means always easy to objectify police practice, to distinguish clearly goals and means or to make them explicit, an adequate research scheme has to answer following questions:

- what is the exact nature of the problem at hand?
- what is actual police practice now?
- what is it the police want to achieve in this particular field?
- what are the means they use to achieve this end?
- how effective are they in realizing their objectives?
- how can the means be modified in order to reach better results?
- under what specific conditions can better results be realized?

4 Some concluding remarks

Members of ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands have a hard time now: the economic recession hits them harder than most other sections of our population.

Youth unemployment -already high among Dutch young people- is still higher among minority youngsters. There are some signs in Dutch society indicating that tolerance against the different ethnic groups is decreasing and feelings of resentment have been noted. But discriminatory practices are not yet a pervasive element in Dutch society. The available information indicates that Dutch people are still fairly tolerant.

This certainly is also true for the police. Research findings do indicate some racial bias and suggest some selective handling of cases of minority members. But the differences are not large and it would not be justified to speak of large scale discriminatory practices.

Moreover, other factors intervene that explain the higher intervention level in minority cases.

Thus it appears that both public and victims tend to call the police earlier in cases of delinquent behavior by minority members, than when the delinquent is a Dutch juvenile. There is also the problem of contacts with the parents. Moreover, both police and social agencies frequently feel that social work intervention with minority families causes too many difficulties or will prove to be useless.

Another factor is that the family situation of many of these children is perceived as particularly problematic: this is the case for example for the great number of one parent, female headed households of Surinam youth, or in case both parents are working and the children are being left behind without adequate supervision.

The consequence is a tendency for juvenile justice authorities to apply more stringent measures to minority youngsters than to Dutch children.

So, although the objective of the different levels of the juvenile justice system is to deal with children in their best interest, the result often is a selective handling of minority kids, and a massive entry of these kids in the juvenile justice system. The Dutch children's police realize this and are looking for more effective ways of dealing with ethnic minority groups. It is my sincere hope that our research efforts will help them to achieve this.

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