

Summary and conclusion

Juvenile Crime Monitor 2015

Trends in juvenile crime with regard to self-reported offenders, suspects and criminal offenders in the period 1997 to 2015

André van der Laan (Research and Documentation Centre; WODC) and Heike Goudriaan (Statistics Netherlands; CBS)

At the request of the Ministry of Security and Justice, the Research and Documentation Centre (WODC) in collaboration with Statistics Netherlands (CBS) periodically charts the trends in juvenile crime in the Juvenile Crime Monitor. The trends in juvenile crime during the period from 1997 to 2015 are examined in this Juvenile Crime Monitor. The central question is 'What are the trends in the level, nature and settlement of juvenile crime during the period 1997 to 2015?'. The emphasis in this report is placed on the trends during the last five years, 2010 to 2015.

Many offences are not solved. When establishing the number of offenders involved in an offence in a given year, the problem always arises that the actual level of juvenile crime and the actual number of juvenile offenders are unknown. There are various methods to obtain a clearer picture of (trends in) juvenile crime. These sources can be separated into the self-reporting of delinquent behaviour by young people themselves and official registrations made by the police and the judiciary. Figures gained from self-reporting provide a view of the percentage of young people admitting that they have committed one or more types of offences during a particular period.

In this monitor we studied the prevalence of self-reported delinquency in the previous year. Statistics from the police offer greater insight into young suspects and the offences of which they are suspected. Statistics from the judiciary provide us with insight into young people against whom the Public Prosecution Service consider it necessary to institute criminal proceedings and in relation to whom criminal proceedings have been completed, hereinafter referred to as criminal offenders. Each of the sources offers insight into their own area of the population of juvenile offenders, whereas there is an amount of overlap. We are able roughly to assert that there is an increasing seriousness and frequency thereby in the delinquent behaviour.

In order to describe the trends over the period of time, we have used the following indicators: (a) self-reported offenders, (b) registered suspects, (c) criminal offenders and (d) settlements at the level of the police, Public Prosecution Service and the judiciary. A person-oriented approach is a central point for the Ministry of Security and Justice when tackling (juvenile) crime. That is why the first three indicators are measured at a personal level. This way it becomes clear which proportion of the young people admit having committed one or more offences in a particular year and which proportion of the young people have had contact with the police and judiciary in relation to an offence. In this Juvenile Crime Monitor, we count the number of persons who report offences, who are registered as crime suspects and who are criminal offender. We do not count the number of crimes these people have committed. In relation to the settlements, we count the settlements (corrected by population trends). In order to clarify the trends well over the course of time, account is taken of the population trends in the groups under study. After all, if changes occur over the course of time in the number of young men, for example, then the level of crime will also respond to that.

Under the heading 'Long-term trends (1997 to 2015)' we provide a concise summary of the long-term trends during the period from 1997 to 2015. Following on, under the heading 'Short-term trends (2010 to 2015)' we go into greater detail concerning the trends that have occurred during the last five years. In both of these sections we describe the trends within three age groups of young people: the under-twelves (10- and 11-year-olds), minors (12- to 17-year-olds) and young adults (18- to 22-year-olds). New in this Juvenile Crime Monitor is that we look explicitly at what is known about online crime committed by Dutch young people such as cybercrime. Since little can be said yet about trends over the course of time concerning such types of offences and since there is limited information about that in the official registrations, we describe the online offences under a separate heading ('Online crime'). Finally, we set out a general conclusion (under the heading 'Conclusion'). We start below with the possibilities and limitations of the statistics we have used. Despite the qualifications we give concerning the methods used, we still assert that the combination of these independent sources is currently the best method available for making statements about juvenile crime and its trends in the Netherlands.

Possibilities and limitations of the sources used

In order to describe the trends in juvenile crime in the Netherlands, use is made in this investigation of various sources: self-reporting figures, the police and judiciary statistics. We have not used victim surveys, as such surveys do not offer the possibility of distinguishing between the different ages of the offenders. Victim surveys do offer many possibilities for investigating trends in the total levels of crime, but not in relation to studying the trends amongst juvenile offenders.

The sources used in this report each have their own possibilities and limitations. Without intending to provide the full picture, we do make a few important comments here (as well as in previous Juvenile Crime Monitor reports), which are important in interpreting the trends in juvenile crime.

Police and judiciary statistics

Police and judiciary statistics provide a view of the trends within the total population of young suspects and criminal offenders. The offences of which the registered suspects are suspected and which have been followed up are also included in these statistics, as well as the settlements which have then been imposed by the Public Prosecution Service or the judiciary. Police and judiciary figures are updated continually. This offers the possibility of showing the state of affairs on an annual basis, albeit with a certain delay, concerning the total population of known suspects and criminal offenders of an offence and the settlements in respect of these offenders. The police sources used in this Juvenile Crime Monitor are the Recognition Service System (HKS) and the Basic Enforcement Services (BVH), and the judicial source used is the Research and Policy Database for Judicial Documentation (OBJD).

A few comments must be added with regard to the police and judiciary statistics, since the statistics provide an incomplete view of the offences actually committed by young people. In the process of committing an offence through to the punishment of the offender, several selections are made (Elffers, 2003; Van Kerckvoorde, 1995).

A distinction can be made between offences with and without victims. Victims do not report all the offences committed (Goudriaan, 2006) and not all offences are identified. Only a proportion of the offences committed become known to the police (this is estimated to be approximately one third annually) and it varies according to the type of offence (property offences more often than violent crimes – with the exception of murder – and vandalism). Of the minor offences experienced by victims in

2014 almost four out of ten were reported to the police and an official report was made of almost three out of ten.

The willingness to report or make an official report of online crime, such as identity fraud, purchase and sales fraud via the internet, or hacking, is even lower (Kloosterman, 2015). Victimization through hacking is reported least often (in 2014 by one in five victims) and in less than 2% of the cases an official report is made. Victimization through purchase and sales fraud is more often reported to the police (in 2014 by a quarter of the victims) and an official report is made by one in five victims. Even if offences do become known to the police, these are filtered within the criminal justice system. A considerable proportion of the known offences are not solved. The detection rates (the percentage of registered offences whereby an offender has been identified) also vary according to the type of offence. The highest detection rates are found for offences uncovered by the police themselves, such as drugs and weapon offences, followed by violent offences. Vandalism and property offences have for years presented the lowest detection rate (Eggen & Kessels, 2013). Between 2005 and 2014 the total detection rate fluctuated around 25% (Kessels & Verkleij, 2015). It is not known how high the detection rates are for cyber and digitized offences.

Moreover, not all registrations of suspects lead to an arrest and prosecution within the judicial circuit. A proportion of the official reports concerning arrested suspects is then dealt with by Halt and another proportion by the Public Prosecution Service or the judiciary. In addition, a proportion of the cases is dismissed due to insufficient evidence (technical dismissal) or because the Public Prosecution Service does not consider prosecution to be expedient (discretionary dismissal).

Besides the selections made within the law enforcement and judicial chain, other factors may also have consequences for the figures given in the police and judicial registrations. For example, this may concern (changes in) priorities relating to the detection of offenders of certain types of offences, the working procedures of the police or changes in registration systems.

In short, we can characterise police and judicial statistics as production figures which are dependent on the supply of information by victims and of the deployment and prioritisation by the authorities involved in the detection and prosecution of (young) suspects and of bringing to trial (young) offenders. If the selections that are made remain stable over the course of time, that has little effect on the trends. Unfortunately, that is not the case. However, it appears that between 2005 and 2015 the detection rate was stable (Kessels & Verkleij, 2015), but the willingness to report and make an official report decreased (Akkermans & Kessels, 2015).

Self-reporting figures of offending behaviour

Given the comments that may be made in relation to the police and judicial statistics, use is also made in this Juvenile Crime Monitor of a source that does not depend on the input or priorities of partners in the chain of the Ministry of Security and Justice, namely self-reporting of delinquent behaviour. The advantage of self-reporting is that it provides a partial view of offences and offenders who are not yet known to the police. Data is used from the Youth Delinquency Survey; waves 2005, 2010 and 2015.

Self-reporting of delinquent behaviour also has various limitations. Firstly, only a small proportion of the population of young people was questioned in relation to self-reporting. Since a sample is used, inaccuracies occur in the estimation of the percentage of juvenile offenders (which is the reason why we report the percentages in levels of reliability). In addition, a proportion of the young people in the random sample refused to cooperate in the survey. The non-response is relatively low in the Youth Delinquency Survey waves. The response rates varies from 62-68%. There is, however, a certain amount of selectivity in the non-response: young people of Moroccan and Turkish origin refuse to participate in the survey

more often than young people from other origins distinguished here, and young adults refuse more often than minors. Through a readjustment taking account of background characteristics, the survey group is made representative, but the fact remains that certain groups are slightly underrepresented. Hereby we also note that particularly young people who had contact with the police appear to be included relatively often in the non-response group (Weijters & Van der Laan, to be published).

Secondly, only a limited number of offences are included in the questions. Self-reporting therefore does not relate to the whole range of possible offences in the same way as police or judicial statistics do. Self-reporting mainly concerns the lighter and more frequently occurring offences.

A third limitation is that it is apparent from studies that some groups of young people tend to underreport delinquent behaviour, whilst others tend to overreport delinquent behaviour. Previous studies are not clear on this matter. Some of them find that young people from certain origin groups, in particular young people of Moroccan origin, more often have the tendency to underreport in self-reporting studies (Batenburg-Eddes et al., 2012; Junger, 1989; Stevens et al., 2003), while in others this is not found (Zeijl, 2002; Junger-Tas et al., 2003). Other studies show overreporting by young people from other origin groups, such as young people from Surinam or the Dutch Antilles (Junger-Tas et al., 2003).

One limitation found in both the self-reporting statistics as well as the police statistics is that the so-called 'invisible young people' (in other words the young people who are not registered in the municipal personal records database) remain excluded. This relates to illegal immigrants, for example, and tourists. Therefore we do not take account of the trends arising in this group of 'invisible young people' in the self-reporting figures and police statistics.

Combination of sources

The use of a combination of sources, both self-reporting figures as well as police and judicial statistics, whereby data is collected over a long period of time, currently provides the best possibility for charting the trends in juvenile crime. Both types of sources offer a view of a portion of the crime and they complement each other. Self-reporting figures depend on the selections, priorities and working methods of the relevant bodies. This concerns the commonly occurring less serious forms of crime, of which a large proportion does not come to the attention of the police. Police and judicial statistics offer insight into the total population of known suspects and criminal offenders. This mainly concerns the less frequently occurring, yet more serious forms of crime.

Despite that, we make use of various types of data sources, highlight the restrictions which are important in looking for new possibilities for charting the offending behaviour of young people or of indicators which strongly predict offending behaviour. Digitalisation and the associated new technologies may also offer new possibilities. We not only consider thereby a different means of questioning young people, for example through questioning via the internet or the use of more advanced measurement techniques of self-reporting, such as the 'randomised response' technique. Consideration may also be given to the analysis of social media messages which young people place on Twitter, Snapchat, WhatsApp or other internet fora (for example the analyses of the Twitter messages relating to the riots that occurred concerning the Project X events; see Gerber, 2014) or of 'behaviour' (concerning purchases or sales of products) through internet fora or the Dark Web. The extent to which this information is readily available is unclear, also because some data is not publicly available or accessible. In addition, increasing amounts of possibilities are offered through smartphones for measuring behaviour and movement or for recording events. Moreover, there are more and more apps available that allow measurements to be made of components of lifestyle in combination with other

information recorded by a smartphone. For example, research has already been carried out into the use of the sensors in smartphones for the measurement of indicators which strongly predict stress (Muaremi, Arnich & Truster, 2013) or that point to symptoms of depression (Saeb et al., 2015). Such studies, however, are still in their infancy and the question is whether, and if so, the methods can be useful in measuring the criminal behaviour of young people. Although it remains an illusion ever to be able to discover that source which measures all (juvenile) crime, it is still important to look for new possibilities.

We go deeper into the findings in this Juvenile Crime Monitor in the following section.

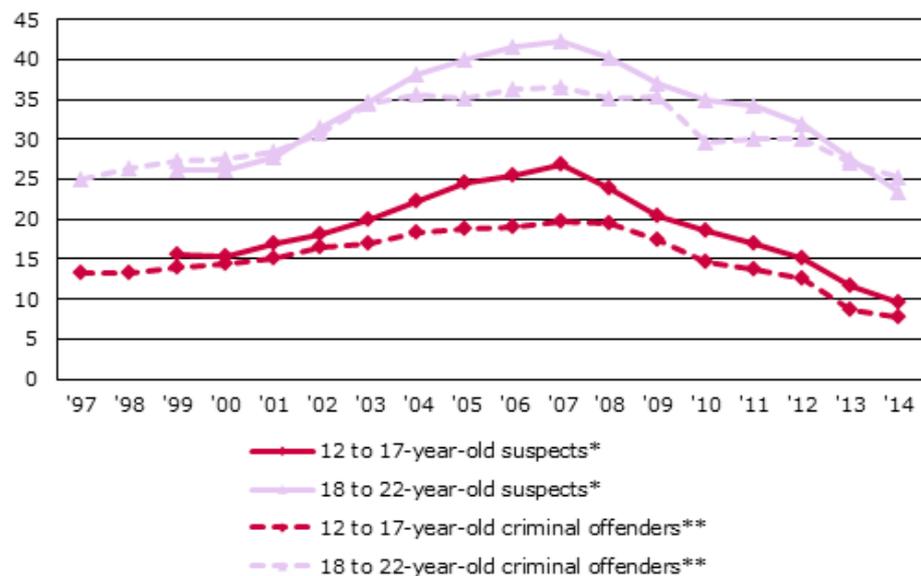
Long-term trends (1997 to 2015)

The portion of suspects and criminal offenders reached a peak around 2007 and then decreases

The trends occurring between 1997 and 2015 are shown in figure S1 for the arrested suspects and criminal offenders. During the period 1997 to 2015 the registered juvenile crime figures first showed an increase until 2007 followed by a decrease during the following years. A similar trend is visible in the case of adults of 23 years and older (not shown in the figure).

In respect of the peak year 2007, the decrease percentage in the number of suspects per 1,000 young people in the 12- to 17-year-old age group is 64%, in the 18- to 22-year-old age group 45% and amongst adults of 23 years and older 32%. The annual decrease percentage in the number of criminal offenders per 1,000 peers is for minors and young adults respectively 61% and 31%.

Figure S1 Long-term trends of young arrested suspects and criminal offenders, per 1,000 peers



* This concerns suspects of a crime arrested by the police who are registered in the municipal personal records database, excluding non-residents (including foreign nationals and tourists). The figures for 2014 are provisional figures.

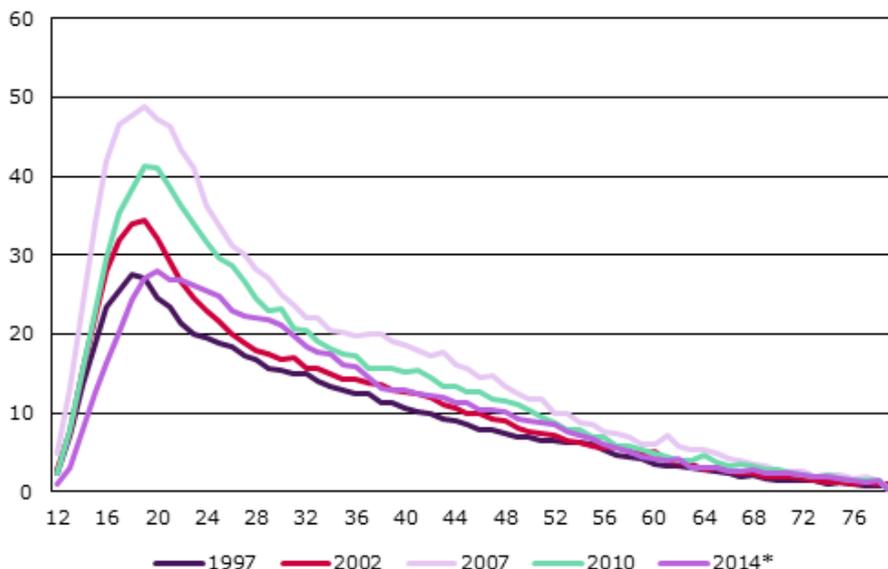
** This concerns all offenders against whom the Public Prosecution Service deemed it worthwhile to continue with criminal proceedings, including non-residents.

Sources: Recognition Service System/SSB, CBS; Research and Policy Database for Judicial Documentation, WODC

Decline in all age groups

The trends seen amongst young people are not unique. Also amongst the total adult population we first see an increase in the proportion of suspects, followed by a decrease from around 2008. In figure S2, we show an age-crime curve for a number of years during the period 1997 to 2015. It is apparent that among all ages the proportion of suspects arrested increases from 1997 until the peak year 2007. After that year the proportion of suspects decreases, independent of their age. What is striking is that among young people the decrease is considerably stronger than among adults. In other words, the decrease in the proportion of suspects per adult is more gradual than among young people. It is also apparent that the peak around the age of 20 has become less pronounced over the course of years. In the last measurement in 2014 it appears that the decrease in the proportion of suspects after the age of 20 is much more gradual than was the case, for example, in 2007.

Figure S2 Age-crime curve for the years 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2014 of arrested suspects, per 1,000 peers



* Provisional figures.

Source: Recognition Service System, CBS, Statline

Short-term trends (2010 to 2015)

In the Juvenile Crime Monitor our aim is targeted more specifically on the trends occurring during the last five observation years. We describe the trends for the three age groups separately.

Under twelves (10- and 11-year-olds)

Since youngsters under the age of 12 years are not criminally liable, there are still no reliable national registrations compiled by the police or the judiciary of their offending behaviour. Only on the basis of self-reporting data do we have an insight into the offending behaviour among this group of young people. To begin with it is asserted to be plausible that the offending behaviour of this group, such as reported in the self-reports, is less serious than among young people in the older age groups. That applies in particular to violent incidents if they report those (Van der Laan et al., 1997, 2008). Moreover, frequent and serious offending behaviour is rare among

the under-twelves and that in most cases such behaviour will be a limited to very few occasions (Van Domburgh, 2009; Van der Laan et al., 2008). Earlier research shows that only a small proportion of the under-twelves comes into contact with the police due to their misbehaviour. This is estimated to concern less than 1% of the under-twelves (Van Domburgh, 2009).

The most important findings concerning self-reported offences by 10- and 11-year-olds are as follows:

The prevalence of self-reported offences by 10- and 11-year-olds is stable between 2010 to 2015

In 2015 one in five 10- and 11-year-olds reported that they had committed an offence in the past twelve months. Although the prevalence is slightly higher than in 2010, the difference compared to the previous wave is not statistically significant. In the case of the 10- and 11-year-olds it mainly concerns minor offences, such as hitting a person without causing injury, theft of products cheaper than EUR 10 from a shop or causing damage to property belonging to someone else.

The prevalence of the separate offences remain stable over the course of time; only self-reported small shoplifting offences increases amongst girls and native Dutch children

The prevalence of the separate offences fluctuates to a certain extent over time, but the differences between the years are not statistically significant. The exception concerns theft from stores of items cheaper than EUR 10, whereby a slight increase can be seen compared to 2010. This increase is in relation to girls and Native Dutch children.

The difference in self-reported offences between boys and girls has decreased

Over the course of time we see the difference in prevalence of self-reported offences between 10- and 11-years-old boys and girls decreasing. Where in 2005 almost twice as many boys as girls reported that they had committed one or more offences, in 2015 this was reduced to around one-and-a-half times as many.

The prevalence of self-reported offences amongst under-twelves of native Dutch children and those of an ethnic minority shows no difference

In all three of the Youth Delinquency Survey waves there are no significant differences between native Dutch youngsters and those of an ethnic minority in the prevalence of self-reported offences. It is not clear whether there are differences between different minority groups because it is not possible to separate these out due to the small numbers in 2005 and 2015.

Minors (12- to 17-year-olds)

In relation to the group of youngsters aged 12 to 17 years, on the basis of all three sources (self-reporting, police and judicial statistics), we are able to make statements concerning the trends that we can see in this age group.

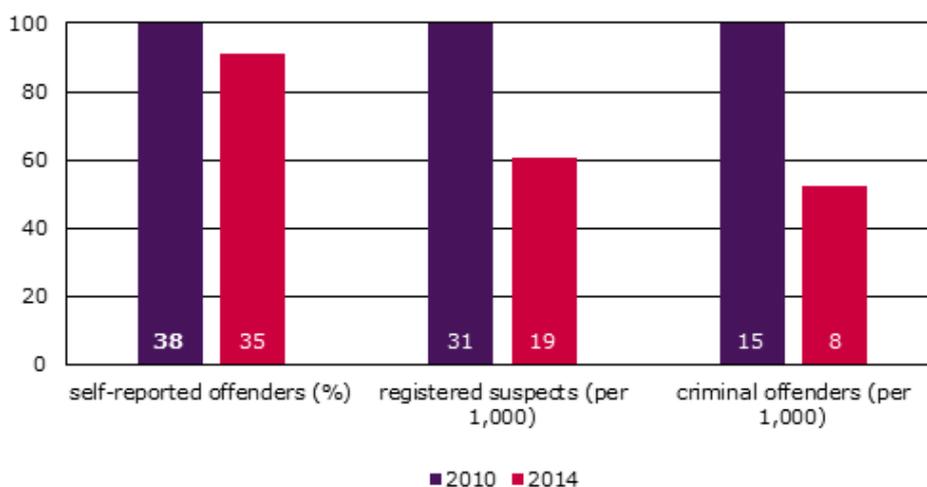
During the period 2010 to 2015 a decrease can be seen in self-reported (offline) offenders, registered suspects and criminal offenders

Self-reporting figures and police and judicial statistics show a decrease during the period 2010 to 2015 in respectively the relative numbers of young self-reported offenders, registered suspects and criminal offenders. It is apparent from the police and judicial statistics that during the period 2010 to 2015 the annual decrease, which started in 2008, continues.

The strength of the downward trend among minors varies per source

The level of the decrease varies per source. In figure S3 we give the figures per source for 2010 and 2014. The percentage decrease (in index figures given in blocks) as well as the proportions of self-reported and criminal offenders and registered suspects (the numbers in the blocks) are given. If we compare the years 2010 and 2014, it is apparent that the prevalence of self-reported offenders among the minors decreased by more than 9% (from 38% to 35%). It is apparent from the police statistics that the number of registered suspects per 1,000 minors decreased by 39% (from 31 to 19 per 1,000 minors) and from the judicial statistics it is apparent that among minors the proportion of criminal offenders decreased by 48% (from 15 to 8 per 1,000 minors).

Figure S3 Trends in the proportion of self-reported offenders, registered suspects and criminal offenders during the period 2010-2015 (index figures 2010=100; and proportions)



Sources: Recognition Service System, CBS; Youth Delinquency Survey; Research and Policy Database for Judicial Documentation, WODC

The general decrease occurs in most categories of offences, excluding drugs offences, but those barely occur among minors

It appears from the self-reporting, police and judicial statistics that the decrease occurs in most categories of offences, such as violent and property offences, vandalism and public order offences. Both self-reporting and police statistics show virtually no change over the course of time in the proportion of minors involved in drugs offences. It also appears from the figures that minors are rarely involved in committing drugs offences.

The general decrease from 2010 to 2015 occurs amongst boys; in the case of girls, only the relative number of registered suspects and criminal offenders decreases

It appears that from 2010 to 2015 there was a decrease in self-reported offences, registered suspects and criminal offenders amongst minor boys. The decrease in self-reported offenders (a reduction of 13%) is less steep than for registered suspects and criminal offenders (respectively a reduction of 39% and 48%). The decrease in the relative number of criminal offenders (the number of criminal offenders per 1,000 peers) has levelled off since 2013.

The picture that we see from the different sources concerning the trends amongst the girls is less clear. The difference between the years in the prevalence of self-reported offenders is not statistically significant (although there is a decreasing trend). This may be due to the small numbers self-reported offenders amongst girls. However, it appears from the police and judicial statistics that there is a significant decrease amongst girls in the number of girls per 1,000 peers who are suspect of a crime or a criminal offender (a decrease in the percentages compared to 2010 of respectively 42% and 49%). The proportion of suspects amongst girls decreases continuously over the course of years. The proportion of criminal offenders amongst girls decreased significantly up to 2013 and then levelled off, as was also the case for boys.

There is hardly any difference between native Dutch and ethnic minorities of self-reported offenders, while there are significant differences between origin groups amongst registered suspects

The prevalence of self-reported offenders in 2015 between native Dutch and ethnic minorities statistically does not differ significantly from each other (respectively 34% and 38%). It is apparent from the police statistics that there is a significant overrepresentation from certain ethnic minority groups. Particularly young people of Dutch Antilles/Aruban and Moroccan origins are overrepresented as registered suspect of an offence (their proportion is almost five times higher than that of native Dutch young people).

The decrease from 2010 to 2015 can be seen amongst native Dutch minors; a decrease is also apparent from police statistics in relation to various ethnic minority groups

It is only possible to distinguish between origin groups on the basis of self-reporting and police statistics. There is a decrease in self-reported offenders amongst native Dutch minors, but not amongst ethnic minority minors. It is not possible to break down the figures into various origin groups due to the small numbers. Police statistics show a decrease seen in all the distinguished origin groups. In other words, the relative number of suspects decreases irrespective of the origin group.

The decrease in registered suspects amongst minors is irrespective of individual or family characteristics

The coupling of the police statistics by CBS to the System of social statistical datasets (SSB) makes it possible to also look at the trends in registered suspects for various background characteristics. This shows that the decrease in registered suspects applies irrespective of gender, origin, level of education, participation in school or work, household income or the composition of the household.

In the case of minors, a continual annual decrease can be seen within all the distinguished groups, except amongst minors who live in an institution. In the previous Juvenile Crime Monitor, we still observed that the relative number of suspects amongst minors living in an institution showed a constant trend. We do now see a decrease during the whole period from 2010 to 2015, but that decrease is still weaker than is the case in the other groups and between 2012 and 2013 there even is a small increase. More information is needed in order to be able to properly interpret this information. For example, it is unclear what the living situation of the young people in institutions actually entails and how this has changed during the period from 2010 to 2015. For a proportion of the young people, living in an institution is partly the consequence of having committed offences and not vice versa. Finally, penitentiary institutions are included under institutions.

The decrease, in terms of percentage, is mainly the greatest amongst socioeconomic groups with the smallest chance of having been arrested as a suspect

If we look at a few socioeconomic characteristics, such as level of education, participation in school/work, household income and composition of the household, then the groups with the smallest chance of being registered as suspect (respectively HAVO (Senior General Secondary Education)/VWO (Pre-university Education), attending school or working, high level of income and living at home in a two-parent family) showed the greatest decrease in terms of percentage during the years 2010 to 2015, while most groups with the highest chance of being registered as a suspect (such as low level of income and living in an institution) showed the least noticeable decrease in percentage terms (there is even an increase in the category of living in an institution). This is also visible in broad terms amongst the young adults (see under the heading 'Young adults (18- to 22-year-olds)'). It seems that the strength of the decrease and the chance of coming into contact with the police according to these socioeconomic variables are connected. However, we must emphasise that this involves decreases in terms of percentages. The decreases per 1,000 peers can clearly be different. If a group that had a small chance of being registered as suspect in 2010 has decreased, for example, from 20 to 10 per 1,000 and a group with a large chance of being registered from 100 to 70 per 1,000, then the decrease in percentage terms is respectively 50% and 30%, but the first group only decreased by 10 per 1,000 and the second by 30 per 1,000 peers. This can be seen, for example, by the observed decrease amongst minors during the period from 2010 to 2015 within the different household compositions. The decrease is the greatest at 44% amongst those living at home in a two-parent family. Per 1,000 of these minors there is a decrease from 23 in 2010 to 13 in 2014. Hence a decrease of 10 per 1,000 minors. With 14%, the decrease is the lowest amongst minors living in an institution. This concerns a relative decrease from 168 per 1,000 minors in an institution in 2010 to 145 in 2014. Hence a decrease of 23 per 1,000 minors.

The relative number of minor suspects has decreased in all the separate municipalities: the number of minor suspects living in the G4 municipalities (Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht) showed a proportional increase

The absolute and relative number of minor suspects shows a decrease irrespective of the municipality where the minors live. The strength of the decrease does however vary per municipality. In the G4 municipalities the number of minor suspects per 1,000 peers decreased by approximately 35% during the period between 2010 and 2015. Among the other 21 large municipalities there are municipalities in which the proportion of minor suspects decreased more strongly ('s-Hertogenbosch, Breda and Maastricht) or less strongly (Apeldoorn). One interesting trend is that the proportion of minor suspects compared with the total population of suspects in the G4 municipalities increased from 2010 to 2015. In total, almost 22% of all minor suspects were living in the G4 municipalities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht) in 2014. In 2010 that was less than 20%.

The number of settlements by the Public Prosecution Service and the judiciary halved; still the judiciary settled more cases against minors than the Public Prosecution Service

The relative number of settlements by the Public Prosecution Service and the judiciary halved between 2010 and 2015. The Public Prosecution Service does, however, settle fewer cases against minors than the judiciary (respectively 5.1 and 6.5 settlements per 1,000 minors). The picture is somewhat distorted by a doubling of discretionary dismissals (mainly the conditional dismissals). If we do not include those in

the numbers, then the relative number of settlements by the Public Prosecution Service against minors has decreased more strongly.

The decrease in the number of settlements with a sanction imposed by the Public Prosecution Service continued from 2010 to 2015; but proportional an increase is found with regard to a punishment order '*strafbeschikking*', discretionary dismissals and conditional dismissals

During the period from 2010 to 2015 the relative number of settlements by the Public Prosecution Service against minors almost halved. The decrease is mainly due to a decrease in the settlements involving a sanction, while settlements without a sanction (dismissals) actually increase. The (relative and absolute) number of settlements involving a sanction by the Public Prosecution Service against minors continues to decrease, with the exception of a punishment order '*strafbeschikking*'. The relative number of community services, educational projects and financial transactions shows a significant decrease (of between 75% and 81%) during the years 2010 to 2015. On the other hand, the relative number of punishment orders (*strafbeschikkingen*) during that period almost doubled and the number of conditional dismissals also increased proportionally. The punishment order has, for a substantial part, replaced the financial transactions. In short, although the settlements by the Public Prosecution Service against minors predominantly shows a decrease, an (small) increase can be seen in the number of discretionary dismissals and conditional dismissals, as well as punishment orders. In respect of the total number of settlements, these forms of settlements have thus increased proportionally from 2010 to 2015.

The decrease in the number of settlements involving a sanction from the judiciary continues; relatively speaking, there are more settlements without sanction (technical judgments and acquittals)

Just as in the case of the Public Prosecution Service, the relative number of settlements by the judiciary against minors halved during the period from 2010 to 2015. Both the custodial sentences (juvenile detention) as well as orders and measures (the Placement in Institution for Juveniles – Order (*PIJ-maatregel*)) show a halving during this period. The custodial measure 'Behaviour Modification measure (GBM)' shows the strongest decrease, but this measure appears to be rarely imposed (see also Plaisier & Mol, 2014).

The settlements by the judiciary which do not end in a sanction (technical judgments and acquittals) do show a decrease over the course of time in absolute and relative numbers, but the decrease is less marked than for settlements that end in a sanction. This means that over the course of years there are proportionally more settlements that ended without sanction. Even in the Juvenile Crime Monitor 2013, we observed that the number of settlements by the judiciary against minors decreased from 2006/2007, but that the numbers of technical dismissals and acquittals increased proportionally (compared to the total number of the judiciary settlements in a year). This trend has continued over the last few years.

Young adults (18- to 22-year-olds)

The trends amongst young adults in the age group 18 to 22 years are described in this Juvenile Crime Monitor. This ties in with the age group which, according to the Adolescent Criminal Law that came into force on 1 April 2014, may also be eligible for application in relation to juvenile criminal law. Self-reporting data for this age group is only available for 2015. The statements made about trends in time for this group are based on police and judicial data. We also wanted to discuss in this Juvenile Crime Monitor several trends related to the introduction of the adolescent criminal law, such as the number of times the juvenile criminal law is imposed on 18-

to 22-year-olds. After the introduction of the adolescent criminal law, however, the registration of that is still not reliable enough in order to enable making statements about it. WODC is currently carrying out a pilot study in order to gain a better view of that. The results of the study are expected in the middle of 2016.

The peak in the prevalence of self-reported offenders occurs at a younger age than is the case with registered suspects

The prevalence of self-reported offenders increases with age, reaches a peak between the 16th and 18th birthdays and then subsequently declines. The peak in self-reported offenders occurs a little earlier than the peak in registered suspects. This finding is in line with earlier research. One possible explanation is that, in the case of self-reporting, mainly the most common offences are measured while the police registrations relate to the less frequent and more serious offences. Other research shows that, in the case of less serious offences, the peak lies more often at a younger age than is the case with the more serious crimes (Ulmer & Steffensmeier, 2014).

Prevalence of self-reported offenders of property and drugs offences is the highest amongst young adults; driving under the influence of alcohol is reported relatively often by young adults

The prevalence of self-reported offenders of juvenile offences¹ is 37% for young adults, 35% for minors and 20% for the under-twelves. If we include adult offences, such as drunk driving and economic offences, then the prevalence for young adults increases to 44%. In comparison with minors, more young adults report property and drugs offences. Although violent and property offences amongst young adults are still the largest category, a relatively large number of young adults report the offence 'driving under the influence of alcohol' (14%). The police statistics also show a relatively large involvement of young adults in such traffic offences. Others also signal this (Donker, 2004; Van der Laan et al., 2012). One possible explanation for this is that the mobility among this group is greater compared to minors, partly due to access to cars and having a driving licence.

Decrease in registered suspects and criminal offenders amongst young adults irrespective of background characteristics; with the exception of the highest level of education

Although the decrease amongst young adults during the period from 2010 to 2015 is generally less marked, just as in the case of minors the decrease is visible within virtually all the investigated sub-groups. There is one exception amongst the investigated characteristics: in the case of young adult registered suspects, the decrease during the period from 2010 to 2015 does not occur in all levels of education. The relative number of young adult suspects with VMBO (Preparatory Secondary Vocational Education) as their highest level of education remains almost the same over the whole period.

Other than is the case with minors, the decrease is not continuous for all the investigated sub-groups during the period 2010-2015. In case of registered suspects, in addition to the group with VMBO as highest level of education, this also applies to young adults receiving social benefits (an increase between 2012 and 2013) and some household compositions.

¹ We include hereby the offences that were also included in previous measurements in the Self-reporting of Juvenile Crime Monitor. Therefore this concerns violent, property and public order offences and vandalism, drugs offences and possession of weapons. See also Chapter 2.

The relative number of young adult criminal offenders remained stable during the period from 2010 to 2012 and then started to decrease. In case of women, the decrease can only be seen after 2013.

In percentage terms, the decrease is usually strongest amongst socioeconomic groups that have the smallest chance of being registered as suspect

If we look at a few socioeconomic breakdowns such as level of education, participation in school/work, household income, and composition of the household, then it is apparent that, in percentage terms, the groups with the smallest chance of being registered as suspect (respectively HBO (Higher Professional Education)/WO (university education), attending school or in work, high level of income and living together away from home) generally show the strongest decrease during the period 2010 to 2015, while most groups with the highest chance in percentage terms of being registered as suspect (respectively VMBO, receiving benefits/others, low level of income, living in an institution) show the lowest decrease. We also saw this picture in the case of minors. It must be stressed, however, that this relates to reductions in percentage terms, which provides a different picture than the relative or absolute decreases (see under the heading 'Minors (12- to 17-year-olds)').

In the case of young adults, the relative number of suspects and criminal offenders decreases at a greater rate for men in comparison with women: the gap between young adult men and women shrinks even further

Amongst young adult men, the relative number of suspects and criminal offenders decreases significantly from 2010 to 2015 (a reduction of 32% and 17% respectively). This decrease is less marked in the case of women (a reduction of 25% and 4% respectively). The difference between the sexes in the relative number of registered suspects and criminal offenders decreases further in the case of young adults between 2010 and 2015, however, which is in contrast with minors. In 2010 the proportion of criminal offenders amongst men was almost five times as great as amongst women (49 and 10 per 10,000 peers respectively), and in 2015 that had decreased to more than four times as great (41 and 9 per 10,000 peers respectively).

Settlements by the Public Prosecution Service, after an initial increase, show a decrease since 2013, with the exception of technical dismissals and discretionary dismissals

Since 2007, the (relative and absolute) number of settlements by the Public Prosecution Service in relation to young adults shows a decrease. This decrease switches to an increase in 2010, reaches a peak in 2012 and then decreases again. This trend is largely due to the introduction of a punishment order '*strafbeschikking*' and also the (absolute and relative) number of punishment orders has shown a decrease after 2012. In the case of young adults, the introduction of the punishment order '*strafbeschikking*' goes, to an important extent, hand in hand with a reduction of financial transactions. This increase is a consequence of the fact that, since the introduction of the Settlement by the Public Prosecution Service Act, the Public Prosecution Service is able to prosecute and hand down punishments using a punishment order in case of relatively minor criminal offences and violations. Cases of more serious offences are still dealt with through the courts. The punishment order was introduced in phases from 2008 and implemented nationwide in 2011 and since then it shows a clear increase. The objective is that in the end transactions will be entirely taken over by punishment orders.

The relative number of discretionary dismissals against young adults increased greatly during the period from 2010 to 2015 after relatively stable numbers in the preceding years. The relative number of discretionary dismissals was almost twice

as high in 2015 compared to 2010. This increase is also visible when we take into account the unconditional discretionary dismissals. Also the relative number of technical dismissals by the Public Prosecution Service shows an increase during this period and is almost twice as high in 2015 compared to 2010. A background fact involved in the increase in the relative number of discretionary dismissals is due to an increase in the number of conditional dismissals. This relates to cases whereby the Public Prosecutor decided to postpone punishment with a punishment conditionally. The number of conditional dismissals amongst young adults increased from 15% in 2010 to 34% in 2014.

Settlements in relation to young adults by the judiciary show an annual decrease

The judicial settlements in relation to young adults reached a peak in 2006 and have decreased since then. There has also been an annual decrease during the period 2010 to 2015, with over one third less settlements by the judiciary in 2015 compared to 2010. Once again this represents a historically low point in the relative and absolute number of settlements by the judiciary in relation to young adults.

The decrease during the period 2010 to 2015 can be seen for most of the settlements with a sanction. Exceptions to this are the longer imprisonments (over three months), other settlements by the judiciary and training orders. The two latter forms of settlement occur rarely, but they do however show a small increase during this period. The relative number of longer terms of imprisonment that are imposed on young adults remains more or less stable during the period 2010 to 2015. In other words, amongst the total number of judicial settlements the number of longer terms of imprisonment imposed on young adults proportionally increases slightly over the course of time.

What is striking is that the settlements which do not end in a sanction, such as a technical judgment or acquittal, remain more or less stable during the period 2010 to 2015. Since the total number of settlements by the judiciary decreased, this means that there are proportionally more judgments without sanction. Apparently, relatively more cases concerning young adults are brought to court, whereby for whatever reason it is not possible to gain sufficient evidence or whereby the young adults were not proven to be the offender in the opinion of the court.

Online crime

Online offences can be separated into cyber offences and digitized offences. In case of the former, this concerns criminal offences whereby IT is the target, like hacking or carrying out DDoS attacks. In case of the latter, this concerns traditional offences that are committed online, such as online threats or not supplying the goods that have been purchased and paid for through a web shop. For the first time in this Juvenile Crime Monitor, extensive research has been carried out into the extent to which young people are involved in online offences, including both cyber offences as well as digitized offences. On the basis of self-reporting as well as police and judicial statistics, investigations have been made into the extent to which young people are involved.

Police and judicial statistics offer little information about the number of young suspects and criminal offenders of online crime

Police and judicial statistics currently provide us with little information about the number of young people who are involved respectively as suspect or criminal offender in a cyber or digitized crime. It is important to note that the distinction we make between online and offline offences cannot be made as such in relation to the registration of offences in police practices. The manner in which offences are regis-

tered in the police registration systems makes it likely that a proportion of the on-line offences remains hidden because those offences are registered as a traditional offline variation whereby it may be specified that the method was carried out digitally. In particular, the digitized offences concern traditional offences whereby use is made of IT. The problem here is the inability of clarifying the modus operandi from the police statistics in order to obtain a national picture. It is therefore conceivable that a proportion of the offences of which young people are suspected concerns cyber or digitized offences (see also Montoya et al., 2013 who investigated files in a police region in the Netherlands). We are unable to verify that on the basis of the available national sources. Judicial statistics offer little further to go on. Although we are able, on the basis of articles of laws, to find out which offences such as cyber and digitized offences are registered, the number of suspects is very small during the observation period.

The percentage of young people that self-report online offences is highest amongst minors

In the Youth Delinquency Survey 2015 five questions were asked about cyber offences (offences whereby the IT structure is the target) and six questions about digitized offences (traditional offences that are committed online). The percentage of young people that reported being involved in an online offence over the previous year is highest amongst the 12- to 17-year-olds, followed by the 18 to 23-year-olds and lowest amongst 10- and 11-year-olds (31%, 28% and 10% respectively). The percentages are higher than is evident from previous research (see Zebel et al., 2014, 2015). This may be explained because the Youth Delinquency Survey asked more questions about online offences. Moreover, the Youth Delinquency Survey involves a national random sample and the other studies are mainly limited to specific groups of young people (pupils or students).

Minors self report more often involvement in digitized offences, young adults more often in cyber offences

Minors more often report being involved in digitized offences as opposed to cyber offences (22% and 17% respectively). By contrast, young adults more often report involvement in cyber offences than in digitized offences (22% and 14% respectively). The greater involvement of minors in digitized offences as opposed to cyber offences is also in line with their online activities, including use of social media. Social media present an important vehicle for various different forms of digitized offences. Studies into how teenagers spend their time show that they are more often engaged in social online activities compared to other age groups (Sonck & De Haan, 2015).

Conclusion

In this Juvenile Crime Monitor, we have examined the trends occurring in juvenile crime on the basis of various sources and indicators. Although these sources have their own possibilities and restrictions, they currently offer the most complete information about trends over time. In this final paragraph we examine a few striking trends, which we have observed in this measurement in the Juvenile Crime Monitor. The Juvenile Crime Monitor is not designed to provide an explanation for trends. However, a few relevant trends are given further clarification and are placed in a wider context.

Seven observations concerning juvenile crime in the Netherlands

The overall decrease in juvenile crime (in terms of proportion of self-reported offenders, registered suspects en criminal offenders among the youth) which started in 2008 also continues during the years from 2010 to 2015

From the various different sources used, each with their own indicators for measuring juvenile crime, we observe that there was a decrease in juvenile crime during the period 2010 to 2015 (in terms of proportion of self-reported offenders, registered suspects en criminal offenders among the youth). The decrease represents a continuation of the decrease that started in 2008 in the Netherlands. We can see this decrease in juvenile crime by minors in all sources used and is visible in virtually all of the background characteristics and types of offences. This also applies to the crime amongst young adults, but in this case we can only base our knowledge on police and judicial statistics.

The decrease in juvenile crime amongst minors and young adults does not exist in isolation. Amongst the total population of adults who come into contact with the police as suspect or as offender with the judicial authorities shows a decrease too (also see figure S2). The decrease amongst minors over the last few decades however, has been greater than it has been amongst the total adult population of suspects (Kessels & Verkleij, 2015). A decrease in the proportion of victims in the Dutch population is also apparent from victimisation surveys (Akkermans & Kessels, 2015). In international terms, a reduction has also been identified in registered juvenile crime (Goudriaan & Smit, 2015). In short, we can argue that across the board a decrease can be seen in the proportion of young people involved in juvenile crime.

The actual decrease in juvenile crime appears to be less strong than is apparent from police and judicial statistics; there may possibly be a difference in decrease in respect of seriousness and frequency

It is unlikely that the decrease in actual juvenile crime is as strong as it appears from the police and judicial statistics. After all, self-reporting figures from minors show a far less strong decrease during the period 2010 to 2015. The discrepancy in the strength of the decrease between the various data sources raises questions about what this implies about the decrease of the actual amount of crime. The limited reduction that we see in the prevalence of self-reported delinquency makes it likely that the actual amount of crime committed by minors decreased less steeply than the decrease that we see in the official statistics, especially in the police statistics.

There are various possible explanations why police and judicial statistics show a stronger decrease than the self-reporting figures.

The first option is that the decrease in official statistics is stronger than in other sources due to various changes that have occurred over the last few years, for example, by the police. In a recent survey carried out by Van Ham, Bervoets and Ferwerda (2015), based on literature and questioning experts, they put forward several possible explanations for the decrease in registered juvenile crime:

- changes to the computer systems used by the police (the introduction of the Basic Enforcement Services and the intended phasing-out of the Recognition Service System);
- reduced priority in the detection of juvenile crime by the police;

- changes in the work process within the police force, such as the Salduz judgment² and the introduction of a system based on 'as quickly, cleverly, selectively, simply and cooperatively as possible, targeted at society';
- there is a shift in the working methods used by the police in public areas, whereby the handling of less serious offences has to a greater extent been handed over to special investigating officers (which possibly leads to a reduction in registration of less serious offences).

Another explanation could be that the behaviour of young people has increasingly shifted to the internet (we do not know that yet), where there is still less visibility than of offline crime.

This concerns hypotheses, which will be investigated further in a follow-up study under assignment from WODC. It is also the question whether the increase in registered crime, that is apparent from police statistics since the start of this century, actually reflects a genuine increase in crime. Some scholars questioned this increase (Wittebrood & Nieuwbeerta, 2006) and argued that this increase has to do with increased attention directed at specific groups, such as young people. During the period from 1996 to 2005, a stable trend can be seen in the prevalence of self-reported delinquency for a few offences (Van der Laan & Blom, 2011).

A final explanation for the difference between the sources in the strength of the decrease is that there may be differences in the reduction in crime depending on the frequency, nature and seriousness. Where the self-reporting of delinquent behaviour by young people focuses on the common and less serious forms of crime, which stay for a large part outside the vision of the police, police and judicial statistics concern the less frequently occurring and more serious forms of crime. We can argue that the different sources complement each other (Weijters & Van der Laan, to be published). The finding that the proportions of suspects and criminal offenders amongst minors show a greater decrease than the proportion of self-reported offenders amongst minors may indicate that the less frequently occurring and more serious forms of crime decrease more strongly than the common and less serious forms. We can see this idea confirmed to a limited extent in the settlements against minors for crimes that have become known to the police, Public Prosecution Service and the judiciary. You can arrange settlements in order of seriousness, with a Halt punishment being the least heavy and custodial sanctions (juvenile detention and the Placement in an Institution for Juveniles Order) as the heaviest sanctions (Bruning, De Jong, Liefwaard, Schuyt, Doek & Doreleijers, 2012). The relative number of finalised Halt punishments for minors decreased only slightly during the period 2010 to 2015 (a reduction of 9%). The relative numbers of settlements by the Public Prosecution Service and the judiciary halved during the same period.

We are unsure whether and to what extent changes in working methods or registration by the police have had a strengthening effect on the decreases in registered juvenile crime. It may be possible that the common and less serious forms of crime, of which a large part remains out of sight of the police and judiciary, also declined less significantly than the more serious forms of crime. We also do not know to what extent the decrease relates mainly to a reduction in the traditional offline crime. Online offences are not well registered, particularly in the police and judicial statistics. We will return to the subject of juvenile offenders at a later stage.

² The Salduz judgment was a judgment made by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). In short, this resulted in all suspects arrested by the police having the right to legal aid before they were questioned by the police.

The difference between the sexes becomes smaller in the case of young adults, but not in the case of criminal minors

More boys than girls are involved in crime. In the previous Juvenile Crime Monitor we commented that the gap between boys and men, on the one hand, and girls and women, on the other hand, becomes smaller based on police and judicial statistics. Others also pointed to the shrinking difference between the sexes (Slotboom, Wong, Swiers & Van der Broek, 2011). This trend does not continue during the period 2010 to 2015 in relation to criminal offenders aged 12 to 17 years (the minors), although it does in the case of young adults. Amongst criminal minors the form and rate of the decrease in registered suspects and criminal offenders for boys and girls remained more or less the same during this period, which means that the difference between the sexes does not lessen. Furthermore, from self-reporting during the years 2010 and 2015 we see virtually no reduction between male and female juvenile criminal offenders (with the exception of self-reporting of property offences).

By contrast, amongst young adults we do see that the difference between the sexes decreases. The reduction amongst young adult men is considerably higher than amongst young adult women, both regarding the relative number of suspects as well as criminal offenders. The difference between the sexes decreased from 2010 to 2015 by five to four times as many criminal offenders amongst men as amongst women.

That the difference between the sexes does not become less in the case of minors is a conspicuous trend that is difficult to clarify. Slotboom et al. (2011) suggested that the decrease in the difference between boys and girls in the police registrations could possibly be related to the priority set by the police in the detection of offences where girls were also involved. What is exactly the background to the stabilisation of the differences between the sexes in the case of minors (and whether policy concerning detection also has something to do with that), is not clear and requires further investigation.

Differences between groups of different origins are virtually not present in self-reporting and yet large in the police statistics; however, there is a decrease amongst all groups of different origins

Young people from ethnic minorities, and particularly young people originating from the Dutch Antilles/Aruba and young people of Moroccan origin, are over-represented in the police statistics. However, we see virtually no differences in self-reported offenders between native Dutch young people and those from ethnic minority groups. This difference between the police statistics and sources from self-reporting figures is difficult to clarify. There are a number of possible explanations, of which some are more methodological and others are more intrinsic in nature.

A first methodological comment concerns self-reporting by offenders of some minority groups. One limitation in self-reporting concerns the overreporting and underreporting of delinquent behaviour. Earlier, we discussed several studies in which it was found that Moroccan boys tended more often towards underreporting than young people of Dutch origin (Batenburg-Eddes, 2012; Junger, 1989; Stevens et al., 2003). Others do not see such differences or instead they see an overreporting by other groups of young people of ethnic origins (Junger-Tas et al., 2003). An additional point is that minority groups, such as Moroccan and Turkish young people, are underrepresented in the random sample used in the Youth Delinquency Survey. One comment that should be added is that, due to the relatively small size of various origin groups in the Youth Delinquency Survey, it is not possible to distinguish between the various origin groups.

A second possible methodological explanation may be that self-reporting figures and police figures each measure their own portions of the crimes committed by young people (see Weijters & Van der Laan, forthcoming). It is conceivable that there are differences between origin groups in their involvement in less serious and more fre-

quently occurring crimes or in their involvement in more serious and less frequently occurring forms.

That there are large differences between origin groups in the likelihood that they come into contact with the police (Jennissen & Blom, 2007) may thirdly be explained by the fact that certain ethnic minority groups are actually involved in crime more often. Fourthly, it is also conceivable that the focus during detection principally lies with particular offences, which are committed more often by specific groups or occur more often in certain contexts. Some studies suggest that the methods used by the police on the streets, especially proactive policing, increases the chance of ethnic profiling, even when they are not suspected of committing a crime (Amnesty International, 2013; Çankaya, 2012). However, there is no evidence that this occurs in the Netherlands on a structural basis. In connection with this, research carried out by Svensson, Sollie and Saharso (2011) into proactive policing provides no indications that young people from ethnic minority groups are systematically treated differently than young people of Dutch origin. The overrepresentation of young people from ethnic minority groups in police contacts may, according to the researchers, be explained to an important extent by the fact that they are out and about on the streets more often and through involvement in delinquent behaviour either by themselves or by group members. Van der Leun and Van der Woude (2014) conclude on the basis of Dutch research that no general picture is clear concerning ethnic profiling by the police. They add that the police work is strongly targeted at street crime and on less affluent districts and those are precisely the areas where migrant groups are overrepresented. However, according to Van der Leun and Van der Woude, there are no hard empirical findings concerning the ethnic profiling of young people from minority groups.

If we look at the trends over time, we see a reduction in self-reported offenders amongst minors and registered suspects of Dutch origin. Amongst young people we do see a reduction only in police registrations regardless ethnic origin. This may suggest that amongst the young people of Dutch origin there is a reduction in their involvement in the frequently committed and less serious forms of crime, as well as in their involvement in less frequently occurring and more serious forms of crime. In relation to young people from ethnic origin groups, we only see a decrease in the police statistics. This could suggest that there is a decrease in the less frequently occurring and more serious forms of crime in relation to these groups in particular. This does not mean that amongst minority groups there is no decrease in the more frequently occurring crimes; we simply do not see that in the self-reporting figures. The absence of a decrease in the proportion of self-reported offenders amongst minors from ethnic origins may also be a result of underrepresentation of specific origin groups, such as young people of Moroccan and Turkish origin.

From 2010 to 2015 the number of settlements by the Public Prosecution Service and the judiciary reduced significantly, and more cases were settled by the judiciary. The decrease in the number of settlements with a sanction continues in relation to the Public Prosecution Service, with proportionally more punishment orders, discretionary dismissals and conditional dismissals

The relatively small number of settlements in relation to minors and young adults shows a significant decrease during the period 2010 to 2015. The number of settlements halved in relation to both the Public Prosecution Service and the judiciary. In the case of young adults, the relative number of the settlements by the judiciary decreased by a third and since 2013 the relative number of settlements by the Public Prosecution Service also decreased.

With regard to the settlements by the Public Prosecution Service, the relative number of community punishment orders, educational projects and financial transactions

showed a significant decrease during the years from 2010 to 2015, while the relative number of punishment orders (*'strafbeschikking'*) almost doubled during the same period. The punishment order (*'strafbeschikking'*) has replaced a considerable proportion of the financial transactions. This points to changes in the working methods used by the Public Prosecution Service as a result of the Settlement by the Public Prosecution Service Act. The Public Prosecution Service has had the statutory possibility since 2008 to impose a punishment order as a sanction instead of a financial transaction. The punishment order was introduced in phases from 2008 and has been applied nationally since 2011. Where in the past community punishment orders or financial transactions were offered by the Public Prosecution Service, the punishment order can now be imposed as well.

Also the increase of settlements by the Public Prosecution Service which do not end in a sanction (particularly the discretionary dismissals) continues during the period from 2010 to 2015. This increase has been on-going since 2007 (see also the Juvenile Crime Monitor 2013) and is also seen amongst adult criminal offenders. The number of discretionary dismissals doubled in 2014 compared to 2010, both in the case of minors as well as young adults. The background to this increase in dismissals is unclear, but may possibly point to a change in policy. In relation to a dismissal by reason of policy, the Public Prosecution Service makes the decision not to prosecute for reasons based on the principle of opportunity. A proportion of the increase in discretionary dismissals in relation to minors and young adults is the result of an increase in the number of conditional dismissals. The Settlement by the Public Prosecution Service Act offers the possibility to separate out the grounds for dismissal. On the one hand, a punishment order may be imposed (Article 257a paragraph 3 of the Netherlands Penal Code) and, on the other hand, the Public Prosecution has the possibility of postponing the decision or prosecution under certain conditions (Article 167 paragraph 2 of the Netherlands Penal Code). In case of the latter, a case may eventually be dismissed if the suspect has kept to the conditions. The conditions imposed are drawn up by the Public Prosecution Service in consultation with the partners in the chain and the municipalities. The concept hereby is that not only the criminal aspects are taken into consideration, but also the social context in which the offence was committed (see Van Rosmalen & Meijer, 2015). Amongst minors we see that there were almost no conditional dismissals in 2010, which is not surprising in itself no surprise since the punishment order was only introduced nationally for minors from 2011. The number of conditional dismissals for minors in 2014 made up more than one third of all discretionary dismissals. In the case of young adults, the number of conditional dismissals increased from 15% in 2010 to 34% in 2014. We also see in the total number of settlements in relation to adults an increase in the number of conditional discretionary dismissals (Van Tulder, Meijer, Kalidien & Verkleij, 2014), although that increase appears to be less marked than in relation to young adults and minors. It is not known in how many cases the conditional dismissal is eventually replaced by a punishment order or that the case is dismissed.

The limited registration of cyber and digitized offences in police and judicial statistics means that remarks concerning trends in these types of offences cannot be made

Online offences, both cyber and digitized offences, are often not recognisable as such in the registration systems of the police (see Zebel et al., 2014, 2015). There are various reasons for that. Some of the information concerning offences whereby IT is used, is present in police files but is not quantified on a structural base. Research into files carried out by Montoya et al. (2013) does indeed show certain offences are registered as traditional offences and in a considerable proportion of the cases IT is involved in the modus operandi, such as in relation to the offences of threat and fraud. Montoya et al. (2013) studied the files manually. Gaining a pic-

ture of this information on a national level requires clever applications, such as text mining of digital files. This would allow the possibility of investigating search engines of the Dutch police force, for example. Fragmentation of information over various different sources is also involved. Recent research carried out by the Inspectorate of Security and Justice (2015) indicates that systems that have improved in the official reporting of certain types of online crime, such as internet fraud, have improved, are still insufficiently connected to other police systems. This limits the detective work into tracking-down the offenders of online crime and suggests that offenders of such crimes can still operate out of sight.

As a consequence, we are still unable to make, on the basis of police statistics, remarks concerning the extent to which Dutch young people are suspects of cyber or digital crime, as well as any related trends. The judicial source offers virtually no other opportunities for gaining a clear picture of online crime. We made use of specific sections of laws pertaining to cyber and digitized crime for that purpose. That shows that the number of criminal offenders, whereby there is a case of cyber or digitized crime, is low. In absolute figures, this concerns less than fifty young people annually (less than 1% of the total group of young offenders in a year). We have also not been able to discover any trends. These low numbers mainly seem to indicate that such offences are not well specified in the judicial source as well.

The limited presence in police or judicial statistics of cases of minors or young adults, in which cyber or digitized crime is implicated, does not mean that virtually no online crime is committed by Dutch young people. Given the increased digitalisation of society it is expected that also young people in the Netherlands do commit online offences. In the literature (Kerstens, 2015; Zebel et al., 2013, 2015) and the media we can already see various examples of that, such as carrying out DDoS attacks (NRC newspaper, 2015a, 2015b), sending threatening emails (NOS.nl, 2015) or 'revenge porn' (NRC newspaper, 2015c).

It is therefore of great importance that actions are carried out in order to register such types of crimes well in the source systems, as well as the characteristics of the suspects of online crime, to look for options for making the data which is already available visible and to find out whether it is possible to link data from different systems so that the data also becomes available to police and judicial statistics.

The number of self-reported offenders of cyber and digitized offences is substantial, but we do not know whether there is a shift from offline to online offences

Around three in ten minors and just as many young adults reported in 2015 that they had committed one or more cyber or digitized offences during the previous year. Hereby, the less serious variations are predominant. Some of those involved mischievous offences, such as logging in to a computer or website without having permission to do so, or impersonating someone else on the internet. However, a small proportion of the young people also reported more serious offences, such as altering information without permission, carrying out a DDoS attack, or threatening others through social media. The prevalence of the whole category of online offences (cyber and digitized offences) is higher than the prevalence of some types of offline offences, such as violence, property offences or vandalism. Minors report relatively more often being involved in digitized offences (online threats) than in relation to cyber offences (such as logging in without permission, altering information without permission or carrying out a DDoS attack), but in the case of young adults that is precisely the other way round. The results may indicate that there is a shift amongst young people from the more traditional offline variations of crime to the online variations. This corresponds with the finding that 'being online' has increased enormously over the last ten years in respect of young people (CBS, 2015a, 2015b; see also Sonck & De Haan, 2015). Particularly 'being online' using mobile devices, such as laptops or smartphones, has increased very significantly

amongst young people since 2005 (CBS, 2013, 2015c). The digitized offences involve online behaviour that is simple to carry out via a laptop or smartphone. It is therefore conceivable that, together with the increased online behaviour of young people including the availability of simpler hardware and software, there may also be a shift from offline to online delinquent behaviour amongst young people. The hypothesis that there has been a shift appears to be cited increasingly often. It was recently pointed out in *The Guardian* (15 October 2015), as a result of new figures in the crime survey concerning England and Wales from the *Office of National Statistics*, that if account is taken of victims of online crime (fraud and cyber crime) there is no decrease, but instead there appears to be a small increase in the number of victims. Although this is a first estimate on the basis of a small sample and concerns victimisation, it clearly shows the importance of proper registration of cyber and digitized crime. It is important to mention that the British estimates refer to victimisation and not to offenders, as is the case in this report.

The increased digitalisation of society and the findings from various investigations into pastimes showing that Dutch young people spend a considerable part of their time online (and that this has increased sharply in recent years), may also go hand in hand with the increase in antisocial behaviour online. For the time being, in relation to self-reporting, it appears mainly to involve less serious offences, of which some can probably be put down to mischievous offences (depending on the manner in which the behaviour of the young person is indicated online). But in relation to various online offences, such as online threats or carrying out DDoS attacks, this does involve offences that can have a big impact. We also do not know whether there are changes to the characteristics of groups of offenders and to what extent offline and online crime overlap each other.³

To conclude

Crimes committed by young people in the Netherlands have decreased irrespective of which source we refer to in order to measure crime and also irrespective of the background characteristics of young people. This phenomenon is not only apparent amongst young people, but also amongst adults. A reduction can also be seen internationally in crime, including juvenile crime.

The reduction is clearly visible in the traditional forms of juvenile crime. Property offences show a significant decrease, but also the other forms of crime, such as violence and vandalism and public order offences, are decreasing. That mainly concerns offences committed offline. It is not known whether and to what extent there is a shift to online forms such as cyber and digitized crime in relation to young people. As previously asserted, it is of essential importance to be able to make reliable estimations concerning cyber and digitized crime, including in relation to offences carried out by young people. In the case of the Netherlands, police and judicial statistics do not yet offer such information at a national level about online crime committed by Dutch young people. A better registration and better coupling with the sources already available, as well as greater insight into the modus operandi used by young suspects and criminal offenders, is hereby important (see Montoya et al., 2013). It is apparent from the self-reporting by offenders that in respect of 2014/2015 a considerable proportion of the young people admit to having been involved in cyber or digitized offences. In respect of young adults, the prevalence of this is approximately equal to that of the traditional offline variations, such as violent or property offences, while in respect of minors, this prevalence is lower. However, it is still unclear to what extent the seriousness and frequency of online

³ Earlier research shows that, with regard to threats, there is an overlap between offenders of offline threats and online threats (Van der Broek, Van der Laan & Weijters, 2014) and victims of these offences (Van Wilsem, 2009).

offences are comparable with the offline offences. A proportion of the online offences can possibly be put down to 'mischievous' offences. This requires further investigation in order to determine whether estimates of (self-reported) offline and online crime can be added to each other.

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