

## SUMMARY

### *Violence monitors*

The objective of the 'Safety Starts With Prevention' programme is to reduce violence by twenty percent in 2010 as compared to 2002. In order to measure the development of violence in Dutch society, a number of government departments carry out monitors. These monitors are based on various sources. In addition to registrations, use is made of victim questionnaires and perpetrator research. There is little insight into the comparability of the figures originating from these different monitors. Therefore, a clear overview is needed of the various monitors that focus on violence. The objective of this overview is to increase insight into the composition, backgrounds, similarities and differences in figures on violence.

### *The study*

In this study we have made an inventory of monitors focusing on violence and assessed them on their suitability to report trends. In addition, we have compared the various monitors and described the developments in violence.

In the first phase of the study – the inventory phase – we collected monitors that focus on violence. We have done this by carrying out a web search and by inquiring with the departments and relevant organisations. From this search 41 monitors emerged that measure violence. These monitors are related to various policy themes:

- violence in the general population;
- domestic violence, partner violence and/or sexual violence;
- child abuse;
- violence on the shop floor;
- school violence;
- violence on public transport;
- juvenile delinquency;
- hard-core criminality;
- racism and discrimination;
- a remaining category with other monitors which measure violence.

After making the inventory, we demarcated the monitors on the basis of the following criteria:

- *Demarcation criterion concept of violence*  
Political violence (including terrorism and war), structural violence (violence that occurs in social structures), violence against animals and destruction of goods have been left out of account.
- *Demarcation criterion period*  
With regard to the period in which measurements have been carried out, in this study 2002 is used as a lower limit.

- *Demarcation criterion scope*  
Local, regional, and specific sector monitors have been left out of account.
- *Demarcation criterion source*  
Figures that are not based on victim questionnaires, perpetrator questionnaires or registrations have been left out of account.
- *Demarcation criterion original data*  
Monitors that provide an overview of figures from other monitors have been left out of account.
- *Demarcation criterion objective figures*  
The perception of violence (for example perception of safety) has been left out of account as much as possible.

After applying the above-mentioned criteria, 31 of the 41 monitors from the inventory phase remained. These 31 monitors have been further assessed on their suitability to report trends in violence.

We assessed the 31 monitors that remained according to the developed framework of analysis. By means of this framework of analysis we compared the monitors with each other by taking into account criteria, which belong to three domains: methodology, reliability and validity. After applying these criteria to the monitors, the monitors have been assessed on their suitability to report trends in violence. In order to do this, the following assessment criteria have been applied:

- carefulness and reliability of the sample;
- external reliability (degree of replicability);
- consistency between the measurements;
- correspondence between operationalisation and definition of violence;
- external validity (degree of representativeness);
- internal validity (extent to which we can rely on the results).

The monitors have been assessed on all the criteria. A score was given for each criterion, between good (++), sufficient (+), doubtful (+/-) and insufficient (-). An insufficient score on one or more of the criteria was taken as an exclusion criterion (except for the criterion 'correspondence between practice and definition of violence'<sup>1</sup>). The monitors were also assessed as unsuitable to report trends in violence if more than half of the criteria were scored as doubtful. In conclusion, monitors of which only one measurement was available were also excluded, since they cannot report trends in violence. On the basis of these criteria we have selected sixteen monitors, which we regard as suitable to report developments of violence in Dutch society (see table 1).

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<sup>1</sup> This criterion has been left out of account, because in our opinion this criterion is the least easy to assess objectively. A sound definition of violence is debatable and the borderline between objective descriptions of violence and subjective perceptions of violence or unsafety is vague.

**Table 1 Monitors which are suitable to report trends in violence**

Monitor (in Dutch)	English translation	Period
<i>General monitors</i>		
1 Veiligheidsmonitor Rijk (VMR)	National Safety Monitor	2006-2008
2 Permanent Onderzoek Leefsituatie, module Recht (POLS)	Permanent Study Living Conditions	2002-2004
3 Politiemonitor bevolking (PMB)	Police Monitor Population	2002-2005
4 Leefbaarometer	Liveability Barometer	2002-2008
<i>Shopfloor</i>		
5 Nationale enquête arbeidsomstandigheden (NEA)	National Questionnaire Working Conditions	2003-2008
6 Aard en omvang van ongewenst gedrag tegen werknemers met een publieke taak	Nature and scope of undesirable behaviour against employees with a public task	2007-2009
7 Agressie tegen overheidspersoneel	Aggression against public officers	2006-2008
8 Monitor Criminaliteit Bedrijfsleven (MCB)	Business Crime Monitor	2004-2008
<i>Education</i>		
9 Sociale veiligheid in het Voortgezet (Speciaal) Onderwijs	Social safety in secondary (special) education	2006-2008
10 Monitor sociale veiligheid in het onderwijs	Monitor social safety in education	2003-2007
11 Monitor Sociale Veiligheid in de mbo-sector	Monitor social safety in intermediate vocational education	2002-2008
<i>Public transport</i>		
12 Personeelsmonitor	Personnel monitor	2002-2008
<i>Hard-core criminality</i>		
13 Doodsoorzakenstatistiek	Cause of death statistics	2002-2008
14 WODC Recidivemonitor	Re-offending Monitor (Ministry of Justice)	2002-2006
15 Geregistreerde geweldsmisdrijven uit het herkenningssysteem (HKS)	Registered violent crimes from the Police Recognition System	2002-2007
16 Landelijk Overvallen Registratie Systeem (LORS)	National Registration System Raids and Robberies	2002-2009

#### *Comparison between monitors*

We have observed large differences in research set-up between the sixteen monitors, which emerged from the selection as suitable to report trends in violence. These differences relate to various aspects:

- The *sample frameworks* are not always comparable, even if the population under study is the same.
- The way *data is collected* is not always similar. The figures are based on registrations, face-to-face questionnaires, online questionnaires and telephone questionnaires.
- Large differences occur with regard to the operationalisation of violence. For example, different types of violence are measured.

- The *formulation* of questions varies. In some monitors the items are explained and examples are given, while in other monitors this is not the case. Besides, in some monitors violence is described by means of concrete behaviour, while in other monitors questions are asked about general forms of violence.
- Some monitors measure *prevalence* of violence, while others only report the *frequency* of violence.

This means that it is possible that existing differences between monitors regarding the level of violence and trends in violence are caused by differences in research set-up. Therefore, the differences in research set-up limit the expressiveness of the monitors to report the developments in violence in Dutch society.

There are large differences with regard to the extent to which policy themes are represented in the eventual selection of monitors. As can be seen in table 1, there is more than one suitable monitor to report trends in violence with regard to the policy themes violence in the general population, violence on the shop floor, school violence and hard-core criminality. However, with regard to the policy themes domestic violence, partner violence and/or sexual violence, child abuse, juvenile delinquency and racism/discrimination it is not possible to report trends in violence. With regard to domestic violence, partner violence and/or sexual violence, and child abuse sufficient valid and reliable monitors are available, but as yet these monitors consist of only one measurement. Therefore, figures originating from these monitors are as yet unsuitable to report trends in violence.

#### *Trends in violence*

Figures from the sixteen selected monitors do not show an unambiguous view of the development of violence in Dutch society. With regard to the number of offences in business, assaults on public transport and the number of murder and manslaughter cases the figures report a decrease. However, most figures report that violence has remained the same in general (e.g. with regard to victims of assaults and victims of sexual crimes), or has increased (e.g. with regard to victims of physical and verbal violence in primary and secondary education and registered violent crimes). Despite the fact that the differences in research set-up limit the expressiveness of the monitors to report the developments in violence, we may state that there is no unequivocal decrease of violence in the period from 2002.