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Dutch penal law

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The Dutch public and the crime problem by J. Junger-Tas and G.J. Terlouw

In 1990 the Dutch Minister of Justice introduced a policy plan in parliament called 'Law in motion; a policy plan for Justice in the years ahead'. On behalf of the plan the Research and Documentation Centre conducted a survey among the Dutch population in March 1990. A random sample of 1025 Dutch citizens of eighteen years or older was drawn and questions were asked on a variety of crime related problems. For example, respondents were asked to evaluate the

seriousness of the crime problem in general and of offenses of fraud in particular. Do they think the governments efforts to combat crime are sufficient? They were also asked what they perceived to be the causes of crime, particularly with respect to juveniles and what they considered as adequate reactions to it. Furthermore questions were asked about crime prevention initiatives and regarding different forms of sanctioning. We wanted to know to what extent the Dutch public was supportive of alternative ways of sanctioning.

The administration of the questionnaire was conducted completely by computer, in order to reduce social desirability effects as well as errors. Respondents received the questionnaire from the main computer at the research centre on their home-computer (distributed by the research centre), completed it there and subsequently sent it back (electronically) to the main computer. The data were analyzed by uni-variate and multi-variate techniques (Homals¹ and regression analysis).

Perceptions of crime as a problem

First, respondents were asked to order a number of social problem areas according to seriousness. The crime problem scores highest and is considered as 'very serious' by 85.5% of the respondents. However, the data show that three other problem areas seriously concern the Dutch public: pollution and the degradation of the environment (82.5%), the growing costs and therefore the threat to the maintenance of the general health care system (82%) and the continuously high unemployment rate (73%). The general economic situation (67.5%), traffic problems (58%) and football hooliganism (57%) are of less concern to Dutch citizens, while only few of them consider the problems of ethnic minority groups (33.5%) and of the farmers (24%) as really 'very serious'. We may conclude that the problem of the massive number of essentially petty crimes, with which the Dutch public is confronted daily, is considered as a really major problem. The conclusion is confirmed by surveys conducted every six months by a Dutch marketing bureau (NSS, July 1990). In the first half of 1990 33 social problems were rankordered. 'Insecurity of citizens' ranked fourth after problems related to the environment and the health care system.

We related the above judgements to background factors such as sex, age, education, religious affiliation, political views, and the choice of a daily newspaper. Some of these were not at all related to judgement about the seriousness of the crime problem. This was the case for sex, religious affiliation and degree of urbanisation.² Other factors proved important correlates. For example with increasing age people tend to see all problems as serious, including crime and football hooliganism. Education is another factor: higher educated respondents rank environmental questions and ethnic minority problems as more important, and crime as less important than lower educated people. Political preference is an interesting variable. It will come as no surprise that Social-democrats and Liberals consider the extent of unemployment as a very serious problem, while Conservatives rank the global economic situation higher. Conservatives also tend to consider environmental problems as less important than other respondents. All respondents consider the crime problem as very serious except left wing (young) people adhering to the so-called 'Green party'.

The choice of a daily newspaper is also related to the judgement about the crime problem, in that readers of liberal and social-democrat papers give a lower rankorder to the crime problem than readers of right wing papers. However there is of course a relation between political preference and the paper one reads. Students and employed respondents consider all problems as less serious than the unemployed. The latter include housewives, retired persons and disabled persons with an invalidity pension. However this is essentially an age effect: older persons generally worry more than young persons.

A number of questions were asked about different forms of fraud. The answers illustrate rather well what has been called the decline of moral values (table 1). Industrial and commercial fraud is considered as extremely serious. This is also true for social security fraud: 75% of the population rejects such practices. However, with respect to tax evasion of individual citizens, respondents are considerably more tolerant: just over one third considers this to be a 'very serious' offense and more than half considers it as 'somewhat serious'. The answers suggest not only that people maintain a double standard, but also that tax evasion must be rather widespread among Dutch citizens.

Women and older people consider all forms of fraud, but particularly tax fraud, as more serious than other respondents. It will come as no surprise that students and the unemployed view social security fraud in a less negative way than housewives and older people. This is also related to age: the younger age groups will have more possibilities to work on the black market than older persons. However, the most interesting outcome is related to religious affiliation, political orientation and choice of newspaper. Supporters of all political parties severely condemn social security fraud, with the exception of left wing Green party adherents. Only half of the latter reject social security fraud, versus 74% of the Social democrats and 85% of the Conservatives. Tax fraud is seen as considerably more serious by Social democrats (42%), Christian democrats (41%) and supporters of the Liberal party (36%), than by supporters of the Conservatives (28%) and Green left-wingers (26%).

A striking fact is that, contrary to what has been found with respect to the other fraud offenses, religious affiliation plays a role with respect to the judgement on tax fraud of individual citizens. This offense is considered as very serious by 45% of those affiliated to the Dutch Reformed church and 53% of the Calvinists, whereas only 31% of the Roman Catholics and 30% of the non-affiliated thought so.

Newspaper choice, being related to political preference, follows a similar pattern. As far as general fraud and tax fraud by commercial firms are concerned, there is a difference between Conservatives and the others. Tax fraud by commercial firms is seen as very serious by 76% of the Christian democrats and by even 87% of the Social

1 Homogeneity analysis by means of alternating least squares (Gifi, 1981)

2 Residents of the four largest urban centres considered ethnic minority problems and the traffic problem as more serious than residents of other cities

Table 1: Judgement on seriousness of some fraud offenses (in %)

	Very serious	Somewhat serious
Industrial fraud	84	13
Tax fraud by commercial firms	76.5	20.5
Social security fraud	75.5	20.5
Tax fraud by individual citizens	35.5	53

democrats, but only by 62% of the Conservatives. Similar differences are found with respect to other forms of fraud committed by commercial firms.

Two conclusions may be drawn on the basis of this material. First, the answers show considerable opportunism among Dutch citizens. Commercial fraud is rejected with great vigour, but if there is an opportunity to commit an infraction on the tax laws, most people do not show many scruples. These results support social control theory and opportunity theory. The first states that the tendency to commit delinquent acts is universal and the second emphasizes that people will do so when the opportunity allows them to get away with it. This conclusion might lead to some bitterness among policy makers about human nature and its shortcomings. However, it seems more fruitful to conclude that the general level of informal and formal controls needs to be raised and that the authorities have an important role to play in this process. The second conclusion is that certain groups of the Dutch population, groups that are affiliated to the Dutch Reformed and to the Calvinist church, much more strongly reject offenses defrauding the authorities than other citizens. These are groups that still maintain strong ties with their church, implying a high level of informal social control and a strong commitment to values such as respect for and decent behaviour towards official authorities. Their attitudes and behaviour are based on strict principles rather than on opportunism. However, we are speaking about small, tightly knit and rather closed communities, mostly living in rural areas. It is improbable that we would be able to recreate such communities in highly urbanized, metropolitan areas. A final question was asked about buying stolen goods, a very frequent offense. The question was put: 'if you would get the opportunity to buy a radio or a video recorder at such a low price that you suspect that these objects were stolen, would you still buy them?'. Although only 3.5% of the sample said 'yes, they would', one fifth thought they might possibly do so ('perhaps'). Moreover, men are far more positive than women: 27% of the male respondents, versus 16% of the female gave a circumstantially positive answer. There also is a striking relation with age. Those born after the second World War had a considerably more lax attitude than those born before the war: 93% of the older respondents absolutely condemn committing such an offense, versus only 75% of those born after the war and 52% of the youngest age groups. Supporters of the left wing Green party, mostly young people, are much more inclined to take advantage of the opportunity than supporters of the other parties (40% versus 15%). The conclusion is that the attitude of the Dutch population with respect to buying goods that probably have been stolen, is somewhat ambivalent. Although most of the people (78%) condemn this act, about one fifth would take it in consideration. If the offer is sufficiently attractive, probably

more people would succumb to the temptation. Although some of the differences in moral judgement that have been noted regarding commercial and tax fraud are also clear in the attitudes about buying stolen goods, the ambivalence and opportunism is more apparent. This is particularly the case with young people. The younger they are the more tolerant they are with respect to this behaviour, and the greater the tendency, we fear, to commit such a deviant act. Other research (IPM, 1989) showed that many rationalizations are available to the offender, such as 'you have paid for it, haven't you', or 'one never really knows whether these things are stolen or not'. We think that these attitudes are not easily reversible. Moreover, fencing is seldom detected by the police.

Victimization

There were a number of questions concerning victimization, partly to check the prevalence of petty crime, but also to check whether victimization has an impact on evaluation of the seriousness of the crime problem and on attitudes with respect to traditional and alternative reactions to criminal behaviour. Five years ago, a similar survey found no relation between victimization and attitudes with respect to crime and crime control, although victims supported more often than non victims a rather punitive, instead of resocializing attitude towards delinquents (Berghuis and Essers, 1986). Similar to the National Crime Survey, carried out every two years by the Central Bureau of Statistics, the highest victimization percentages during the preceding year are found for vandalism (15%) and bicycle theft (6.5%). Victimization rates for burglary (2.5%), pickpocketing (2%), robbery (2%) and assault (0.5%) are somewhat lower. Although the National Crime Survey cannot be directly compared to this study (larger sample including 15-18 year olds, more offenses, other period), a number of similarities can be mentioned. In both surveys men are more often victimized than women, though women are more often victims of pickpocketing than men (3% versus 0.5%). Young people, particularly students and unemployed youths, are more often victim of bicycle theft and less often of pickpocketing than persons of sixty years and older. In both surveys the risk of victimization is twice as high in urban centres as in rural areas. Cities with over 400,000 inhabitants have still higher victimization rates, especially for bicycle theft, robbery, pickpocketing, vandalism and assault. Burglary is an exception: the rates are similar (2.5%) all over the country. Looking at the type of job of respondents, independent workers, including many respondents who run a small business of their own, are considerably more often victims of burglary (8.5%), assault (4.5%) and of vandalism of personal property (48%) than civil servants or salary workers.

Table 2: Expressed views on contributing factors to juvenile delinquency (in %)

	Very much	Somewhat	Not at all
Lack of parental control	60	36	2
Youth unemployment	58	36	2.5
Lack of parental attention	56	38.5	2.5
Lack of social control	34.5	53.5	7
Lack of recreational facilities	27.5	50	18

Table 3: Time of coming home after having been out in the weekend (17-year olds, in %)

17 years in	Before 10 o'clock	10-11 o'clock	11-12 o'clock	12-1 o'clock	1-2 o'clock	After 2 o'clock
< 1940	15	35.5	33	9	1.5	-
1940-1949	14	40	31	6	2	1
1950-1959	6.5	39	30.5	12	4.5	1
1960-1969	5.5	16	38.5	20	7	3
1970-1979	1	6	24.5	30	10.5	13
1980-1989	-	3.5	13	25.5	18	29

Juvenile delinquency: causal factors and reactions

As is well established, the massive manifestation of petty crime is largely a youth phenomenon. That is why we have devoted some attention to this subject. A first question was what Dutch people consider as important causes of juvenile delinquency. The factors listed in table 2 are causes frequently mentioned by policy makers and in criminological literature. According to the Dutch public three of them are very important. Lack of parental control and attention, as well as unemployment are considered main causal factors. Other social controls or lack of recreational opportunities are seen as less operative: half of the respondents think these factors contribute 'somewhat' to juvenile delinquency and one third judges lack of other social controls as a very important contributing factor.

Control mechanisms

Control is an important factor in juvenile behaviour. Taking a study by Felson and Gottfredson (1984) as an example, some questions were asked concerning leisure time behaviour during weekends of respondents at the time they were seventeen years old.

The results show large differences between generations. Of those that were aged seventeen between 1940 and 1960, about a third never went out in the weekend, and about half went out only on some occasions. However, 40% of the respondents aged seventeen between 1960 and 1970 went out regularly during the weekend, while this percentage is approximately 50% for those seventeen between 1970 and 1980.

About 30% of the 17-year olds between 1940-1960 say they sometimes went out with their parents. For younger generations this percentage is only 15%. A comparable pattern shows for going out with other adults. One out of five of those aged seventeen before 1950 'usually' went out with other adults than their parents. This fraction is halved for the younger generations.

Juveniles frequently go out in groups, nowadays and in the past. Yet, one can observe changes between generations. Of those aged seventeen before 1940, 57% used to go out with a group of friends. Of the respondents aged seventeen between 1940 and 1960, about 70% went out in the company of friends, and of those aged seventeen after 1960, this is 80%. The differences between generations are even larger when it comes to the hour of returning home after going out.

Table 3 shows that half of the oldest generations returned home before 11 o'clock at night, and about 85% before 12 o'clock. Things change after 1950. First, 75% is home before 12 o'clock, but this percentage falls to 60%, then to 31.5%, and to 16.5% for the youngest generation. At the same time the percentage of respondents returning home after 1 o'clock at night increases from 1.5% to 47% of those aged seventeen between 1980 and 1989. Juveniles have become increasingly mobile. Almost all of the oldest respondents went out in the town they lived in (93%). Among later generations the proportion of juveniles going out in cities other than their hometown almost doubles from 17% to 33.5%.

Next to the differences that correlate with the period in which the respondents grew up, there are systematic differences between the sexes. About twice as many 17-year old boys went out in the evenings during the weekend than girls (46% vs. 25.5%). Only 18% of girls went out on their own versus 31.5% of the boys, while twice as many girls than boys sometimes went out with their parents (23.5% vs. 11.5%). Also, girls have to return home earlier than boys: over 60% of the girls was home before 12 o'clock at night, versus only 40% of the boys.

The most important conclusion from these data is that the Western nations show a trend of diminishing control on juveniles. Felson and Gottfredson (1984) reported comparable trends for the US. In Holland the breaking point appears to be situated around 1960. Youths from the period before 1960 did not go out quite as frequently in the weekend. When they went out, it was more often in the presence of an adult. The peer group seemed less influential. Those aged seventeen after 1970 went out much more often, and almost exclusively with groups of other youngsters. Only a small minority of the

Table 4: Prevention of juvenile delinquency (in %)

	Not appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	Very appropriate
More parental control	8	34	53.5
More social control	10	51.5	34.5
More recreational facilities	11	51.5	32.5
More technical protection and security officers	14.5	47	33

Table 5: Reactions to juvenile delinquency (in %)

	Not appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	Very appropriate
No punishment	81	12.5	3
A fine	20.5	46	31
Reparation of the damage	1.5	14	83.5
Compulsory schooling course	15	41	37.5
Compulsory work experience	9	38	46.5
Imprisonment	27.5	43	24

younger generation is home before 12 at night in contrast with respondents from older generations. At the same time we see a significantly increased mobility. In general, these developments are somewhat less pronounced among girls than among boys. Girls are going out less often than boys and they go out somewhat more frequently with their parents. However, like boys, girls go out mostly with a group of peers though they return home at an earlier hour than boys. Remarkably enough, religion, political preference and municipality size are not correlated with these results. This means that the trend is very general and characteristic for contemporary society. Parents and other adults have less and less control over juveniles. Young people increasingly spend their time with persons of their own age, travel easily to places where people do not know them and where there is little social control on them. The changes in pleasure-seeking behaviour over the last 50 years are enormous. However, the greater freedom that juveniles have acquired sometimes results in going astray. Juvenile delinquency can sometimes be seen as a form of expression of this process.

Reactions to juvenile delinquency

We asked the Dutch population what the reaction should be to delinquent behaviour by juveniles, offering a choice from several types of reactions. For each type of reaction the respondent was requested to indicate whether it was considered 'not appropriate', 'somewhat appropriate' or 'very appropriate'. Table 4 lists four types of preventive reactions, two of which concern acting upon the (potential) offender, while the other two are aimed at influencing situational factors. Considerable consensus can be seen regarding the role of parents. There seems to be a general feeling that improved control by parents concerning their kids is the best type of prevention. More environmental control or recreational facilities, or more technical protection and security guards are considered as less effective. One third of the respondents judges these reactions 'very appropriate', and half of them as 'somewhat appropriate'. If prevention has failed, and a juvenile has to appear before

the juvenile judge, several other reactions might follow. This time, we gave the respondent six options to consider (table 5). Hardly anyone regards 'no punishment' as a valid option (only 3%). The option 'making the offender repair the damage' gets by far the greatest support. Over 80% of the respondents see this as a very appropriate sanction and almost no respondents think this would not be appropriate. Obliging the offender to acquire some work experience is appreciated by half of the respondents as being a very appropriate reaction. There clearly is less support for fining the offender or sending him to a schooling course. Both options are judged 'somewhat appropriate' by a large proportion of the respondents. This result might be explained by the fact that people expect parents of the offender to pay the fines, while schooling is not felt as 'real' punishment. Nevertheless, about one out of three respondents thinks these are very appropriate alternatives. However, the most remarkable outcome is the lack of support for imprisonment. Less than a quarter of the respondents judge this option as a very appropriate one, more than a quarter feels it is not appropriate, while 43% think imprisonment would be 'somewhat' appropriate. Should we exclude the alternative 'no punishment', we would see that, in comparison to the other options, imprisonment receives the lowest support and the greatest number of 'not appropriate' answers.

Against the background of the significant support for having the offender repair the damage, making the offender work and, to a lesser extent, compulsory schooling, we may conclude that the Dutch public holds a relatively pragmatic attitude when it comes to penal measures with respect to juvenile offenders. It seems to advocate sanctions that are at the same time useful for the victim and appropriate for the offender. Younger generations though, are not more 'progressive' on this subject than older generations. Support for preventive measures, compulsory courses and work and fines increases significantly with age, while support for imprisonment decreases significantly. Though women as well as men do not hold very positive attitudes regarding imprisonment, relatively more men than women consider this as a very appropriate measure (29.5% vs.

Table 6: Support for proposed preventive measures (in %)

	Not at all	Yes, if no extra costs	Yes, even if extra costs
Conductors on trams/busses	4.5	46	50
More personnel in shops	10.5	59.5	30
More security devices in new buildings	13	47	40
Immediate repair of vandalised community property	7.5	50	43
More guarded bicycle parkings	7	44	49
More personnel in high schools	28.5	43.5	28

19%). If we look at the way political preferences are associated with judgement on the different reactions, we notice that working as a sanction gets the strongest support by adherents of the Conservatives (60%) followed by the other big parties (approximately 50%), but only partially by Green left-wingers (35%). Support for imprisonment is greatest among Conservatives (30.5%). Green left-wingers and Social democrats show the least enthusiasm for this option (17.5% and 20.5%). The main conclusion remains that the new policy, in particular community sanctions that take the position of the victim much more into account, may reckon with substantial support from the Dutch population.

Crime control by the government

The subject of crime control was introduced with the question whether the respondents thought the Dutch government was spending enough money on fighting crime. Most respondents (60.5%) answered that the government spends too little money on the crime problem. Of this group 55.5% even considers the amount of money spent far too small. Only 3% thinks too much money is spent in trying to reduce crime, while about one fifth of the respondents considers the amount just right. Men are more negative than women on this point. 28% of the women, but 40% of the men, hold the opinion that the government has not allocated enough resources to fighting crime. Despite these views, the governmental efforts in combatting crime are judged more positively than five years ago. At that time, 74% of the respondents thought that not enough was spent on crime reduction, while in this survey the percentage was 60.5%.

Older people seem to worry more about the crime problem than younger ones. Of those over fifty, 42% consider the amount of money available as minimal, while 25% to 30% of the respondents younger than fifty think so. Not surprisingly, adherents of the opposition characterize the financial means available for crime reduction as far too limited. 65% of the small-business people hold the same opinion, compared to about a third of the civil servants or of those who have a job in industry. Finally, urban citizens (in cities 400,000 inhabitants) in particular feel the government spends far too little money on crime reduction.

How would respondents view the payment of a special tax, in order to supply the government with more financial means to attack the crime problem? To only 6% of them this seems a very good idea and just over a third has a neutral attitude. The majority however (57.5%) responds negatively, though respondents over sixty years of age are less negative than the other age groups. We already saw that small-business persons

feel the government doesn't give enough money by far to reduce crime. This could explain that many more small-business people (17.5%) than civil servants or industrial workers (6.5% and 4%) consider the idea of a 'crime tax' as very positive. Less than half of the small-business people is negative about this idea, while this proportion is much higher among the other employees (68% and 63%).

The last question on this subject concerned the use of so-called 'undercover agents', who invite crime (e.g. in drug traffic cases) in order to acquire evidence. Generally (60.5%) the public views this positively. Men agree to a somewhat greater extent than women (64.5% vs. 57%) and juveniles more than elderly persons.

On the political front, the most significant support for 'undercover' police work is found under Conservatives (72.5%), followed by Liberals (67%) and Christian democrats (60%). Among Social democrats 55% support the idea, but only 44.5% of the adherents of the left wing Green party do so.

Preventive measures

A number of questions regarding crime prevention measures presented two options: would the public support certain crime prevention measures a) if there would be no associated costs for them, and b) if the measure would entail extra costs. Table 6 shows the results. It is no surprise that support for the proposed measures is generally stronger if they do not bring additional costs than if they do. This effect is strongest with respect to measures that are considered not to be the major responsibility of the individual person, such as hiring more personnel in department stores or in schools. In that case only a limited number of people (30% and 28%) would be willing to endorse the measures, even if these cost them extra money. Most support is given to reintroducing conductors on trams and busses, and more guarded bicycle parkings. These outcomes are comparable to those of the 1985 survey. However, in 1985 respectively 71% and 63% were willing to pay extra money for these measures, while in 1990 just half of the respondents said they were. 43% of the respondents is prepared to pay extra money for immediate repair of community properties (in 1985 this was 85%), while 40% is ready to pay an additional sum for having more security devices installed in new homes to be built (in 1985: 55%). In other words, in 1985 a majority of the Dutch population was willing to pay extra in order to activate five of the six measures proposed, but in 1990 this willingness is found in half of the population for only two of the proposed measures. The willingness to spend extra money increases for all measures with age: the older one is the more willing to pay extra for the

Table 7: Opinion concerning 'city guards' and job type (in %)

	Positive attitude	Can make arrests	Can carry weapon
Small-business persons	65	69.5	26
Civil servants	52	37	16
Industrial workers	55.5	48.5	26

Table 8: Opinion on different types of alternative sanctions (in %)

	Not appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	Very appropriate
Working for the victim	20	38.5	37.5
Providing financial compensation	4	28.5	65.5
Sent to course or training program	17.5	45.5	32
Intensive probation supervision	54.5	34	7
Electronic monitoring	52	31.5	10.5

measures proposed.

There are not many differences between adherents of different political parties. The Conservatives show the greatest willingness to pay extra for conductors on trams and busses (60.5% vs. approximately 49% for the other political parties), while Liberals and adherents of the left wing Green party are more willing to pay for guarded bicycle parkings (57% vs. about 49% for members of the other parties).

There have been a few experiments in the Netherlands with 'neighbourhood watching', which met with a varying degree of success (Hummel et al., 1989; Terpstra and Moor, 1990). So far the results suggest that 'neighbourhood watch' is not easily accepted in this country. It is therefore rather remarkable that almost half of the respondents said to be 'very' willing to cooperate in preventive efforts in their own neighbourhood, while 38% showed 'some' willingness. This outcome indicates that there may be a significant gap between the positive attitudes regarding specific preventive efforts, and real life behaviour.

While 59.5% of the respondents show a positive attitude toward so-called 'city guards' (unarmed surveillants without arresting powers), a quarter has no opinion. Less than half of the respondents (47.5%) think that these 'city guards' should also be allowed to make arrests. Apparently the general opinion is that arresting people should remain the exclusive power of the police. The idea to allow 'city guards' to carry a weapon is rejected by two-third of the respondents. Only a quarter of them feels this is a good suggestion. Attitudes towards introducing 'city guards' and authorizing them to make arrests are correlated with age: the older the respondents, the more positive their attitudes. However all age groups reject the idea of having these 'city guards' carry a weapon.

Adherents of the Conservatives particularly like the idea of 'city guards' (70.5%), followed by the Liberals (64%), Social democrats and Christian democrats (60%). The enthusiasm for this measure is considerably less among adherents of the left wing Green party (41.5%), particularly when it comes to carrying weapons (9.5%).

Table 7 shows that the most positive opinion regarding 'city guards' is found among small-business persons (65%), while civil servants are least enthusiastic (52%). Industrial workers

fall in between these groups (55.5%). The high level of support among small-business persons for authorizing 'city guards' to make arrests is remarkable. It probably reflects the degree to which this part of the population is annoyed and disturbed by criminal behaviour.

Reactions to delinquents

To what extent are new developments in criminal justice supported by the Dutch population? First, we wanted to know what people thought of substituting imprisonment in some instances by alternative, or intermediate, sanctions. 69% of the sample thinks this is a good idea and about a quarter shows moderate enthusiasm. In other words, in the Netherlands substantial support is found for the administration of alternative sanctions. Secondly, we tried to find out how people viewed different specified types of alternative sanctions (table 8).

The alternatives that are well-known to the public, such as 'working for the victim' and 'financial compensation', receive most support. The sanction of sending a delinquent to a course or training program, in order to improve his or her chances to find a job, is not administered on a wide scale. However, it received a lot of press coverage as a way to reduce unemployment. The analyses show that those who think unemployment contributes much to delinquency, consider this alternative to be an effective measure. Two of the alternative sanctions proposed are relatively unknown in the Netherlands, as they have almost exclusively been discussed within the judicial system and by criminologists. For example, very strict and frequent supervision of the offender by a probation officer is an alternative which has mainly been applied in the US (intensive probation supervision). The administration of house arrest by electronic means, the so-called 'electronic monitoring', is still in an experimental phase in the US and Great Britain and its effectivity is uncertain. The main conclusion on the basis of the answers given is that public opinion, supported by a 'liberal' press, assumes a sympathetic attitude towards alternatives for imprisonment, particularly where this concerns petty crime.

This is essentially the same pragmatic position as we have

seen with respect to juveniles. The largest support is found for 'financial compensation', considered by 65.5% of the sample as a very appropriate alternative sanction. About as many respondents feel that 'working for the victim' is a somewhat or very appropriate sanction (38.5% and 37.5%). Just under half of the respondents (45.5%) regards a special course or training program as a somewhat appropriate alternative, while 32% considers this very appropriate. The saying 'unknown, unloved' goes obviously for the last two alternative sanctions. Over half of the respondents view these as not suitable. The older age groups consider the first three alternatives more frequently as very appropriate than the younger respondents. Of the youngest respondents for instance 48% consider 'financial compensation' to be very suitable, while this proportion increases to 82.5% for the oldest group. Analysis of the answers of petty crime victims in the sample showed that these victims do not advocate more severe punishment of delinquents than do non-victims.

Support for alternative sanctions as a substitute for imprisonment is generally large among adherents of the different political parties (approximately 70%). However, the level of enthusiasm is even greater under green left-wingers (82.5%). About 35% of the supporters of most large political parties feel that a training program or special course would be a valuable alternative, but the Conservatives are more sceptical. Only 26% of their adherents judge this option to be a valid alternative.

To conclude, we asked a few questions concerning combinations of sanctions as a reaction to fraudulent acts. Three quarters of the respondents consider the payment of damages to the victim, if necessary combined with a fine, 'very appropriate'. But only 29.5% judge the combination of financial compensation with imprisonment as 'very appropriate'. A quarter of the respondents think this last combination is 'not appropriate'. Over half of the respondents (56.5%) hold the opinion that sentencing someone exclusively to imprisonment would not be an appropriate sanction. Barely 9% consider this a very appropriate punishment, and 30% view this as 'somewhat' suitable.

We can safely conclude that new types of sanctions, based on compensation for the victim and on socially useful forms of judicial intervention, are supported widely by the Dutch population. At the same time doubts increased as to the usefulness of imprisonment. While in 1985 71% of the respondents considered 'incarceration of criminals' a very appropriate sanction, in 1990 this percentage is only 9%, with 30% judging this sanction as 'somewhat appropriate'. Similar to the results in 1985, there is - in 1990 - significant consensus about the benefits of imposing a fine, financial compensation for damages caused and the sanction of community service. However, alternative modernisms like 'intensive probation supervision' and 'electronic monitoring' do not meet with the same approval.

Summary and conclusions

The most important outcomes of this opinion-poll can be summarized as follows.

- A large number of Dutch citizens consider the crime problem a very serious one. Ordered according to problem-seriousness, this problem is first on the list of social problems.

- Opinions concerning fraud are mixed. Industrial and tax fraud by commercial business and social security fraud are strongly condemned. However, individual tax fraud is seen as much less serious. Respondents affiliated to the Calvinist and Reformist church take a stricter moral stand than those who are not affiliated to a particular church.
- Fencing is generally strongly rejected. However, males and juveniles hold a more tolerant position regarding this type of crime than elderly persons and women.
- Men become more frequently victims of petty crime than women, but women are more often victims of pickpocketing. The risk of being victimized is greater in big cities than in rural areas and greater among juveniles than among older people. Small-business people are significantly more frequently victims of burglary, robbery and vandalism of personal property than other citizens.
- Lack of parental attention to and control of their children is the major factor contributing to juvenile delinquency, according to the majority of the respondents. Youth unemployment is also considered an important factor, especially by adherents of the left wing Green party.
- There are indications that the level of control on juveniles has been decreasing since the second World War. In comparison to later generations, generations aged seventeen before 1960 did go out less frequently in the weekends and when they did it was more often in the company of their parents or other adults. Also, their evening outings were more often confined to their hometown and they usually returned home at a much earlier hour.
- Respondents advocate reparation of the damage, community service and specific training programs as an adequate reaction to juvenile delinquency. Generally there is great support for sanctions that are satisfying to the victim and socially useful. As far as prevention of juvenile delinquency is concerned, a more stringent control by parents of their children is considered the most promising option.
- A majority of the respondents, in particular those persons who live in big cities, the elderly and small-business persons, think that the government allocates too little money to the crime problem, to be able to reduce crime effectively. The idea of a special 'crime tax' however, hardly appeals to them. The respondents support preventive actions such as more conductors in trams and busses, more bicycle parkings, more safety measures in new buildings and immediate repair of vandalised objects, but there is little willingness to pay extra money for these measures.
- The idea of introducing 'city guards' is viewed positively, with the restriction that they should not be allowed to carry a weapon.
- Alternatives to imprisonment are advocated by 69% of the respondents. Alternative sanctions such as working for the victim, financial compensation and, to a somewhat lesser degree, sentencing to a training program or course in order to get a better position on the labour-market, as well as combinations of these alternatives, meet with great approval. Although in 1985 71% of the respondents saw imprisonment as very appropriate, in 1990 this percentage is only 9%, while 30% judge this sanction as 'somewhat' appropriate.

A peculiar paradox shows in the results of this survey. It is clear that many people in the Netherlands are worried about

the crime problem. This can be concluded from the high ranking of the problem, according to seriousness, from the victimization scores and from the reactions with respect to juvenile delinquency.

The notion that crime reduction is a matter concerning all of us does not seem to be widely accepted. The general opinion is that the government does not spend enough money on this problem. On the other hand there is little willingness among citizens to make a financial contribution, for example through a 'crime tax', or by paying something extra for specific measures. The willingness has even lessened over the last five years, since in 1985 a majority of the respondents supported five of six preventive measures proposed, while in 1990 only two measures are backed by a majority.

Furthermore, an ambivalent attitude is apparent in the answers concerning some specific questions about fencing and tax fraud by individual citizens. The answers indicate that a relatively large proportion of the respondents (one fifth) did not exclude completely the possibility of fencing, and the low percentage of respondents that absolutely rejected tax fraud suggests that many people will be guided by self-interest whenever there is a good opportunity and may be tempted to commit these acts. These results show how hard it is to try to effectively reduce such offenses, as well as other types of delinquency such as fare dodging in the public transport system or speeding.

This ambivalence does not imply however that there is a negative attitude towards new ways of crime reduction, at least in principle. The idea of undercover activities by the police and the introduction of 'city guards' for example are viewed positively. Preventive measures that have recently been developed and introduced meet with enthusiasm. The large support for these measures did not decline over the last five years, but the willingness to pay extra money for them did. An important result is that support for imprisonment, in reaction to petty crime, has decreased considerably since 1985. Expectations about the effectiveness of this sanction are obviously not very high. Alternatives to imprisonment are met with considerably more approval. This concerns in particular alternative sanctions such as working for the victim, financial compensation for and reparation of the damage. It is interesting that this conclusion is valid not only with respect to juveniles but with respect to adult offenders as well. Therefore we are justified in saying that significant support exists for the Dutch judicial policy in this field.

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