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Ethnic Diversification and Crime

Editorial

Semantics do matter. This insight came up while the editorial committee was preparing this issue on crime problems among ethnic minorities in European countries. Over the last 30 years the population of many European countries radically changed. Migrants from all over the world became part and parcel of European countries, or better European culture. Multiculturalism became the intellectual nominator to describe what happened to Western civilisation with its long roots in Christian religion and humanist philosophy. Assimilation could not be the aim of a culture with its emphasis on freedom of speech, meeting and lifestyle. On the other hand, a melting pot is not an attractive alternative if some kind of social cohesion and mutual trust is found essential in order to guarantee the economies of the welfare states. 'Multiculturalism' stresses the challenges which the new composition of the populations imply, but seems to underestimate the problems which happen to occur when new groups have to be included in existing cultures.

For a long time a (criminological) debate on the crime problem among immigrants was not possible in many European countries. It would trigger racist actions and nationalistic policies. These are still strong arguments, but not strong enough to shut the eyes for the problems among immigrant groups. It might even be the other way around: ignoring the problems does not help the inclusion but brings the risk of stigmatising migrants as such – also the migrants who do succeed in finding their way in European societies. Ethnic diversification describes in a neutral way the actual situation in Europe. The crime problem in Europe cannot be understood anymore if this diversification is not included in the analyses. This is the rationale behind this issue of the *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*.

The hypothesis of the research reported by *Josine Junger-Tas* is that a lack of economic and social integration of ethnic minorities in our society can lead to criminal and antisocial behaviour. The first part of this article deals with the various dimensions of social integration into Dutch society, some of which are connected to characteristics of this society while others relate to the features of various ethnic groups. Attention is given to group differences in the integration process. Useful concepts in this regard include the level to which these groups have social, informative and cultural capital that can help them to integrate into the society. The second part considers the theoretical links between integration and criminal behaviour. She attempts to develop a theoretical framework that could explain the different levels of involvement in crime between various ethnic groups and between individual juveniles in these groups. This framework draws on the separate theoretical perspectives: social control theory, specific aspects of strain theory, new developments in the ecological approach to crime and the possible impact of cultural and individual variables.

Philip Muus highlights some of the past and current trends in international migration towards European countries, and the developments in immigrant settlement, migration policies and immigrant labour market integration. A short definition of international migration is the movement of persons across national borders with the intention to settle in another country for a period of at least a year. Several types of migration are distinguished, including migration from (former) colonies, recruitment of 'temporary' workers, family reunification, asylum seeking, ethnic Germans, EU-migrants, highly skilled migrants, clandestine migrants, and East-West migration. The immigrant settlement and migration policies are also discussed.

Godfried Engbersen and Joanne van der Leun use various Dutch data sources to explain the relations that exist between illegality and criminality. They discuss the emergence of illegality as a social problem and the linking of illegality to criminality. In addition they focus on the illegal immigrants' differential involvement in types of crime on basis of the data gathered for the *Unknown City* project – a project in the four largest cities in The Netherlands. The differential involvement will subsequently be explained on the basis of the extent to which illegal immigrants have access to the labour market and

supportive networks, and on the basis of the implementation of the policies towards illegal immigrants.

Within Britain, the police use of powers to stop and search members of the public on the street has long been a source of controversy. At the centre of the debate has been the observation that those from minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly black people, are stopped and searched far more often than white people. *Joel Miller, Nick Bland and Paul Quinton* have recently conducted research looking specifically at the question of stop and search. Their article draws on this research to consider how the impact of stops and searches on the community can be reconciled with their use as a crime-fighting tool. Specifically, it asks the following questions: How do stops and searches impact on public confidence in the police? What role do stops and searches have in policing? Following from this, what steps can be taken to minimise their negative impact on the community and maximise their effectiveness against crime problems?

In the *Current Issues* section *Gerry Rice and Terry Thomas* explore the exchange of personal information between agencies working with drug users, and take as a case study the 'Wintercomfort case' concerning a day centre for drug users in Cambridge.