

Justitiële verkenningen

Vol. 24, no. 1, January/February, 1998

No home, no haven

Summaries

Justitiële verkenningen (Judicial exploration) is published nine times a year by the Research and Documentation Centre of the Dutch Ministry of Justice in cooperation with the publishing house Gouda Quint BV. Each issue focuses on a central theme related to criminal law, criminal policy and criminology. The section Summaries contains abstracts of the internationally most relevant articles of each issue.

Man without documents; informal strategies to stay in The Netherlands

G. Engbersen

This article deals with the social position of undocumented immigrants in Dutch society and the strategies they conduct in order to stay in The Netherlands. This article argues that an 'undocumented underclass' is in the making whose members differ from other marginal groups in their illegal status and their precapitalistic labour market position. The author analyzes four main strategies illegal immigrants employ to lengthen their illegal stay in The Netherlands, e.g. committing crimes, mobilizing social capital, manipulating their personal identity, and risk avoiding behaviour in the public sphere. The author concludes by stating that the current restrictive migration policies will have some negative, unintended consequences for the social order in Dutch cities and for the poor, ethnic communities who have to support their illegal co-ethnics.

Unintended integration and street level bureaucrats; tales of in- and exclusion of undocumented immigrants

J. van der Leun

Undocumented immigrants are, in principle, not incorporated in the Dutch welfare system. Without a residence permit, they are supposed to be excluded from a whole array of public services. Street-level bureaucrats, who represent the welfare state at the local level, however, do not always act according to these rules. Drawing on qualitative interviews with police officers, teachers, doctors, public housing administrators and social workers, it is shown that they use their considerable discretion to refrain from excluding undocumented residents. Despite formal restrictive policies, public service workers in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods in the larger cities actively contribute to the emergence of so-called 'bastard institutions', informal institutions that enable a kind of partial integration of undocumented immigrants which is completely at odds with the official rules and regulations. In the long run, this may lead to a creation of truncated citizenship for some undocumented immigrants who are entitled to specific welfare state benefits but not to others.

Homeless youths; a psychological enigma

M.H.R. Nuy

Homelessness is not a very large (about 0.2% of the Dutch population) but certainly a very serious problem with roots in societal structures as well as in personal courses of life. Although there is a wide spectrum of care in The Netherlands, many homeless people keep their distance, sometimes because of their long history of distrust, sometimes because of the denial of their individual problems. Social research has taught a lot about homeless people, but still their behaviour often remains a psychological enigma. They want a 'normal life' but many of them nevertheless remain in the circles of the street, or worse, keep hiding themselves in inaccessible bombs. Self-exclusion follows the exclusion of society, not because they don't want to find a way out, but because of the necessity to survive. Vulnerable or fighting men, the tragedy of social exclusion asks for an answer. This answer would not always or exclusively have to be an answer of care: for some so called streetwise homeless a quite normal lodging-house would be the best alternative. The vulnerable ones do need at least outreaching care, not compulsory, but should continuously be kept in contact with.

Homeless youths; draft of psychological developments

M.A.E. Thomeer and L.W.C. Tavecchio

The development of homelessness in adolescents and young adults is partially explained within the framework of attachment theory. The relation between the quality of early parent-child interactions on the one hand, and affective development as well as interpersonal relationships later in life on the other, constitutes one of the focal points of the theory. In a group of homeless youths (n=108), data were gathered on family background, parenting style, and experiences of separation and loss. Also, data were obtained with respect to the presence and influence of social support systems. Homeless youth data were compared with data from two comparison groups and a control group. One comparison group was composed of adolescents formerly in residential care (n=85), the other comprised adolescents resembling homeless youth in SES, educational level and working experience (n=76). Finally, there was a large controlgroup of youth from the 'normal' population (n=1228). Results indicate that growing up in a family with divorced parents, and especially a lack of parental responsiveness - i.e. little warmth and care combined with much control - should be regarded as decisive factors in the genesis of homelessness in adolescents and young adults. It also appeared that the existence of a social support system can act as a protective factor, and thus play a role in preventing the development of homelessness.

Homelessness and social exclusion

F. Spierings

Social policy may unintentionally exclude social categories, and by this process select new groups into the ranks of the vulnerable and the needy. This is the case with homeless people. Care facilities in the Netherlands do not fit the specific needs and interests of homeless people. As a consequence, these people drift towards the edge of society. They are considered a nuisance by many other members of society. They 'cause' feelings of insecurity in the inner cities and in the old neighbourhoods. This paper describes the social reach model as an alternative model for organizing social provisions and care facilities. The social reach model is not a model based on a standardised system, but based on individual needs: provisions and facilities become tailor made.

Helping them 'on-the way-back'; three (re)integration projects for homeless youths

B. Bijl and M.H. Glas

In The Netherlands about 4.300 youths in the age from 15 to 23 years are homeless. In addition to these youths, about 25% of the young people living in residential facilities run the risk of becoming homeless when they drop out of these institutions: they usually don't have a supporting social network and they lack social skills. For both groups methods are developed to prevent further disintegration and to support them to improve their position in society. In this article three of these methods are presented. The methods focuss on the solution of material and psychosocial problems; on creating substantial social support; on empowerment; on enhancing social skills and on developing a plan for the future. For a lot of participants these methods appear to be successful. That is, these youngsters find their way back into society. For mental handicapped and/or addicted homeless youths and for youngsters with psychiatric problems, more specialized methods are needed.