

# Justitiële verkenningen

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## Police and social science

### Summaries

Justitiële verkenningen (Judicial explorations) 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. The central theme of this issue is: Police and social science.

#### **Police and (social) sciences: co-operation and opposites**

G.J.N. Bruinsma and C.D. van der Vijver

For several years it is stated that in the Netherlands police forces and scientific research, i.e. criminology and polices studies, are coming closer to one another. In this contribution this thesis is questioned by differentiating between kinds of research. In the seventies there were many conflicts between critical researchers and the police, because empirical studies show the more negative sides of police work (discrimination, violence). Nowadays a more close co-operation between criminologists in studying organised crime, offenders and so on, is welcomed by both because each benefits from these co-operation. But nowadays evaluation and fundamental studies in the field of police studies are still observed with distrust by the police, like in the sixties. Despite this existing distrust, all kinds of social research have more or less contributed substantially to the police practice the last decades. The article is closed by an appeal for more fundamental and coherent research programmes in stead of the fragmented research practice of today.

#### **A closely knit relationship; the dilemma's for social science**

J.M. Nelen

The author states that the relationship between social science and the police has changed significantly during the last two decades. Criminologists are no longer considered as 'enemies' but have become almost one of the police family. Social scientists nowadays have access to classified police information. Besides their classic role as independent scientists many of them have adapted a new role by advising police managers in operational matters. Although it is in the interest of both the police and social science to maintain as good mutual relations as possible, the author warns that in the end social science might have to foot the bill. The situation has to be prevented that the police prohibits the publication of research findings because of their sensitivity. Furthermore, more attention has to be paid to the assessment and verification of research findings. Finally, researchers should be more aware of the fact that intertwinement of the roles of researcher and advisor puts pressure on their independency and integrity.

#### **Social-sciences within Haaglanden Police Department**

J.H.G. van den Broek and P.H.M. Versteegh

The authors sketch the use of social research in the policy making process within the Dutch police. In the mid sixties relationships between the police and the universities were troubled and this situation has cast a long shadow. Nevertheless the Haaglanden Police Department has long tradition in the application of social science for its policy making. Starting in the mid seventies with market research Haaglanden police made its first steps in the direction of a more sophisticated, scientifically grounded policy. Scientific research enables the police a better performance in crime-fighting as well as gives the police proper means to engage its allies, for instance the town council and the justice department, to tackle local crime. The latest developments include the deployment of methods similar to those used by the New York Police Department (i.e. Compstat) in combination with geographical information systems, which are already in use in the social sciences. These latest developments have been started to overcome problems due to the reorganisation of the Dutch Police which resulted in rising

scale levels of population and related crime. The greater scale on which the police force is operating gives the need to apply scientifically sound methods in dealing with crime. Lead by the example of the New York Police Department the Haaglanden Police Department wishes to tackle crime in a way which is best suited for the given situation.