

## Summaries

*Justitiële verkenningen* (Judicial explorations) is published six times a year by the Research and Documentation Centre of the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice in cooperation with Boom juridisch. Each issue focuses on a central theme related to judicial policy. The section Summaries contains abstracts of the internationally most relevant articles of each issue. The central theme of this issue (no. 1, 2017) is *Diminishing juvenile crime*.

### **The evaporation of juvenile crime. Explaining the international downward trend**

*A.C. Berghuis and J. de Waard*

Registered youth crime figures in the Netherlands show a spectacular downward trend from 2007 (minus 60%). In this article the authors show that this trend can be observed in a lot of other countries. They argue that a number of international developments has created a climate favorable for juvenile crime reduction: more (situational) crime prevention, less use of alcohol, more commitment to schooling, more satisfaction with living conditions, and changing activity patterns during leisure time. For the Netherlands this coincides with a diminished willingness of the Dutch police to follow up on suspicions that a youngster has committed a minor offense. The authors discuss the worldwide dissemination of smartphones and online games that started in 2006/2007, as well as the subsequent changes in the use of free time, which might have contributed to juvenile crime reduction.

### **Trends in juvenile and young adult crime rates in the Netherlands, 1997 till 2015**

*A.M. van der Laan, M.G.C.J. Beerthuizen and H. Goudriaan*

Since 2008 juvenile crime rates in the Netherlands annually decreased. The decrease is shown in official police and justice crime, as well as in self-reported delinquency. However, this crime drop mainly accounts traditional offline crime, whereas little is known about cybercrime amongst juveniles and young adults. According to the Juvenile Crime Monitor, approximately 20% of juveniles and young adults report involvement in cyber or digitized delinquency. Trends with regard to cyber or digitized crime are not (yet) available. Previous research indi-

cates that multiple factors are responsible for the crime drop amongst juveniles. These explanations mainly regard to offline factors and are primarily focused on traditional offline crime. In this article the increased use of social media is also discussed as a potential explanation.

### **Trends in overrepresentation of boys and young adult men with a Moroccan background in the statistics on suspects of crime**

*R. Jennissen*

Similar to the total youth crime, the share of Moroccan boys and men who are suspected of committing a crime is decreasing. The percentage of suspects among male Moroccan teens and early twenties declined with as much as 35% in the period from 2005 to 2015. However, the share of 12- to 24-year-old males with a Dutch background who were suspected of committing a crime, declined even more sharply. Therefore, the overrepresentation of Moroccans increased. The increased amount of cultural dissonance among Moroccan boys and young adults seems to be the most probable explanation for the increased overrepresentation of this group in recorded crime. Cultural dissonance is where migrants have to steer a middle course between two highly contrasting cultures, namely the culture of their country of origin (of their parents) and that of the country in which they are residing.

### **Can social media and smartphones explain the decrease in juvenile offending?**

*F. Weerman*

This contribution explores the hypothesis that the rise of social media use and smartphone possession since 2007 contributed substantially to the international decrease in juvenile crime. The author addresses three processes that aid in understanding how social media and smartphones may have contributed to decreasing juvenile crime statistics. First, activity patterns of young people may have been altered in such a way that substantial less time is spent with unstructured socializing in public places. Second, the rise of social media may have led to additional and alternative possibilities to fulfill psychological and social needs of adolescents, taking away many immaterial motivations for juvenile crime. Third, it is possible that social media and smartphone use have facilitated a shift from offline to online juvenile

crime, which is less detected and visible in official crime figures. While these theoretical arguments make the hypothesis plausible, research is needed to provide empirical evidence on the role of social media and smartphones in juvenile crime.

### **Alcohol use among adolescents in the Netherlands: From soaking to complying**

*M. De Looze and I. Koning*

Alcohol use and adolescents: they are inevitably connected. At least, this was the case up until the early 2000s in the Netherlands. After a peak in the prevalence of alcohol use in 2003, the percentage of adolescents in the Netherlands who drank alcohol decreased enormously. This decline co-occurs with a dramatic shift in sociocultural norms on adolescent alcohol use among parents. Since the peak in 2003, a variety of national and local prevention and intervention programs have been implemented, aiming to stimulate parents to adopt stricter parenting practices related to the alcohol use of their child. In other Western countries, however, similar decreases in adolescent alcohol use have been observed. On the basis of recent societal developments, the authors describe potential explanations for the observed declines. Moreover, they discuss how youngsters actively create peer contexts in which behaviors like alcohol use take place.

### **Can keeping kids at school reduce crime?**

*O. Marie and T. Paulovic*

The authors discuss the effects on criminal participation of the 2007 Dutch educational reform which forced individuals between age 16 and 18 to stay in school if they had not attained *startkwalificatie* level. By comparing the arrest rate of individuals born just before and after the reform, the authors estimate the potential incapacitation effect of education on crime. Their results suggest that this exogenous change in education policy significantly reduced criminal participation among youths affected by the policy. The authors conclude that forcing youths most at risk of leaving school without any qualification to stay longer in education has positive immediate effects on youth crime reduction, that are beyond the potential educational benefits of such policies.

### **Lessons from the approach towards youth groups**

*H. Ferwerda and T. van Ham*

Attention for youth group crime is important, because the majority of juvenile crime is committed in groups or is the result of group dynamic processes. The police makes an inventory of youth groups with the help of an instrument (called 'the shortlist'). In the Netherlands this has contributed to an integral approach on the group, domain and individual level. Although there are some side effects, findings suggest that this approach is effective. This fact, together with other developments in juvenile crime, has led to the further development of the shortlist instrument. Its basis, i.e. applying focus and an integral analysis of a youth group as a starting point for an integral approach, is herein maintained.

### **The Amsterdam Top600 Project five years later: Where do we stand now?**

*S. van Grinsven and A. Verwest*

More than forty organizations in security, healthcare and social services work together in the 'Top600 Project', aimed at those committing 'high-impact crimes'. The goal is to improve safety in and around Amsterdam by achieving a permanent change in the behavior of these perpetrators. This includes both a reduction in recidivism of high-impact crimes and an increase in their self-reliance in order to decrease their reliance on crime. To achieve this, special case managers strive to get a clear perspective on the (often complex) lives of these Top600 persons. These managers ('regisseurs') can connect to all the organizations concerned and ensure that their efforts are coordinated, aligned and mutually strengthening. The project includes preventing the Top600 persons' (younger) brothers and sisters from following their siblings on a path of crime. It works through a collective focus and a tailor-made approach for each person, by exercising control on three levels (administrative, civil, and case level), by central monitoring of the results and - from there - by resolving structural flaws in the system.