

Between protection and repression: a short history of juvenile policing in the Netherlands

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cases involving minors. However, this policy of minimal intervention appears to be waning in recent years. This shift from welfare to justice seems to be in line with the developments in other European countries. This article comments on this development by framing it in the long-term history of juvenile policing in the Netherlands. It describes the founding and development of the Juvenile Police as an organisation, and sketches the parallel changes in juvenile policing that occurred during the twentieth century. The organisation of juvenile policing has changed considerably over time with a visible tendency away from welfare oriented policing. As such, restraint and minimal intervention may no longer characterise the way Dutch police handle juvenile offenders.

INTRODUCTION

To ensure the care and protection of children, criminal justice systems in western societies have special provisions for young people. These include — but are not limited to — a minimum age of criminal responsibility, a special set of formal criminal justice procedures, other types of sanctions and lower maximum lengths of prison sentences. There are also many differences between these systems; some countries tend

ABSTRACT

The police in the Netherlands have traditionally been characterised by restraint when dealing with

to be welfare oriented while other countries tend to be justice oriented (Courakis, 2000).

In the Dutch criminal justice system, children below the age of 12 cannot be subjected to criminal prosecution. Children in the 12–17 age group can be charged, prosecuted and convicted for committing offences, but the juvenile criminal law applies to them. Juvenile criminal law is customised to take into account the level of development of children, and is different from criminal law for adults in terms of formal procedures and the types and length of sentences (de Jonge & van der Linden, 2004).

The Netherlands is a small country of just over 16 million inhabitants, of whom 1.1 million are minors between the ages of 12 and 17. Currently each year about 6 per cent of them come to the attention of the police (Eggen & van der Heide, 2005). This percentage has been growing since the 1960s, in particular for violent crimes. Although one should be cautious in making comparisons between countries, because of differences between justice systems and crime and justice statistics (Dünkel & Drenkhahn, 2003; Muncie, 2006; Walgrave & Mehlbye, 1998), it seems that the crime developments in the Netherlands match those of other countries. Pfeiffer (1998) describes a similar development in a number of mostly west European countries: a gradual increase of juvenile crime in general, and a relatively sharp increase in violent juvenile crime. Dünkel & Drenkhahn come to a similar conclusion for mid European and East European countries. Although Estrada (2001) challenges the view that violent crime is rising, he supports the view that different countries have similar trends in juvenile crime.

Traditionally, the involvement of police and justice authorities in the Netherlands has been characterised as an approach ‘with restraint’, ie police and justice authorities

only intervene when strictly necessary, the intervention is not more far-reaching than strictly necessary for behavioural change to take place, and a sanction is never given for its own sake. This policy has been characterised as one of *minimal intervention*: not every offence is officially registered or prosecuted, not every case is brought to trial, and a conviction does not always result in the highest possible sanction (van der Laan, 2005: 2006). According to this policy, it is not the act committed that determines the reaction of police and justice authorities, but the offender himself and the extent to which he can be held fully or partially responsible for what he did, taking into account his physical and moral development and his age. This general juvenile criminal justice approach ‘with restraint’ (minimal intervention) traditionally results in a comparatively high diversion percentage (van der Laan, 2000; Junger-Tas, 2004). For example, in 2004 65,100 juveniles came to the attention of the police, but the police forwarded only 30,600 official reports to the public prosecutor’s office, and the public prosecutor brought only 10,400 of these to trial, about 16 per cent of those who had originally come to the attention of the police (Eggen & van der Heide, 2005). It should be emphasised, though, that refraining from writing an official report does not imply the absence of a formal reaction. The Dutch police can punish vandalism and minor property offences (shoplifting) with a so-called HALT sanction (up to 20 hours of community service tasks). If the juvenile agrees and performs the community service, the police refrain from making a formal registration (de Jonge & van der Linden, 2004). Being the gatekeeper of the juvenile justice system in general, and being responsible for the diversion through HALT in particular, the police play a very important role in this approach.

Although the approach to juvenile crime in the Netherlands is still ‘with restraint’, a

number of things have changed in recent years. In line with a broad European shift from welfare based to justice based criminal justice philosophies (Muncie, 2006), the Dutch criminal justice approach to juvenile crime has become more repressive and punitive (Junger-Tas, 2004). In this respect too, the Netherlands is similar to many other western countries (Butts, 2001). Both the number of community service sanctions and the number of prison sentences has risen sharply, more juveniles have been put under the (involuntary) supervision of probation offices, and fewer cases are being dismissed (van der Laan, in press). Based on the high and rising juvenile incarceration rates, Muncie (2006) classifies the Netherlands, together with England and Wales, as a prime example of youth re-penalisation (Muncie, 2006), ie the tendency to punish more harshly in general and to deliver more and longer prison sentences in particular. Muncie further identifies some developments in the Netherlands that may indicate 'adulteration', ie the tendency to apply adult style justice to young offenders (Muncie, 2006).

What explains these developments? The usual explanations for this development suggest either that juvenile crime has become more serious and more violent, and/or that attitudes in society towards the responsibility of juveniles and the effectiveness of interventions are changing. Although the issue is not completely resolved, it appears that the increase in serious and violent juvenile crime can only partly explain this development (van der Laan, 2006). Following Wacquant (1999; 2001), Muncie (2006) relates youth re-penalisation and adulteration to the burgeoning of neo-liberal economics, political conservatism and the import of penal policies from the USA, as well as to new fears of immigration and the subsequent success of far right political parties in many European countries, including the Netherlands. In

this article we attempt to interpret the changed criminal justice climate from a different angle, by framing the recent developments in a longer-term perspective on Dutch juvenile policing.

In their dealing with youth, the Dutch police have always taken responsibility for the dual task of sanctioning juveniles who violate the law, and taking care of juveniles who need protection. Throughout the twentieth century, there has been a long-term shift in the balance between 'protective' and 'repressive' interpretations of police responsibilities regarding juveniles. Since the establishment of the first Juvenile Police department in 1911, questions have frequently arisen about the justification of such a police department, about its responsibilities regarding minors, and about its role in the police organisation.

This article gives an overview of major historical developments in the area of juvenile policing in the Netherlands. It describes how the involvement of the Dutch police with minors has been subject to various organisational changes, and how along the way the balance between protective and repressive functions gradually shifted from the former towards the latter. We first briefly describe the legal background of juvenile policing and the development of the Juvenile Police as a separate centralised and specialised department in the police organisation. Subsequently, we chronologically explain how the nature of juvenile policing in the Netherlands changed over the course of the twentieth century.

INTRODUCTION AND REVISIONS OF THE CHILDREN'S LAWS

Around 1900, various institutions for child protection signalled an increase in recidivism among youthful convicts. At the same

time they felt they lacked measures to withdraw children permanently from harmful environments or to react effectively to youth crime (Overwater, 1930). Under the pressure of these institutions three Children's Laws came into effect in 1905 (Doek & Vlaardingerbroek, 2001a). One of these laws was the Criminal Children's Law. This law was introduced in order to be able to punish children in a manner suitable for their age, and contained the possibility of using sanctions with an educational purpose. Possible sanctions for delinquents under the age of 18 included returning the child to the parents or carers, a reprimand, a fine, confiscation, placement in a reformatory or mandatory treatment. The personal characteristics of the child and educational value of the sanction were deemed important factors in deciding upon the measure. The explicit provision in the Criminal Children's Law for a reaction 'with restraint' to juvenile delinquency has been characteristic for youth justice in the Netherlands ever since (Doek & Vlaardingerbroek, 2001b).

The Criminal Children's Law continued in operation without much change until 1995, when it became subject to reform. Thus, the law of 1905 has been the main legal framework within which the Dutch police have been involved with youth throughout the twentieth century, and much of it can still be recognised in the Children's Laws today.

In the revision of the juvenile justice system in 1995, the police were given a new sanction modality. Under the responsibility of the prosecuting attorney's office the police are authorised to give juveniles a community service sanction (called 'HALT — the Alternative') if they have committed minor offences for the first time and are under the age of 18. The HALT sanction was introduced as a means to discipline

children for minor offences without bringing them into the criminal justice system.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF JUVENILE POLICE DEPARTMENTS

The recognition of rights and needs of children that inspired the introduction of the Children's Laws, also resulted in the establishment of various new institutions that applied themselves to the needs of children (Wirtjes, 1931). The police started to create special departments for minors: the Juvenile Police. In establishing Juvenile Police departments, the Dutch police followed similar developments in other countries (Lignac, 1951).

In 1911 in Rotterdam, Dina Sanson was the first female officer hired as an inspector in the vice squad. She mostly dealt with vice cases, but her responsibilities quickly expanded to include child protection. The name of the vice squad was changed into the Vice and Children's Squad in 1918, which was the first time that the Juvenile Police was officially given a name (Lignac, 1951).

After the founding of the department in Rotterdam and a considerably smaller office in Utrecht, the Amsterdam police established a department of Juvenile Police in 1920. Other municipal police forces commenced establishing departments of Juvenile Police, but the phenomenon did not diffuse very quickly. Some of the larger cities, such as 's-Hertogenbosch and Tilburg, did not establish a Juvenile Police department until after the Second World War.

The National Police, a police force that served towns, villages and rural areas outside the cities, established a department of Juvenile Police in 1945. The rate of establishing Juvenile Police departments then slowed down, so that around 1980 only 56 per cent (76 out of 136) of the municipal police forces had established a department

dedicated to juvenile cases. All larger cities had Juvenile Police, but many of the smaller cities did not (Drewes, 1981).

START OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: CHILD PROTECTION AND SOCIAL AID

What did the people who worked in these Juvenile Police departments do? What were their tasks, and how did they relate to the rest of the police organisation?

The first Vice and Children's Squad in Rotterdam was organised so that the vice cases (gambling, prostitution) and children's cases were separate, but the departments functioned under communal management. It was part of the Detective Division and therefore located at the central police station. Its purpose was generally viewed as 'the link, the middleman between the needy and the caregivers, between those who are at risk of ruin, and those who are willing to rescue' (Wirtjes, 1931). Accordingly, the Juvenile Police did not handle complete cases themselves, but forwarded juveniles to other institutions that took over. The responsibilities of the female officers in Rotterdam consisted of supervising the living conditions of foster children, and they also had tasks in the area of child protection and misconduct of children that did not result in a criminal procedure (Lignac, 1951). Another task was patrolling in places where children could be at risk, such as market places, harbours and cinemas. However, the women at the Vice and Children's Squad rarely conducted the patrols, and usually passed the task on to the uniformed police at the precincts (Lignac).

The police task regarding minors in Rotterdam in the early years is thus best described as social work. Patrols and all criminal cases involving minors were handled not by the Juvenile Police, but by uniformed police. Lignac (1951) lists three possible reasons why the Juvenile Police did

not handle criminal cases involving child delinquents. The first is that the women working for the Juvenile Police did not have any legal training, so that they were not entitled to handle criminal cases. Secondly, the Juvenile Police saw its purpose as providing help, and was hesitant to take on the function of administering sanctions. Finally, having the Juvenile Police department handle criminal cases involving juveniles simply was not convenient, because often cases involved both juvenile and adult suspects.

The focus on child protection in the formative years of the Juvenile Police is nicely illustrated by the case of Amsterdam. The objective of the Amsterdam Juvenile Police department was described as being 'in the area of social assistance, especially of child welfare, en consists in general of the protection of minors in close cooperation with corporations, institutions or persons, who have child welfare in mind.' (Lignac, 1951).

In the annual report of that time of the Juvenile Police of Amsterdam (Hogendijk, 1921; Muller, 1925), the task of the Juvenile Police was described as follows:

- (a) assisting parents who complain about their children's behaviour;
- (b) combating poor treatment or neglect of children by their parents or caregivers;
- (c) seeking help for children who have no caregivers and need immediate care;
- (d) preventing begging, song singing, wandering and truancy by children;
- (e) supervising places of temptation for children (markets, dancing halls, suspicious cafes, cinemas, etc) to, if needed, report to the parents of children found in these places;
- (f) finding and returning children who have run away from their custodians;
- (g) handling of all requests to the police by the Child Protection Boards for background information of minors;

- (h) supervising all prohibitive orders, especially those made in the interest of children's welfare, such as exhibition of images that can be considered titillating for minors, sale of tobacco products to children, etc.

Thus, in Amsterdam like in Rotterdam, emphasis was placed on social aid, crime prevention and the protection of children against harmful influences. In that sense the activities had a strong educational nature. A few years later, in 1923, another task was included (cited in Muller, 1925):

- (i) The last addition is its task in criminal cases, coming about after a request by the prosecuting attorney. Since 1 January 1923, it will give all needed information about juvenile suspects against whom a report has been made at the police precincts, and about their families, so that the judiciary is informed as completely as possible. Because of this, a close bond is created between the judiciary (especially the magistrate in a juvenile court) and the Juvenile Police. Making criminal reports in juvenile cases and the investigation of the offence is carried out at the precincts.

As such, even though the Amsterdam Juvenile Police was assigned a role in criminal cases involving juveniles, its task was predominantly to assist other divisions, and to act upon their request. The Juvenile Police did not handle criminal cases itself, let alone initiate them.

At the time there was debate regarding the involvement of Juvenile Police departments regarding their role in doing research into the background and environment of juvenile delinquents (Hogendijk, 1923; Muller, 1924). Some viewed this task as one belonging to other agencies, and argued

that the Juvenile Police was not sufficiently equipped for the task (Muller). Others did not agree, they regarded the police as an important source of information regarding minors and their environment (Hogendijk).

In sum, the above descriptions of the departments in Rotterdam and Amsterdam exemplify that, during the formative years of the Juvenile Police, their primary tasks and responsibilities were in the area of social aid and child protection, and that the handling of criminal cases was a secondary task. The departments often took up tasks simply because they were necessary and at that time not being handled by other institutions (Lignac, 1951; Voskuil, 1930). Very soon after their establishment, Juvenile Police departments took responsibility for a diverse set of tasks (Voskuil). These tasks had unclear boundaries and sometimes overlapped with the responsibilities of other agencies, such as the Child Protection Board.

AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR: GREATER INVOLVEMENT WITH CRIMINAL LAW

In their formative years, from 1911 to the start of the Second World War in 1940, the tasks of the Juvenile Police consisted mostly of giving aid to juveniles and their families and crime prevention activities. After the war, the Juvenile Police departments in some respects continued their style of policing: they took primary responsibility for child protection cases, some of which were quite different from the original concept of the Juvenile Police, such as the care for single mothers, care for children whose parents had been arrested for their activities during the war, and care for young refugees after the Second World War. If anything, the taking up of these tasks shows the flexibility and promptness with which the Juvenile

Police assumed responsibility for problems that arose in society.

However, the end of the Second World War also marked the start of a change in the nature of juvenile policing, as the responsibilities of the Juvenile Police departments were expanded to include more tasks in the area of criminal law. In a leaflet from 1948, the Ministry of the Interior allocated a notably larger legal role to the Juvenile Police (Minister van Binnenlandse Zaken, 1948). The making of criminal reports and the handling of criminal cases involving juvenile delinquents were assigned to the Juvenile Police. In line with this development, Juvenile Police departments were increasingly put under the daily management of the Judicial Service. This decreased the time dedicated to tasks of social aid (Drewes, 1981).

The Juvenile Police's shift away from protecting juveniles towards a role in sanctioning juveniles, is well illustrated by the implementation of so called 'youth brigades' after the Second World War (Lignac, 1951). These youth brigades consisted of men from the uniformed police who held close contact with the Juvenile Police. The youth brigades differed in size and formation across the different municipal forces, but were commonly established to combat nuisance behaviour and truancy by youths.

Organisational changes reflect the changing nature of the involvement of the Juvenile Police in the era after the Second World War. Many Juvenile Police departments were split up into a social and a criminal division, for example in Rotterdam. The original nature of the department was most recognisable in the social division, whereas the criminal division handled juvenile crime cases and made criminal reports. Criminal divisions were also established in the Juvenile Police departments of other cities, and they were usually separate from

the divisions that took care of the social tasks.

There are three explanations for the fact that the departments of the Juvenile Police focused more and more on tasks concerning criminal cases. Firstly, after the Second World War a marked increase of nuisance behaviour in youths was observed (Albers, 1990; Lignac, 1951). Thus, the greater emphasis on sanctioning and on criminal cases can be seen as a police reaction to an autonomous crime development in Dutch society after the war.

A second explanation for the Juvenile Police's growing emphasis on criminal cases can be seen, paradoxically, as a continuation by other means of their protective task. The understanding that criminal cases against minors needed a different approach from criminal cases against adult perpetrators, naturally led to these cases being put into the care of the Juvenile Police, since this department had access to a lot of background information on juvenile suspects. This was important since at the time civil procedures became a more popular way of dealing with juveniles (Andriessen, 1976). As such, placing juvenile criminal cases under the responsibility of the Juvenile Police brought about the situation whereby juvenile criminal cases were evaluated more often from a social point of view than from a legal point of view.

Finally, the growing emphasis on criminal cases and the decrease in social tasks can also be explained by the establishment of other institutions that took over tasks in the field of child care and child welfare (Andriessen, 1976). The nature of the work of the Juvenile Police allowed it to pick up signals of problems involving minors quickly, and therefore it was usually the first agency to intervene in pressing matters. But sooner or later the tasks were taken over by other agencies, such as the Child Protection Board.

BEYOND THE 1950S: DECREASING CONFIDENCE IN PROTECTIVE ROLE OF JUVENILE POLICE

The fact that other institutions were taking over the social tasks of the Juvenile Police was also noticed by the department itself and by the police organisation. As a result, questions were raised as to the legitimacy of the social nature of the Juvenile Police department. Also, other institutions no longer regarded the police as the obvious institution for giving social aid. This development is marked by a lawsuit in 1972 involving the police of The Hague and the '*sosjale joenit*', a private organisation providing aid to juveniles, in particular runaways. The *sosjale joenit* felt that the police were not the proper institution for dealing with these cases, and fell short in handling them because the police operated against the will and against the interests of the juveniles (Andriessen, 1976).

The above case is an example of the tensions that grew between police and other social institutions, not only in The Hague but all over the country. It was obvious that the police were no longer regarded as a proper institution for providing social aid, and that other agencies tended to ban the police from becoming involved in such cases. As a result the social tasks of the police were slimmed down further, and the police became less eager to take up such cases (Andriessen, 1976). Gradually the Juvenile Police moved further away from being a protective agency towards being a sanctioning agency, although the Juvenile Police have always kept a protective attitude towards juveniles in handling criminal cases. At the end of the 1970s the tasks of the Juvenile Police consisted of checking antecedents, interrogation, and the investigation of crimes by juveniles. Secondary tasks of the Juvenile Police were tracking down runaways and

missing children and giving social aid in problems with minors.

THE 1990S: REORGANISATION OF DUTCH POLICE CLOSES JUVENILE POLICE DEPARTMENTS

In the 1990s an important change took place in the organisation of the police. Before the reorganisation, the Dutch Police force consisted of two police forces, the municipal police and the national police. The smaller cities, towns and villages fell under the responsibility of the national police; larger cities had their own municipal police force. The national police fell under the leadership of the Ministry of Justice; the municipal police were governed by the municipalities, and thereby fell under the Ministry of the Interior.

In 1994 the police were reorganised into 25 regional police districts. The police regions have one central police station and several police precincts. The precincts are responsible for the daily police tasks in a portion of the region. The central police station is responsible for more general tasks, for example monitoring police registrations, the personnel department and keeping sight of trends in crime for that region.

Before this reorganisation the Juvenile Police departments were a part of the Detective Units, and they were centralised departments. In the reorganisation, the future of the Juvenile Police departments was left up to the newly established regional districts. Despite the assertion, in an influential report on juvenile delinquency (Commissie van Montfrans, 1994), that specialised (police) knowledge necessary in handling youth cases, the Juvenile Police disappeared in most regions.

The organisation of the tasks concerned with juveniles became disordered and varied greatly from region to region. In most districts, the tasks regarding minors were allocated to police officers with a general

responsibility (patrol officers) or to the general Detective Unit, while support was available from youth specialists in complex cases (Doek & Vlaardingerbroek, 2001b). Among uniformed police officers, some officers were engaged to spend all or part of their time on activities involving minors, and they were usually called *youth officers*. But these activities were not part of a specialised juvenile department.

The closing down of Juvenile Police departments was bemoaned, and the resulting changes in the organisation of juvenile policing were awaited with concern, both externally and internally (Lakmaker, 1993; Snijder, 1993). Police personnel and other institutions dealing with juveniles experienced difficulties finding the responsible persons in the police organisation. Internally, concern was expressed that the dismantling of the Juvenile Police departments would undo the specialised way of dealing with juvenile delinquents that had developed over a century. The tasks regarding juveniles were allocated among the various responsibilities of uniformed police officers. Implicitly the tasks were esteemed of lower value; indicated by their allocation to lower ranks and thus less experienced personnel and the fact that there was hardly any attention to juvenile crime in the education of police officers (Snijder). In sum, the reorganisation of the police closed down the Juvenile Police and placed at risk its specialised way of dealing with minors.

Notwithstanding these concerns, there have also been signals that the reorganisation has had beneficial effects on juvenile policing in general. The closing down of Juvenile Police departments has changed juvenile policing itself from being a centralised activity to being a part of regular police work. According to a report on juvenile policing (Werkgroep 'Visie op de politie jeugdzorg', 1997), there are unintended positive results of closing down Juvenile Police departments. It argues that

problems with juveniles are usually of a local nature, and that local problems can be dealt with more efficiently by patrol officers, which is an advantage that the centralised Juvenile Police department did not have. It states that as a result the contacts between youth specialists, patrol officers, schools and community centres have improved.

TODAY

12 years have passed since the reorganisation of the Dutch Police and the closing down of the Juvenile Police departments in 1995. What is the situation like today?

Currently the daily tasks — youths exhibiting nuisance behaviours, juvenile crime, prevention and networking — are usually dealt with by a general officer, a uniformed police officer. They can, if need be, be assisted by another general officer who has a special interest in juveniles. In complex cases, youth specialist detectives can be asked to assist or take over. Depending on the capacity of the regional police force and the nature and seriousness of the local problems with juveniles, these youth specialists are organised at a neighbourhood, district or regional level.

In many of the regional police forces, the responsibilities regarding juveniles are regarded as important priorities. Phrases such as 'early, fast and consistent' and 'knowing and being known' are mentioned in many documents on youth policy. On paper — at least — youth cases are an important issue for the police, even if the organisation of the youth tasks is not always clear.

CONCLUSION

The history of juvenile policing in the Netherlands is for the most part a history of the Juvenile Police departments. Established at the start of the twentieth century as part of a social movement towards a greater

involvement of the state in child protection, they initially took up responsibility for a broad set of social tasks. The Juvenile Police have often been the first institution to be confronted with newly emerging social problems that would later be taken over by other institutions.

Throughout their history, the Juvenile Police departments have had to defend themselves often, both internally and externally. Internally, they had to defend themselves because of the social basis of their existence and the relative overrepresentation of women which was non-typical for police organisations. Externally, they had to defend themselves because their expertise was questioned, and because they were often not viewed as appropriate organisations for giving aid and advice. As a consequence, the welfare oriented protective orientation of the Juvenile Police has always been under pressure, right from the beginning of the twentieth century.

At the same time, the involvement of the Juvenile Police in criminal cases involving minors has functioned as a guarantee for a reaction 'with restraint' in dealing with juvenile delinquency and anti-social behaviour. It is this restraint that has always characterised the policy of the Netherlands regarding youths. Thus, the allocation of more judicial responsibilities to the Juvenile Police after the Second World War did not signal a more repressive trend in the interventions with juveniles. On the contrary, it has been an effective means of dealing with juvenile delinquency outside of formal legal institutions. By sending these youths (voluntarily) to different institutions giving social aid and child welfare, the social nature of the Juvenile Police is emphasised.

With the reorganisation of the police in 1994, the Juvenile Police departments disappeared, and it was feared that this would also close down juvenile policing as a specialised form of policing with its own expertise and methods. Although it may be

too early to draw conclusion on this issue, it appears that the police organisation still makes use of the expertise on juvenile delinquency of some of its officers, and thus that the leniency in handling juvenile criminal cases continues to prevail in the Netherlands. At least on paper, juvenile policing is a priority, and it has been argued that taking juvenile policing from the central district headquarters to the local communities has also had some benign effects. Juvenile policing is now, at least in theory, a responsibility of every police officer, and not only of the few specialists at the central Juvenile Police department.

The quality of juvenile policing, however, is still threatened by several factors. Firstly, the transfer of responsibility from the Juvenile Police department to the police force as a whole contains the risk of a diffusion of responsibility: when everybody *is* responsible the effect may be that nobody *feels* responsible and acts accordingly. Furthermore, generalists have other priorities next to their responsibilities concerning minors. This means that the possibility exists that juvenile cases are being overshadowed by other — more common or more conspicuous — cases.

A related second point of concern is the fact that the police training does not invest a lot of time in specific knowledge of youth cases. Thus, in the former situation when the Juvenile Police department hired new personnel, expertise on youth cases was a primary criterion for evaluating applicants. At present, it is much more difficult to guarantee that expertise on youth cases is being retained and updated in the police organisation.

The leniency that has been so characteristic of juvenile policing, and that can partly be attributed to the existence of the Juvenile Police departments, appears to be threatened by recent developments. The first development concerns juvenile policing specifically. Recently, several new police

directives were prescribed by the Public Prosecutor's Office. According to these directives, police officers can handle fewer cases by an informal warning. These directives have contributed to an allegedly harsher approach to youth crime.

Another development concerns the Dutch police in general. The regional police forces have been confronted with covenants that force them to reach certain 'production standards', mainly expressed in terms of measurable quantities like the number of reports and arrests. As yet, these covenants seem to be resulting in a more repressive and outcome-oriented manner of policing. The preventative and social tasks of the police regarding youths may possibly be neglected in daily police work as a result of this.

It is certainly too early to come to a conclusion on the effects of these latter developments, but our brief overview of the history of juvenile policing in the Netherlands has shown that they are in line with the developments in the twentieth century. The approach 'with restraint' to juvenile delinquency and the clear protective interpretation of juvenile policing that was apparent at the start of the twentieth century, has gradually shifted towards an approach that is still 'with restraint', but seems to be gradually losing that qualification.

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