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### Indirect effects of impact on crime rates

**Abstract:** The drop in the incidence of burglary may, in principle, be a result of any of a number of the team's duties or of any combination of these. In view of the other findings, however, the possible causes are limited. If the drop resulted from the more widespread use of precautionary measures, we would expect to find a drop in the overall level of crime against property. However, the surveys do not appear to indicate any such drop, with the result that this factor would not seem to have been a major one.

**Key words:** crime; victimization; team; experiment; survey; population.

Of all the indirect short-term effects, the effect on the crime rate is, of course, the most relevant. The surveys show that the incidence of burglary (for our present purposes, the victim rates) in Moerwijk and Rustenburg/Oostbroek remained the same or dropped slightly, while elsewhere in The Hague and in the rest of the Netherlands sharp rises occurred. Records of the number of crimes coming to the knowledge of the police reveal a sharp drop in the number of burglaries in Moerwijk, and rises in Rustenburg/Oostbroek, the rest of The Hague and the rest of the Netherlands. In Moerwijk, people's willingness to report crime would appear to have increased slightly; this was not the case elsewhere. The available data would appear to indicate, therefore, that the activities of the burglary control team resulted in a drop in the incidence of burglary, at any rate in the short term. The surveys show no indication of a drop or levelling off in the case of other forms of crime in Moerwijk.

The drop in the incidence of burglary may, in principle, be a result of- any of a number of the team's duties or of any combination of these. In view of the other findings,- however, the possible causes are limited. If the drop resulted from the more widespread use of precautionary measures, we would expect to find a drop in the overall level of crime against property. However, the surveys do not appear to indicate any such drop, with the result that this factor would not seem to have been a major one. By the same argument, it is improbable that the extra patrols were responsible for the drop. In our view, the most likely cause of the drop was the publicity given to the team's efforts to concentrate more on burglary. Certain potential criminals will have been deterred by such publicity. Police data provide no evidence of any increase of burglary in surrounding districts. There is some indication, however, that the level of burglary began to rise after the disbanding of the team. At present, it is still not possible to say whether the team's work in giving information and advice and the resulting rise in the level of actual crime prevention will have made a more lasting contribution to burglary control.

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There is no indication that feelings of insecurity in Moerwijk altered in any way. In Rustenburg/ Oostbroek such feelings increased. More detailed figures show that the existence of the team in general, and the extra patrols in particular, certainly did not stop the development of feelings of insecurity among the female inhabitants of the district and, more particularly, among the older female population. It would seem that the setting up of a special burglary control team had rather the effect of strengthening the feelings of insecurity felt by this section of the population. Particularly in the case of the male inhabitants under 55, however, the team does appear to have moderated somewhat the concern about the rise in crime.

The Moerwijkers who knew the team were asked what they thought of it. Many of these respondents were unwilling or unable to give any judgement as to how far the team succeeded in discharging its duties. Of those who did respond, the overwhelming majority expressed a decidedly favourable opinion. Significantly, it was precisely the team's duties of patrolling on foot and by bicycle which scored relatively poorly in their replies. Some inhabitants had evidently expected better results from these patrols. The question whether the burglary control team should be made permanent was answered unanimously: 77% of those who knew about the team thought that it should stay.

The experiment with a "burglary control team" was unprecedented in the Netherlands. In part on the basis of the above discussed findings a new design for such a program has been developed by the RDC. This design has been implemented by means of an experiment by the municipal police forces of Amsterdam and Hoogeveen. In the next paragraph we shall compare the external effects of the latter programs with the above discussed effects and try to formulate some preliminary conclusions concerning the validity of the design.

The design of The Hague program seemed to have had the following shortcomings. The team's impact on the perceptions and attitudes of the neighbourhood is probably marginal. The main reason for this marginal influence is the weakness of the stimuli of foot patrol and face-to-face instruction about crime prevention. Stronger stimuli could possibly be administered by eliminating the team's investigation task altogether and by limiting its use of police cars more strictly. It would be advisable in general to select a somewhat smaller neighbourhood, to develop more detailed guidelines for the team's activities and to organize more extensive training of the police officers. The advisability of enlarging the scope of the program to other crimes besides burglary was, on the other hand, a conclusion drawn by the Moerwijk police team members.

In Amsterdam the municipal police agreed upon a replication of the The Hague experiment. All of the above mentioned suggestions were incorporated in the design. The team of eight patrol officers, a senior officer and a detective covered a neighbourhood of 0.9 km<sup>2</sup> with about 10,000 inhabitants by means of foot and bicycle patrols and various kinds of prevention instructions concerning property crimes. The selected neighbourhood was Osdorp. The establishment of this special team implied no extension of available manpower but only a reassignment.

The experiment in Hoogeveen cannot be characterized as a replication of the The Hague experiment'. It consisted of an increased effort by a special team to patrol high crime areas in the city (by car and foot patrols). Unconnected with this team the force appointed a full time crime prevention instructor. The city of Hoogeveen consists of 35,000 inhabitants.

Both the Amsterdam and the Hoogeveen experiment have been evaluated by means of population surveys before and after the experiment. In Amsterdam a control neighbourhood has been interviewed as well.

The results of the Amsterdam police experiment were superior to those of both the The Hague and the Hoogeveen experiment. In Osdorp (Amsterdam) 66% of the inhabitants said they were aware of the special efforts of the police (44% in the Hague, 54% in Hoogeveen). More than half of the latter Amsterdam respondents had become personally acquainted with the team and only one quarter were familiar with the team by means of media reports. Both the Hague and Hoogeveen have shown an opposite result (mainly media-mediated awareness of the team). As a result of the face-to-face contacts, the Amsterdam project has been particularly successful in reaching the female, the elderly and low socio-economic status groups in the district. Foot and bicycle patrols seem to be the main contributors to this achievement. The public willingness to report crimes has increased significantly during the Amsterdam/Osdorp project in the experimental neighbourhood and not in the control area (especially crimes of violence). The results in Hoogeveen are less positive, The non-integrated efforts of more surveillance and crime prevention instruction appear to have had no impact at all in this respect.

The findings in Hoogeveen show a significant increase of the willingness to apply more than two precautionary measures against burglary in private dwellings. In Amsterdam/Osdorp the percentage of persons who take no measure at all has decreased significantly; The latter impact is probably due to the personal contacts of the team with elderly and the lower social class. The Hoogeveen results are, according to the analysis, largely media-mediated. These support the prior interpretation of the results of the police experiment in The Hague. The level of precautionary measures in order to prevent other types of crime has not been influenced markedly either in The Hague or in Hoogeveen. The marginal influence on the level of these precautionary measures is probably the result of less concrete availability of prevention devices for other crimes than burglary.

The general opinions on the police of the inhabitants of 'both Amsterdam/Osdorp and Hoogeveen show significant improvements after the programs. Foot patrol and crime prevention instruction in Amsterdam and crime prevention instruction in Hoogeveen are in particular welcomed. Improvements of police-community relations can apparently be achieved both by a media-mediated approach and a direct approach to the public by the police.

Two indirect effects have been distinguished in this report, the effects on crime rates and the effects on feelings of insecurity. In order to conclude this summary with good news, we shall discuss the crime rates first. Neither in Amsterdam/Osdorp nor in Hoogeveen have significant decreases of victimization rates (or registered crime rates) in comparison to the control areas been found. These present police experiments apparently do not bring about observable decreases of actual crime rates in the short run. The small decrease that has been observed after the The Hague experiment should probably be interpreted as an effect of the large media coverage of the experiment. This media coverage may have deterred local gangs or recidivists from "scoring" in this particular neighbourhood during the experiment.

In all three cities the crime consciousness of the target population has been raised (more conversations on the subject of crime). However, only the Amsterdam/ Osdorp program has been successful in reducing the feelings of insecurity significantly. The percentage of respondents in Amsterdam/Osdorp who stated they feel safe in their neighbourhood showed a remarkably significant 10% rise ( $\chi^2=35$ ;  $df=1$ ;  $p 0,001$ ), while the control neighbourhood showed stable percentages. Again, these findings suggest a high impact of the Amsterdam police experiment due to its higher and more concrete visibility for females, the elderly and the lower social class.

To sum up, the Amsterdam program, consisting of foot and bicycle patrols combined with face-to-face crime prevention instruction, reached large sections of all population groups in the neighbourhood. This impact has resulted in an increased willingness to report crimes to the police, an increased willingness to apply at least one anti-burglary device, and a much better judgement on general police performance. The program has also been successful in reducing feelings of insecurity. No immediate reduction of crime rates has been found, however [1]. The increased willingness to report crimes to the police, and especially the increased prevention-mindedness of the neighbourhood, however, will probably have enlarged the controllability of local crime in the long run.

The Hague and Hoogeveen programs have consisted of a more global effort to increase neighbourhood surveillance by car or foot patrol, together with the introduction of crime prevention instruction. Both programs seem to have reached their target groups mainly by means of media reports, which has severely limited their impact among females, the elderly and persons with a low socio-economic status. As a consequence of this they have been less successful in increasing the willingness to report crimes, to apply crime prevention techniques, and not successful at all in reducing feelings of insecurity. Like the more concentrated program of the Amsterdam/Osdrorp experiment they, too, have been effective in improving crime consciousness and the general image of the police. Presumably because of its extraordinary press coverage the The Hague program has also been instrumental in reducing (temporarily) local burglary rates.

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### Косвенные эффекты воздействия на уровень преступности

**Аннотация:** Снижение количества краж со взломом, в принципе, может быть результатом выполнения любой из нескольких обязанностей команды или любой их комбинации. Однако, учитывая другие результаты, возможные причины ограничены. Если бы это сниже-

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**Ключевые слова:** преступность; виктимизация; команда; эксперимент; опрос; население.

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