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THE TREND OF JUVENILE OFFENCES IN THE NETHERLANDS AND THE UNITED STATES*

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The need for international comparative studies of juvenile delinquency statistics in the context of national patterns of social control was recently pointed out by Lejins.¹ While holding a Fulbright lectureship at the University of Amsterdam in 1961-1962, I had an opportunity to examine Dutch methods of handling juvenile offenders and to collect their statistical reports on delinquency. This experience enabled me to explore some of the problems involved in cross-national comparison and to consider what might be learned about the nature of juvenile delinquency from such comparisons.

My inquiry focused on post-World War Two changes in the amount of juvenile delinquency. I compiled statistics that would make it possible to compare the trend of juvenile offenses in The Netherlands with that of the United States. In order to understand the Dutch statistics I studied and observed relevant aspects of the Dutch legal

system, child welfare agencies, and juvenile correctional institutions. I found it possible to make valid comparisons between the two countries after the early fifties and to be reasonably confident that the statistics since then are a valid, if crude, index of the amount of juvenile wrong-doing. In both countries the trend of juvenile offences has been upward since the middle fifties, and the number of reported cases has about doubled. Between 1954 and 1961 the number of cases dealt with by Dutch judicial authorities rose 108 per cent, while, in this same seven year period, the increase in the number of juvenile court cases in the United States was 106 per cent. (See Figure.)

Other countries, too, have reported a rise in juvenile delinquency during the fifties. A survey concluded that six countries of western Europe experienced "a postwar rise, some decline in the early or mid-fifties, and a renewed increase in the later part of the fifties."² Lunden's compilation of statistics shows a sharp upturn after 1954 in Belgium, Norway, Denmark, Japan, and Canada,³ and a continuing rise in Sweden that started in 1948.⁴ In none of the countries for which he presents data for the middle fifties was there a sustained decline in the number of reported cases.

In this paper I deal with three problems involved in any binational comparison of social statistics: (1) choosing comparable statistical series, (2) assessing the validity of the selected statistics as an index of delinquency, and (3) explaining trends in the amount of juvenile delinquency. International comparisons help distinguish accidental from essential causes. When two countries have the same fluctuations in the amount of delinquency, explanatory factors that are alike gain additional empirical support, while those that are different have their importance called into question.

² COUNCIL OF EUROPE, EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON CRIME PROBLEMS, SOME ASPECTS OF POST-WAR JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN THE TWELVE MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE 22 (1960).

³ LUNDEN, WAR AND DELINQUENCY 33, 48, 56, 66 (1963).

⁴ *Id.* at 42.

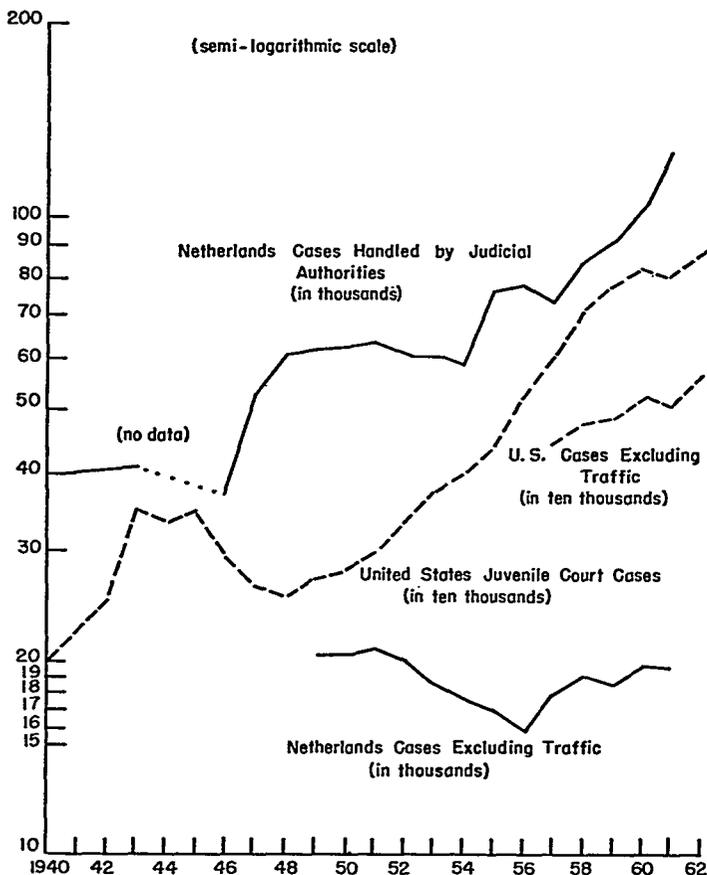
* Revised version of a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, Washington, D.C., August 29, 1962.

I am grateful to the many persons in The Netherlands who aided my inquiry, to the United States Educational Foundation in The Netherlands, which made a year of residence in Holland possible, and to Prof. Dr. T. T. ten Have, Director of the Institute of Social Psychology (Sociaal-Pedagogisch Instituut) of the University of Amsterdam, who sponsored my visit.

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¹ Lejins, *American Data on Juvenile Delinquency in an International Forum*, 25 Fed. Prob. 18 (June, 1961).

FIGURE
TRENDS IN CASES OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS, THE NETHERLANDS AND THE UNITED STATES,
1940-62



Sources: UNITED STATES CHILDREN'S BUREAU, JUVENILE COURT STATISTICS; NEDERLAND, CENTRAAL BUREAU VOOR DE STATISTIEK, TOEPASSING DER KINDERWETTEN.

CHOOSING COMPARABLE STATISTICS

Because the kinds of published statistics on juvenile delinquency for the United States are very limited, and there are abundant data published for The Netherlands, the problem of choosing comparable data is largely reduced to selecting data from the Dutch publications that are as nearly as possible like those available for the United States. There are two series of statistics for the United States: cases disposed of by juvenile courts, published by the Children's Bureau,⁵ and arrests of persons under 18 years of age, published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.⁶ For comparing

⁵ U.S. CHILDREN'S BUREAU, JUVENILE COURT STATISTICS.

⁶ FBI, CRIME IN THE UNITED STATES (formerly UNIFORM CRIME REPORTS).

variations through time the court cases are a better measure than arrests because they are based on a representative sample designed by the United States Bureau of the Census. The arrest data, on the other hand, are less valid for this analysis because they are based on voluntary reports from as many local police departments as can be persuaded to participate. They are not intended to be a representative sample; rather they are as complete a report of all cases as possible, but they contain an urban bias because a greater proportion of large city than small city and rural departments have responded, and their usefulness for measuring year to year changes in the amount of delinquency is reduced because the number of reporting departments has been constantly increasing.

The statistics of Dutch cases, dealt with under juvenile codes and police reports involving juveniles, are published by the Central Bureau of Statistics.⁷ They are complete reports from all courts and police forces, rather than samples or incomplete, voluntary reports. However, Dutch police reports cannot be compared with similar American data because only arrests for serious crimes are published, while the United States statistics are for all arrests and are not broken down by offence.

The range of ages of children under juvenile court jurisdiction is similar in the United States and The Netherlands. The upper limit of 18 years under Dutch law is also the maximum age adopted by most states of the United States, though some are lower and a few higher.⁸ However, a new act of the Dutch parliament will make it possible in individual cases to extend the age limit to 21 if the personality of the offender warrants it.⁹ If, under this new law, a high proportion of youths between 18 and 21 are tried in the juvenile courts, the Dutch and American juvenile court cases will become less comparable.

The data I am using from both countries to compare trends are confined to cases in which the child is alleged to have committed some offence and excludes those cases in which the child is the victim of wrongdoing by others. Hence, I exclude American cases of "dependency and neglect" and Dutch civil cases (*burgerlijke zaken*), though the two categories are not defined in exactly the same way. The Dutch use civil proceedings, not only for cases when parents are mishandling the child, but also for offences peculiar to children, such as truancy, ungovernable behavior, running away, and undesirable companionship. In the United States, these children's offences are all considered delinquencies and are not reported separately from the cases of those who commit criminal acts. On the other hand, many dependent and neglected children coming before courts in the United States have also committed delinquencies, but their number is not revealed in the statistics. Despite these differences in the definition of Dutch civil cases and American dependency and neglect cases they are strikingly

similar in their sex and age distributions. In both countries the children in these categories are much younger, and a far larger proportion of them are girls than is true of those included in this analysis as measures of delinquency.

A small source of error in the Dutch statistics may arise from the practice of transferring cases from penal (*strafrechtelijk*) to civil (*burgerrechtelijk*) proceedings. The Ministry of Justice reported that the number of such transfers has increased in recent years;¹⁰ but the data have not been published. To the extent that this practice has accelerated it would tend to reduce the number of cases of delinquency, but if there has been any tendency to lower the amount of reported delinquency, it must have been slight because the number of cases coming before civil courts during the fifties has been about constant, and in 1960 they constituted only six per cent of all juveniles coming to the attention of judicial authorities. By contrast, dependency and neglect cases in the United States were thirteen per cent of all court cases, and their numbers had increased about 40 per cent during the fifties.

Violators of traffic laws are included in the data from both countries. They cannot be eliminated from a trend analysis of American data because only since 1957 has the Children's Bureau been reporting traffic cases separately from other delinquencies. Nor does their inclusion or exclusion seem greatly to matter because there was an upward trend in both kinds of cases in the three years from 1957 to 1960. For The Netherlands, however, it makes a great deal of difference, because the exclusion of traffic cases would almost eliminate the upward trend. The number of non-traffic cases in 1960 was only six per cent greater than six years earlier. If, as is more reasonable, just the minor traffic offences are eliminated, the increase is 13 per cent. This is about half the rate of increase in the child population. It should be added, however, that the increase, after the low point in 1956 (see Figure), was 26 per cent, while the population increased 18 per cent. Although a comparison of fluctuations in delinquency, excluding minor traffic offences, would be fruitful, this will not be feasible until American data become available for a longer series of years. However, such a comparison should take account of differ-

⁷ NEDERLAND, CENTRAAL BUREAU VOOR DE STATISTIEK, TOEPASSING DER KINDERWETTEN (THE APPLICATION OF JUVENILE LAWS); and MAANDSTATISTIEK VAN RECHTSWEZEN, POLITIE EN BRANDEN (MONTHLY STATISTICAL BULLETIN OF JUSTICE, POLICE AND FIRES).

⁸ SHULMAN, JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN AMERICAN SOCIETY 529-30 (1961).

⁹ Hudig, *Child Protection and the Law*, 20 A CRIANÇA PORTUGUESA 187 (1961-1962).

¹⁰ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON CRIME PROBLEMS, SUB-COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE DELINQUENCY, REPLIES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON POST-WAR JUVENILE DELINQUENCY: NETHERLANDS (mimeo.) 21 (1960).

ences between the countries in the rate of increase of motor vehicles. A rapid rate of increase may, by expanding opportunities for violating laws, simply shift offences to traffic violations from other categories, though it is probable that greater access to vehicles will have a compounding effect.

Discussion of differences in the amount of Dutch and American juvenile delinquency can easily result in misunderstanding, because words used in the two countries have different meanings. In the United States the phrase "juvenile delinquency" is a comprehensive term referring to the commission of offences, by children, of all degrees of severity, as well as anti-social conduct peculiar to minors, like truancy and ungovernable behavior. In Holland, the most commonly used term is "youth criminality" (*jeugdcriminaliteit*), but its meaning is more restricted than the American phrase "juvenile delinquency," because it refers only to minors who commit serious offences, specifically, crimes (*misdriften*) defined under their penal code, as distinct from minor offences (*overtredingen*)—a distinction similar to that between felonies and misdemeanors under Anglo-Saxon law. The Dutch have no term, in general use, for children committing all degrees of offences as the phrase "juvenile delinquency" is used in the United States. When Americans talk about juvenile delinquency, Dutchmen assume they are referring to the commission of serious crimes.

This difference in terminology and stress on criminality is apparent in the report on juvenile delinquency in The Netherlands to the Council of Europe, in which trends are analyzed entirely on the basis of cases in which a serious offence (*misdrif*) was charged.¹¹ However, if only cases involving the commission of serious crimes are used as an index of juvenile delinquency in The Netherlands the trend in recent years would not change its direction. The number of cases in 1961 was 78 per cent greater than in 1954. The authors say it would be desirable to include children dealt with under civil procedure, but do not even consider including cases involving minor offences.¹²

Semantic usage in Dutch also corresponds to the organization of the courts. With rare exceptions, serious penal offences and civil cases are handled in the district courts (*arrondissementen rechtbanken*), while juveniles charged with minor crimes are dealt

with in local courts (*kantongerechten*) or by a police magistrate (*politierechter*).

One Dutch official felt strongly that my analysis of delinquency should be confined to cases handled by the district courts.¹³ He had good reasons for taking this position, similar to that of Robison in her pioneer study of the problems of measuring delinquency, who wrote that more accurate comparisons of the extent of delinquency can be obtained by counting only serious cases.¹⁴ Although she was concerned with comparing the boroughs of the city of New York, her argument may be equally valid for national comparisons. Advisable as it might be to limit this study to the more serious cases, the data presently available for the United States preclude this refinement. Our national statistics on juvenile court cases are not classified by offence. The distinction we make between official and unofficial cases cannot be used as equivalent to serious and minor offences because the classification depends on the kind of treatment needed by the child as well as the nature of his offence, and it is known that courts vary greatly in the proportions of cases they assign to these two categories. Classification seems to be strongly influenced by the philosophy of the judge, available welfare services, and specialized personnel on the staff of the court.¹⁵

To obtain a statistic for The Netherlands that is comparable to juvenile court cases in the United States, it is necessary to add together three kinds of cases, specifically: (1) cases of juveniles charged with serious offences and either brought to the district court or disposed of after a social investigation, (2) cases brought to the local court for lesser offences, and (3) cases of minor offences settled without a social investigation or a formal hearing (*transacties*). Under the Dutch legal system only a fraction of these are juvenile court cases, because most of them are settled by other officers, agencies, and courts under the Ministry of Justice. In many instances the district attorney (*Officer van Justitie*) decides that no prosecution should be initiated; for many minor offences a settlement (*transactie*) is made, like payments for traffic tickets in American cities; misdemeanors (*overtredingen*) are adjudicated in local courts (*kantongere-*

¹³ Cnoop Koopmans, personal communication (October 2, 1962).

¹⁴ ROBISON, CAN DELINQUENCY BE MEASURED? 78 (1936).

¹⁵ U.S. CHILDREN'S BUREAU, *op. cit. supra.* note 5 at 3-4.

¹¹ *Id.* at 1-2.

¹² *Id.* at 6.

chten) not presided over by a special juvenile judge; and other cases are adjusted by social workers on the staffs of the Child Welfare Councils (*Raden voor de Kinderbescherming*) that conduct pre-hearing investigations and provide other services for each juvenile judge (*kinderrechter*). In the United States, however, where juvenile courts combine administrative with judicial functions, most, if not all, of these instances would be cases of the juvenile court, even though they may be adjusted by an intake officer, referee, probation officer, or unofficially by the judge himself without the filing of a petition.

Although juvenile courts in the United States have jurisdiction over almost all offenders, regardless of the seriousness of their misconduct, not all children who commit illegal acts come to the attention of the courts. This is especially true of those who commit minor offences. Only about half of the children arrested by the police are referred to the court. The other half, who are handled by the police, are mostly apprehended for minor offences.¹⁶

This section has been concerned with the problem of choosing similar data from both nations. For a valid comparison of fluctuations in the amount of juvenile delinquency it is necessary to use cases of juvenile offenders brought to the attention of the courts. Their ages and categories of offences are roughly similar. Since the published data from The Netherlands are more refined than those of the United States, data from Dutch sources must be selected and combined to make a statistical series as nearly comparable as possible to the best available American data.

VALIDITY OF DELINQUENCY STATISTICS

Before examining trends in the statistics of juvenile cases we need to consider their validity as indices of the amount of delinquency. An index, it should be recalled, is not a *direct* measure of the object of study, but "an indirect, quantitative measure of a characteristic that is not itself directly measurable."¹⁷ Since not all offenders are apprehended and brought to court it is obvious that court cases cannot measure the absolute quantity of delinquency,¹⁸ but *if* we can assume that

¹⁶ Pilcher, Stern & Perlman, *Juvenile Delinquency, Health, Education and Welfare Indicators*, June, 1963, v-xviii.

¹⁷ Baur, *Statistical Indexes of the Social Aspects of Communities*, 33 SOCIAL FORCES 64 (1954).

¹⁸ Cressey, *The State of Criminal Statistics*, 3 NAT'L PROBATION AND PAROLE A.J. 230 (1957).

the ratio of the unknown total number of offenders to the number brought to court is approximately constant, the number of cases can be used as a crude indicator of *changes* in the total number. They can be used as a statistical index provided we critically scrutinize all possible influences that might bias the data and eliminate those years during which biasing factors nullify the validity of the data. We should confine our comparison to a series of years during which there is no detectable bias of sufficient magnitude to change the direction of the trend and not attach significance to year to year fluctuations. Finally, we should compare large administrative units, such as nations, in which changes in local laws and practices can be assumed to cancel each other.

Although it will be maintained in this paper that the number of cases annually brought to court can be used to compare national trends in juvenile delinquency, it should be emphasized that they *cannot* be used to compare the absolute amount of delinquency. We cannot say that one nation has more or less delinquency than another because of differences in culture, law, the administration of justice, and the development of child welfare services.

A correction for the effect of the growing juvenile population on the number of offences does not need to be made in this analysis because the rate of increase has been similar in the two countries. Between 1954 and 1960, the years for which valid comparisons can be made, the per cent increase was 27 in The Netherlands,¹⁹ and 30 in the United States.²⁰ Since, in both countries, the trend in the number of juvenile offenders has been rising more rapidly than the teenage population, the increase in delinquency can be only partially explained by population growth.

Variations in the ratio of court cases of juveniles to the total number of offenders has been attributed to a multitude of different causes. Lejins suggested that a long run, upward trend in delinquency may reflect a gradual transfer of control from traditional institutions for socializing the young—the family, school, church, and community—to formal institutions of social control—police, courts, welfare agencies, and behavior clinics.²¹ Mannheim

¹⁹ Nederland, CENTRAAL BUREAU VOOR DE STATISTIEK, TOEPASSING DER KINDERWETTEN, 1960. Calculated from Staat 1, p. 15.

²⁰ U.S. CHILDREN'S BUREAU, JUVENILE COURT STATISTICS 1961, Table 9.

²¹ Lejins, *supra* note 1, at 20.

attributed variations to institutional changes including alterations in laws, police methods, and court procedures.²² Perlman stressed improved reporting procedures and the impact of changing public opinion on police and judges.²³

In the United States since 1940, the effect of these factors has probably been gradually to increase the proportion of offenders brought to the attention of the courts, but it seems unlikely that they can account for the sudden rise and fall of cases during the forties and the continuous rise during the fifties. Numerous instances have been reported of changes in number of cases disposed of by specific courts as a result of administrative or legal changes, and if these and other factors have tended overall to increase the number of cases, they may account for some of the steady rise during the fifties, but they are unlikely to account for all of it, and they go counter to the post-World War Two decline and the decrease in 1961. I accept the conclusion of Perlman, who, after weighing the statistical evidence and discussing the problem with persons actually dealing with delinquents, concluded in 1959 that there has been a real rise in delinquency since 1948.²⁴ However, no one has demonstrated that court cases are a valid index of the national volume of juvenile delinquency. This study rests on the plausible assumption that for certain specified time periods they appear to be satisfactory indicators of gross changes in amount of juvenile delinquency.

In The Netherlands, on the other hand, a number of these extrinsic factors may explain much of the change in delinquency statistics in recent years. In the remaining paragraphs of this section I will consider the impact on Dutch delinquency statistics of the postwar reconstruction, administrative reforms, and the pressure of public opinion.

During World War Two, and immediately thereafter, Dutch law enforcement was so completely disrupted by the German military occupation that no confidence can be placed in statistics of arrests and court cases of that period. No criminal statistics were published for two wartime years, 1944 and 1945, and child welfare workers told me it took from two to four years after the Liberation in May, 1945, to reorganize and reconstruct the police forces and child welfare agencies. For this

²² GIBBENS, TRENDS IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY 10 (1961).

²³ Perlman, *Delinquency Prevention: The Size of the Problem*, 332 ANNALS 7 (1959).

²⁴ *Id.* at 8.

reason it is unwise to use the number of court cases of the late forties as an index of juvenile delinquency. They show a sharp rise from 1946 to 1948 of more than 50 per cent which can be attributed more to the institutional reconstruction than to an increase in the number of juvenile offenders.

During the early fifties the statistics of children dealt with by public authorities may have been affected by administrative reforms. There is statistical evidence that something other than the amount of juvenile crime influenced the data because the trends of cases referred to judicial officials, on the one hand, and police reports, on the other, moved in opposite directions. While there was a decline of 21 per cent in the number of juveniles charged with major crimes for the years 1952 through 1954,²⁵ police reports on children involved in serious crimes increased over 11 per cent.²⁶ After 1954, court cases and police reports for serious crimes increased at about the same rate.

The temporary inconsistency between these two data series may be explained by changes in juvenile agencies and their practices. The early fifties was a period of thorough re-examination of the methods of handling juvenile offenders. A national committee, called after its chairman, the Overwater Committee, was appointed in 1948 to study existing methods and recommend improvements.²⁷ The services of mental health clinics (*medisch opvoedkundige bureaus*) and diagnostic centers (*observatiehuizen*) were expanded and in 1956 legal responsibility for all pre-hearing investigations was given to child welfare councils (*raden voor de kinderbescherming*).²⁸ This function had previously been shared with private probation and child welfare societies (*Gezinsvoogdijverenigingen*). Municipalities were employing more school social workers.²⁹ It seems likely that the establishment and expansion of these services for children increased the proportion of cases settled without going to the judicial authorities, and therefore cases brought to the courts may not be a valid index of juvenile delinquency during the early fifties, because they

²⁵ NEDERLAND, CENTRAAL BUREAU VOOR DE STATISTIEK, TOEPASSING DER KINDERWETTEN 1961, Staat 1.

²⁶ *Ibid.*; JAARCIJFERS VOOR NEDERLAND (STATISTICAL YEARBOOK OF THE NETHERLANDS).

²⁷ PRINS *et al.*, INLEIDING IN HET KINDERRECHT EN DE KINDERBESCHERMING 99-101 (1961).

²⁸ JEUGD EN SAMENLEVING, DEEL III: HANDBOEK VOOR DE BIJZONDERE JEUGDZORG 108 (Hart de Ruyter, *et al.* eds. 1959).

²⁹ *Id.* at 270.

increasingly underrepresented the trend of offences.

The pressure of public opinion, it has been suggested, may partially explain the recent rise in the number of children brought to court.³⁰ In the United States, there has unquestionably been a growing popular preoccupation with the problem. The press has given increasing space to reports and comments on youthful criminals. The popular arts have increasingly used the delinquency theme, notably in the musical drama "West Side Story." It has been argued that this increasing public concern has pressured the police into stricter enforcement of laws concerning juveniles, and to referring a higher proportion of arrests to the courts.

Although the pressure of public opinion on the police may explain some of the increase in the rate of juvenile delinquency in the United States during the fifties, it seems unlikely that this could explain the rising trend in The Netherlands after 1954. In The Netherlands, there appeared to have been far less popular concern over delinquency than in the United States, and, in any case, the police were probably not as sensitive to local public opinion as in the United States. Dutch police forces are financed from the national treasury, while American police costs are born by the local community.³¹

Outside the circles of persons professionally concerned with children, the prevailing view among Dutch citizens has been that there is not much juvenile crime in their country, and existing methods are adequate to cope with the problem. This impression was strikingly evident in the public reaction to a recent murder case.

In the fall of 1961, a few weeks after I arrived in The Netherlands, three youths were arrested on suspicion of murdering a companion for fear he might tell the police about the thefts they had perpetrated together. The crime was committed a year earlier when the offenders were 16, 17, and 18 years of age. The eldest and youngest were sons of a wealthy insurance executive, and the other boy was from a working class home.

The newspaper gave prominent space to the case, which they referred to as the Baarn murder case (*de Baarnse moordzaak*)—after the city where

³⁰ CAVAN, JUVENILE DELINQUENCY: DEVELOPMENT, TREATMENT, CONTROL 31 (1962).

³¹ THE NETHERLANDS, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DIGEST OF THE NETHERLANDS, PART 1. CONSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL LIFE 72 (1958).

the events took place, and even more space to subsequent spectacular events—the eldest boy's escape in the course of interrogation by the prosecuting attorney, his return to jail in the family automobile flanked by his father and the prosecuting attorney, while the police were still searching for him, and the official reprimand of the prosecuting attorney for mishandling the case. A volunteer group was formed that solicited contributions to a fund used to retain a competent lawyer to defend the workingclass youth. The public trial, in the spring of 1963, that resulted in their conviction, was also fully covered by the press.

Despite the widespread publicity given this affair it was treated, for the most part, as a unique episode rather than as an extreme instance of a widespread problem. The press and public were more concerned with the suspicion of class discrimination in handling the youths than with their crime. Since it appears that there has been little popular excitement over juvenile crime in The Netherlands, and their police are not very vulnerable to local political pressure, it is unlikely that the recent increase in juvenile offences can be attributed to the pressure of public opinion on the police and judges.

Although the number of cases brought to the attention of the judicial authorities is admittedly a crude index of the amount of delinquency, it is the best measure available for comparing trends in The Netherlands and the United States. The above examination of the validity of these data suggests that meaningful comparisons can be made since 1954. During the prior decade Dutch statistics were distorted by the post-war reconstruction and subsequent administrative reforms. In both countries the trend was upward from 1954 to 1960.

CAUSES OF THE RISE IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Having presented evidence for an increase in the amount of juvenile delinquency from 1954 to 1960 in both The Netherlands and the United States, this section is concerned with interpreting this trend. Since the explanations offered are admittedly *ex post facto*, rather than predictive, they are no more than unverified hypotheses. However, their plausibility is strengthened by their consistency with the conclusions of other studies and general theories of deviant behavior.

A recent summary of social factors that may explain the "steady and marked increase in juve-

nile arrests and juvenile court cases during the past decade" in the United States specified: (1) increasing movement of population, (2) breakdown of controls and ways of life in family and neighborhood, (3) discrimination against minority groups, (4) post-war prosperity, (5) mass media emphasis on toughness, violence, deceit, etc., and (6) threats of war and annihilation.³² Two of the above factors were also emphasized by people, professionally concerned with delinquency in The Netherlands, with whom I talked, namely, increasing prosperity and breakdown of control in the family. The evidence for the former is especially clear, and the increasing breakdown of traditional group control may be aggravated by the rising prosperity. Furthermore, rapid economic growth may also be the primary cause of increasing migration during the fifties, greater resentment of discrimination by minority or underprivileged groups, and more access and exposure to mass media influences.

The press has given abundant publicity to the postwar growth of material prosperity in western nations. For the two countries with which this paper is concerned there are comparable economic statistics. For three of these, the percent increase during the six year period from 1954 through 1960 are:

	The Netherlands ³²	The United States ³⁴
Gross National Product (in constant prices)	36	22
Wages and Salaries	75	38
Value of Personal Consumption Expenditures	63	38

The close association between the business cycle and delinquency in the United States was first noted after the Great Depression of the thirties.³⁵ A widely held explanation for the correlation between the business cycle and delinquency rests on the premise that juvenile misbehavior is a consequence of family disintegration. There is evidence that during depressions many families are drawn together and spend more time at home, while, presumably, the opposite is true during periods of prosperity.³⁶ Glaser and Rice verified this hypothesis for the United States by correlating arrests and

unemployment during the thirties and forties, and concluded that "parent-child contacts are the intervening variables in an inverse relationship between unemployment and juvenile delinquency."³⁷ During the middle and late fifties, however, unemployment has ceased to decline while delinquency has continued to rise. Hence, it is unlikely that there continues to be a sizable, negative correlation between the two variables. Positive indicators of prosperity, such as those noted above, rather than negative indicators like unemployment probably correlate with delinquency to a greater degree.

The observations of the persons I interviewed in The Netherlands suggest that in times of a sustained rise in prosperity there is an important *direct* connection with the amount of wrongdoing by children, as well as the indirect link through the disturbance of parent-child relations. For example, I asked a Dutch juvenile judge what changes she had observed in the kinds of offences committed by children. She immediately stated that "joy-riding" has greatly increased and remarked that young people have much more money than formerly because they get jobs right after leaving school and, since they live at home, have few expenses. Their parents often permit them to spend their earnings instead of insisting that they save some of it. They buy expensive clothes and all the new, highly advertised products. I inferred that having money enabled young people to do things formerly beyond their means, and out of reach of parental control, which may bring them into conflict with the law. Their level of wants sometimes rises faster than their incomes. The judge told of asking a boy accused of theft why he stole, although he had a job and ample spending money. He answered, "But I wanted a hi-fi set." Wants seem to be growing at a faster rate than the means for their satisfaction.

A similar relationship between employment of youth and delinquency was reported several years ago by Lunden in a study of juvenile offenders in wartime Britain. He wrote, "This 'easy money,' devoid of customary communal controls, created a 'new freedom' and opened many 'strange doors' to the young worker. The boy or girl not prepared to meet these situations often made unwise choices resulting in delinquent behavior."³⁸ The delin-

³² Pilcher, Stern & Perlman, *supra* note 16, at xiv.

³³ NEDERLAND, *op. cit. supra* note 26.

³⁴ U.S. BUREAU OF THE CENSUS, HISTORICAL STATISTICS, COLONIAL TIMES TO 1957 and STATISTICAL ABSTRACT OF THE UNITED STATES.

³⁵ LUNDEN, SYSTEMATIC SOURCE BOOK IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY 63-68, 168-69 (1938); CARR, DELINQUENCY CONTROL 52-57 (1940).

³⁶ Bogen, *Juvenile Delinquency and Economic Trend*, 9 AM. SOC. REV. 183 (1944); Milne, *Economic Factors in*

Juvenile Delinquency, in JUVENILE DELINQUENCY 213 (Roucek ed. 1958).

³⁷ Glaser & Rice, *Crime, Age, and Employment*, 24 AM. SOC. REV. 680 (1959).

³⁸ Lunden, *War and Juvenile Delinquency in England and Wales*, 10 AM. SOC. REV. 392 (1954).

quency generating consequence of employment at relatively high wages suggests the general proposition that unaccustomed income, whether earned or received from parents, equips the youth with new power for action in an enlarged field of activities for which his existing habit patterns and inner controls are inadequate, so that some of his conduct brings him into conflict with society. This interpretation is an application to delinquency of Durkheim's explanation of the rise in suicide rates during times of increasing business prosperity.³⁹

Among boys an attractive way of sharing in Holland's prosperity has been through acquiring a motor bicycle (*bromfiets*). The number of motor bikes has skyrocketed from under 5,000 in 1949 to over one million.⁴⁰ There has also been a tremendous increase in motorcycles, motor scooters, and automobiles, but most juvenile traffic offences are committed on motor bikes, because they are the only powered vehicles that can be legally driven by persons under the age of 18, which is also the upper limit of juvenile court jurisdiction for criminal offences. I was told by a Dutch juvenile court judge that few boys under 18 know how to drive automobiles unless they have had some special opportunity as comes with working in a garage. An evidence of official concern in Amsterdam over juvenile traffic offences was a campaign in 1962 to reduce speeding on motor bicycles. Bright colored posters were displayed portraying a youth, tempted to show off before a girl, but remembering that he should not drive his motor bike faster than 18 miles per hour. Consideration is being given to requiring motor bike operators to have driver's licenses. Since they are issued only to persons who have passed their 18th birthday the proposed law would prohibit juveniles from driving motor bikes. If the law is passed, one consequence will probably be a tremendous increase in juveniles arrested for driving without a license.

The number of traffic cases coming to court more than doubled between 1954 and 1960, and the per cent that traffic cases form of all cases of juvenile offenders rose from 67 to 81. Even more spectacular was the rise in serious traffic offences (*wegenwerkeerswel misdrijven*), mostly for unauthorized use—what the Dutch call "joy-riding"—and some for driving while under the influence of alcohol. The number of these serious cases was 151 in 1954 and 1254 in 1960.

With motor bikes so plentiful, some youths who don't own one take one without the owner's knowledge. If the borrower is caught he may be charged with joy-riding or even theft. With the spread of material prosperity, there are more opportunities illegally to acquire many things besides motor bikes. Crimes committed by juveniles that showed the greatest increase, after traffic offences, were burglary and receiving stolen property, both of which more than doubled between 1954 and 1960.

Shoplifting, in the opinion of a Dutch juvenile judge, is another offence that has been rising rapidly. She attributed it in large part to the increasing numbers of self-service stores. Supermarkets and department stores are taking a larger share of the market from specialized shops. The greater ease of stealing from open counters and shelves provides more opportunities for acquiring things by theft. Increased shoplifting is one consequence of the adoption of mass methods of distributing the flood of consumer goods during these prosperous times.

The upward trend of juvenile delinquency in the United States and The Netherlands may be partially explained by two different consequences of increasing economic prosperity. Some children who enjoy new affluence find themselves in an anomic state as a result of their enlarged powers and access to fields of activity for which they are inadequately socialized and controlled. Those who do not benefit from the greater wealth feel the strain of a relatively larger disparity between their low economic status and that of others and find more opportunities for reducing the strain by illegal appropriation of property. Jackson Toby saw a similar direct connection between prosperity and juvenile delinquency. He referred to the sting of socio-economic deprivation felt by the poor in rich societies and their resentment of the prosperity of those who are better off. He remarked that this effect aggravates the problem for adolescents in communities having strong ethnic and class cleavages. Toby also suggested that affluence in industrial societies stimulates the emergence of a distinctive youth culture among autonomous, adolescent groups, hence increasing the differentiation of the world of adolescents from that of adults.⁴¹

³⁹ DURKHEIM, SUICIDE: A STUDY IN SOCIOLOGY 241-54 (1951).

⁴⁰ NEDERLAND, *op. cit. supra* note 26.

⁴¹ Toby, The Prospects for Reducing Delinquency Rates in Industrial Societies (unpublished paper read at the Annual Meeting, American Sociological Association, Washington, D.C., August 30, 1962).

American students of delinquency⁴² have stressed the importance of organized gangs for elaborating and maintaining a deviant youth culture, and therefore, as an important factor in the rise of delinquency. There is no evidence that highly integrated gangs exist among Dutch youth. There are peer groups among boys that affect distinctive dress and have a special predilection for noisy motor bikes. They are known as *nozems*, and resemble the similar German *Halbstarke* and French *blousons noirs*, but in the opinion of Cnoop Koopmans, deputy secretary of the Amsterdam Child Welfare Council, who has studied at New York University, there are no predatory, fighting gangs, as we know them in American metropolises. The groups that commit offences are small, loosely structured, and of unstable membership.⁴³ The evidence from Holland suggests that a rise in delinquency can occur without the participation of organized, anti-social gangs. The same thing may be true of American cities the size of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague. In Kansas City, for example, the head juvenile officer of the county court said, in November, 1959, that in his knowledge there had not been any organized, juvenile gangs in Kansas City, Missouri,⁴⁴ yet delinquency cases referred to the court were 72 per cent greater in 1960 than in 1954.⁴⁵

The hypothesis suggested by these observations is that rising prosperity increases delinquency because it expands the available means and raises the goals of action without strengthening the conditions, that is, the effective devices of social control. I am not suggesting that affluence, itself, causes delinquency, rather it is the rapid spread of economic well-being that tends to upset the relation between means, goals, and conditions.

In this period of rising prosperity the weakening of the parent-child relationship appears to be as much a consequence as a cause of youthful deviant behavior. Possibly they are interdependent and mutually reinforcing factors. Some child welfare

⁴² Especially COHEN, *DELINQUENT BOYS: THE CULTURE OF THE GANG* (1955); and CLOWARD & OHLIN, *DELINQUENCY AND OPPORTUNITY: A THEORY OF DELINQUENT GANGS* (1960).

⁴³ Cnoop Koopmans, *Gangvorming*, 40 *MAANDBLAD VOOR BERECHTING EN RECLASSERING* 279 (1961).

⁴⁴ Reeper (now Director, Department of Welfare, Kansas City, Missouri), statement confirmed in personal communication (August 2, 1963).

⁴⁵ NATIONAL STUDY SERVICE, SCANS, 1962, *A STUDY OF CHILDREN'S AGENCIES, NEEDS, SERVICES IN JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI, PART TWO, AGENCY REPORTS A-38* (1962).

workers in The Netherlands believe that increased permissiveness in child rearing has contributed importantly to the delinquency problem.⁴⁶ If this factor contributed to the rising trend of delinquency in post-war America, it seems unlikely that it can explain the continuing rise in the late fifties, since the fashion in child rearing in recent years has been toward firmer parental discipline, though the extent to which this change in theory has affected practice is problematic. This explanation is also complicated by class differences in child rearing methods.

A London social worker is reported to have observed that

"[T]here is more than the ordinary mental sickness among those born in 1937-42. It was all tied up with evacuation, the absence of their fathers and all that. You might say there has been a bulge of indiscipline travelling up just as there has been a bulge in the birth rate, but this indiscipline has become a new way of life."⁴⁷

This explanation sees the stress in the family originating more in the children than in their parents. This insight is the basis for the theory of "delinquent generations" proposed by Wilkens, which relates disturbances of social and family life during early childhood to delinquency during adolescence. From his analysis of year to year variations in delinquency by age for England, Wales, and Scotland, he found that "the greatest 'crime-proneness' is thus found to be associated with that birth group who passed through their fifth year during the war."⁴⁸ He concluded "that disturbances of social or family life have the most marked effect on subsequent criminality if they occurred when the children concerned were passing through their fifth year."⁴⁹ Since most juveniles brought to court are between 14 and 17 years old, there would be a lag of nine to twelve years between the time of maximum social stress and the peak years of juvenile delinquency. This delinquency proneness, of those whose fifth year occurred during wartime dislocation, might explain the upward trend of delinquency during the fifties, but if this were the only important factor, the rate should have begun to decline after 1958. Other

⁴⁶ Ten Have van der Werff, personal communication (May 14, 1963).

⁴⁷ FYVEL, *TROUBLEMAKERS: REBELLIOUS YOUTH IN AN AFFLUENT SOCIETY* 22 (1962).

⁴⁸ Wilkens, *Delinquent Generations* (1960), as reprinted in *THE SOCIOLOGY OF CRIME AND DELINQUENCY* 177 (Wolfgang, Savitz & Johnston eds. 1962).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

factors may have counteracted this tendency. Wilkens himself points out that other factors must be considered to account for the amount of crime in 1956 and 1957 far in excess of expectation.⁵⁰ Perhaps one of the factors is the anomic effect of expanding prosperity.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Cases of juvenile offenders increased from 1954 to 1960 in both The Netherlands and the United States. The rise in the number of American cases began in 1948, and although the number of Dutch cases was about constant between 1948 and 1954, a rise in police reports on juveniles during the early fifties suggests that the rise in delinquency in The Netherlands may have begun before 1954. The reorganization and expansion of child welfare services in The Netherlands during the early fifties may have had a tendency to reduce the number of offenders referred to the judicial authorities.

⁵⁰ *Id.* at 178.

The rise of economic indicators is associated with the rise of juvenile crime in both countries. Spreading prosperity may increase delinquency both among those whose money enables them to do things that bring them into conflict with the law, and those who resort to stealing to satisfy wants raised above their means by the affluence of others.

This review of some of the problems encountered when making international comparisons of delinquency statistics, and the illustration of the research possibilities for generating and testing hypotheses of delinquency causation to be gained from such studies, should be sufficient reason to act on Lejins' suggestion⁵¹ for developing a specialty of the comparative study of juvenile delinquency in which statistics are evaluated in the context of the systems of social control unique to each nation and, it should be added, the changing cultural, economic, and social conditions.

⁵¹ Lejins, *supra* note 1, at 21.