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Introduction to a Special Issue on the YouPrev Project: Expanding Self-reports to Include Adolescents' Views on Prevention of Youth Deviance

Internationally, self-report studies represent a key tool in research on delinquency among adolescents (see e.g. Enzmann et al., 2010; Junger-Tas, Marshall, & Ribeaud, 2003; Junger-Tas et al., 2010). The papers in this volume are connected by their common origin in a European study on youth crime and its prevention.¹ While this study stands in the tradition of self-reported delinquency studies, it goes beyond student survey data on rule-breaking and victimization regarding topics covered as well as methods employed. Being able to make use of the freshly developed ISRD-3 instrument, it supplemented self-reports on delinquency and victimization with questions on students' experiences with and views on preventive actors and approaches. Under the acronym *YouPrev*, the study also included qualitative approaches, such as interviews with experts and practitioners from a multitude of fields relevant for youth crime and its prevention. The consortium comprised partners from Western Europe (Belgium, Germany), Southern Europe (Portugal, Spain) and from Central and Eastern Europe (Hungary, Slovenia).

The paper by Ann Evenepoel and Jenneke Christiaens is titled: "*Giving voice to 'youth of today': Young people's views and perspectives on youth crime and its prevention in Belgium*". The authors point to the fact that the respondents reached in the Belgian school-based survey have relatively limited experience both with crime and with its prevention. While this may suggest a closer research focus on groups of juveniles with a higher involvement in delinquency, it also raises questions with regard to the appropriateness of approaching low-level delinquency youth with activities running under the heading of "crime prevention".

Based on a survey among more than 2000 German youngsters, Anabel Taefi, Thomas Görgen and Benjamin Kraus draw a picture of widespread, although mostly not very severe, involvement in delinquency and deviant behaviour. In their paper "*Adolescents as delinquent actors and as targets of preventive measures*",

1 The research reported in this issue was funded by a European Commission grant (grant number: JUST/2009/DAP3/AG/1360 – 30-CE-0389559/00-57). It was conducted under the title "*YouPrev: Youth deviance and youth violence: A European multi-agency perspective on best practices in prevention and control*". The study was funded from the European Commission's DAPHNE III programme ("*to prevent and combat violence against children, young people and women and to protect victims and groups at risk*").

they show connections between involvement by young people in delinquency and the way in which prevention is perceived. While both delinquent and non-delinquent adolescents ascribe more preventive potential to parents and peers than to formal agents of social control, skeptical attitudes towards potential preventive impact increase with involvement in delinquency; the authors also point at possible unintended effects of prevention measures on highly delinquent youths.

Reporting on the basis of the Hungarian *YouPrev* study, Fruzsina Albert and Olga Tóth in “*Youth drug and crime prevention practices in Hungary as reflected in the opinions of students and professionals*”, compare the perspectives of those who conceptualize preventive approaches and put them into action and of those who are targeted by them. They show that while prevention of substance abuse is broadly implemented in Hungary, the prevalence of intoxication, especially with alcohol, is high among young people. While professionals consider teachers as important and potentially influential actors in substance abuse prevention, youngsters’ views on this are much more reluctant.

In their paper “*Self-control and morality in Slovenian primary and secondary school sample: The results of YouPrev study*”, Eva Bertok and Gorazd Meško use the data from the Slovenian school survey to test the concept of crime propensity as suggested by Situational Action Theory (see e.g. Wikström, 2009; Wikström & Svensson, 2010; Wikström & Treiber, 2009). Measuring crime propensity as a variable composed of low self-control and weak moral values, they found that it explains a substantial amount of self-reported delinquency.

While most of the research from the *YouPrev* project presented in this issue has its main focus on quantitative data from school surveys, María José Bernuz Beneitez and Daniel Jiménez Franco in “*Juvenile violence prevention: The gap between ideals and practices*” draw mostly upon expert interviews and group discussions. The authors point to conceptual limitations to prevention and intervention in the Spanish context and discuss the impact of the economic crisis on current and future perspectives.

Writing from the perspective of another Southern European country hit hard by the current economic crisis, Ana Cardoso, Heloísa Perista, Paula Carrilho and Mário Jorge Silva in “*Juvenile delinquency, school failure and dropout in Portugal: Drafting a picture in different voices*” display and discuss connections between high level involvement in violent offending and the circumstances in which the most delinquent adolescents live their daily life. They point to the key role of the school and the importance of measures addressing school dropout and school failure.

In “*Prevention of juvenile crime and deviance: Adolescents’ and experts’ views in an international perspective*”, combining data from different countries, Thomas Görgen, Ann Evenepoel, Benjamin Kraus and Anabel Taefi put a special focus on findings on prevention. Across countries, students have more often been targeted by drug abuse prevention measures than by approaches addressing violence. Internationally, they regard peers and parents as more influential in prevention than professional agents such as teachers, social workers, or police. Experts point to the significance of socioeconomic factors and of social policies.

The focus both on delinquency and on its prevention constitutes a key characteristic and a distinct feature of the *YouPrev* study. While young people’s

views on prevention cannot be regarded as matter-of-fact knowledge but should be considered as lay theories (Furnham, 1988), they are instructive both regarding involvement in delinquency and young persons' accessibility for prevention measures.

Thomas Görgen & Gorazd Meško
Guest Editors

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Uvod v tematsko številko revije o projektu YouPrev: Uporaba samonaznanitve adolescentov za razširjanje znanja o preprečevanju odklonskosti mladih

V mednarodnem okolju so samonaznanitvene študije glavno orodje pri raziskovanju mladoletniškega prestopništva (glej Enzmann et al., 2010; Junger-Tas, Marshall in Ribeaud, 2003; Junger-Tas et al., 2010). Prispevki v tej tematski številki revije Varstvoslovje so pripravljene na osnovi evropskega projekta *YouPrev* o mladoletniškem prestopništvu in njegovem preprečevanju.¹ Raziskava v okviru projekta je temeljila na tradiciji samonaznanitvenih študij prestopništva, vendar je z uporabo novorazvitega instrumenta ISRD-3 vsebinsko in metodološko presešla okvire zbiranja podatkov o kršenju pravil in viktimizaciji mladih. Vprašalnik ISRD-3 poleg vprašanj o samonaznanitvi delinkventnosti in viktimizacije mladih vključuje tudi vprašanja o njihovih izkušnjah in pogledih na preventivne ukrepe in pristope. V raziskavi *YouPrev* so bili med drugim uporabljeni tudi kvalitativni pristopi, kot so intervjuji s strokovnjaki in praktiki, ki se ukvarjajo z mladoletniško kriminaliteto in njenim preprečevanjem. V raziskavi *YouPrev* so sodelovali partnerji iz zahodne Evrope (Belgija, Nemčija), južne Evrope (Portugalska, Španija) ter srednje in vzhodne Evrope (Slovenija, Madžarska).

Ann Evenepoel in Jenneke Christiaens v svojem prispevku "*Prisluhni glas 'današnje mladine': pogledi in mnenja mladih na kriminaliteto mladih in njeno preprečevanje v Belgiji*" ugotavljata, da imajo izpraševanci v belgijski raziskavi relativno malo izkušenj s kriminaliteto in njenim preprečevanjem. Ta ugotovitev odpira možnosti ponovne raziskave, ki bi zajela mladostnike z več izkušnjami z delinkventnimi dejanji. Hkrati pa odpira vprašanje o primernosti vključevanja mladih z malo delinkventnimi izkušnjami v preventivne programe preprečevanja kriminalitete.

Anabel Taefi, Thomas Görgen in Benjamin Kraus predstavljajo izsledke raziskave, ki je zajela več kot 2.000 nemških mladostnikov, ter ugotavljajo, da sta delinkventnost in deviantno vedenje med njimi precej razširjena, vendar večinoma

¹ Izvedbo projekta z naslovom "*YouPrev: Youth deviance and youth violence: A European multi-agency perspective on best practices in prevention and control*" je financirala Evropska komisija v okviru programa DAPHNE III (številka projekta: JUST/2009/DAP3/AG/1360 – 30-CE-0389559/00-57).

v blažjih oblikah. V svojem prispevku z naslovom *“Mladostniki kot prestopniki in kot ciljne skupine preventivnih ukrepov”* predstavljajo povezavo med vpletenostjo mladih v delinkventna dejanja in načinom izvajanja preventivnih ukrepov. Mladostniki pripisujejo večji pomen preventivnim dejanjem staršev in vrstnikov kot tistim, ki jih izvajajo formalni družbeni nadzorovalci. Vendar skeptičnost do vpliva preventivnih ukrepov raste z bolj pogosto vpletenostjo mladostnikov v delinkventna dejanja. Avtorji opozarjajo tudi na morebitne nepredvidene vplive preventivnih ukrepov na zelo delinkventne mladostnike.

Fruzsina Albert in Olga Tóth v prispevku z naslovom *“Pristopi preprečevanja kriminalitete in zlorabe drog na Madžarskem skozi pogled dijakov in strokovnjakov”* predstavljata izsledke madžarske raziskave, pri čemer primerjata stališča tistih, ki pripravljajo in izvajajo preventivne ukrepe, in tistih, ki so ciljna skupina le teh. Kljub razširjenosti preventivnih ukrepov v zvezi z uživanjem različnih substanc, je razširjenost zastrupitev (predvsem z alkoholom) na Madžarskem med mladimi zelo pogosta. Medtem ko strokovnjaki med najpomembnejše dejavnike preprečevanja uživanja različnih substanc uvrščajo učitelje, je pogled mladostnikov ravno nasproten.

V prispevku *“Samonadzor in moralnost mladih v slovenskem osnovnošolskem in srednješolskem vzorcu: ugotovitve raziskave YouPrev”* Eva Bertok in Gorazd Meško na podlagi podatkov slovenske raziskave preverita zanesljivosti enega najbolj ključnih konceptov situacijskoakcijske teorije, in sicer koncepta nagnjenosti h kriminaliteti (glej Wikström, 2009; Wikström in Svensson, 2010; Wikström in Treiber, 2009). Pri merjenju nagnjenosti h kriminaliteti, ki jo sestavljata šibek samonadzor in šibke moralne vrednote, sta avtorja ugotovila, da le-ta pojasni znatno količino samonaznanjenih prestopniških dejanj.

María José Bernuz Beneitez in Daniel Jiménez Franco sta za pripravo svojega prispevka *“Preprečevanje mladoletniškega nasilja: razkorak med ideali in praksami”*, v nasprotju z večino ostalih v tej številki predstavljenih raziskav v okviru projekta *YouPrev*, ki so temeljile na kvantitativnih podatkih, uporabila predvsem intervjuje s strokovnjaki ter skupinske razprave. Avtorja izpostavita konceptualne omejitve pri prevenciji in intervenciji v španskem okolju ter razpravljata o trenutnih in bodočih možnostih le-tega glede na vplive ekonomske krize.

Ana Cardoso, Heloísa Perista, Paula Carrilho in Mário Jorge Silva v prispevku *“Mladoletniško prestopništvo, neuspeh v šoli in opustitev šolanja na Portugalskem: skiciranje slike iz različnih mnenj”*, z vidika še ene južnoevropske države v ekonomski krizi, predstavljajo in razpravljajo o povezavi med visoko stopnjo nasilja in okoliščinami v vsakdanjem življenju večine mladoletnih prestopnikov. Pri tem poudarjajo ključno vlogo šole in pomen ukrepov za zmanjšanje opuščanja šolanja ter šolskega neuspeha.

V prispevku *“Preprečevanje mladoletniške kriminalitete in deviantnosti: pogledi mladostnikov in strokovnjakov z mednarodne perspektive”* Thomas Görgen, Ann Evenepoel, Benjamin Kraus in Anabel Taefi združijo podatke različnih držav in se osredotočijo na ugotovitve, povezane s preventivnimi ukrepi. Učenci in dijaki so v različnih državah pogosteje deležni preventivnih ukrepov v zvezi z zlorabo drog kot pa tistih v zvezi s preprečevanjem nasilja. V mednarodnem okviru imajo vrstniki

in starši večji preventivni vpliv kot učitelji, socialni delavci in policisti. Poudariti pa je treba velik pomen socialnoekonomskih faktorjev in socialne politike.

Glavna značilnost projekta *YouPrev* je osredotočenost na prestopništvo in njegovo preprečevanje. Medtem ko poglede mladih na preventivne ukrepe ni mogoče šteti za na dejstvih temelječe znanje, temveč jih je treba obravnavati kot poglede laikov (Furnham, 1988), so vseeno poučni, tako glede udeležbe mladih pri prestopništvu kot tudi glede njihove dovzetnosti za preventivne ukrepe.

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Gostujoča urednika

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Giving Voice to ‘Youth of Today’: Young People’s Views and Perspectives on Youth Crime and its Prevention in Belgium

Ann Evenepoel, Jenneke Christiaens

Purpose:

The aim of this article is to present findings on a study into the field of prevention of youth crime and deviance in Belgium. This research took place within the framework of a European study *YouPrev* that involved six European countries.

Design/Methods/Approach:

On one hand, a school survey was conducted with youngsters aged between 14 and 17 years in three regions: an urban, a semi-rural/urban and a rural area. Based on the new ISRD-3, in addition to classic self-report questions, the instrument also focused on young people’s views and perceptions regarding practices and initiatives aimed at preventing youth delinquency. To enhance the richness of these results, group discussions and interviews with youngsters were organised in the same regions, addressing the same topic.

Findings:

The major finding was that the youngsters that participated in the study do not seem to be part of classical prevention target groups. They attach great importance to informal actors in controlling and preventing youth crime (while formal actors like police, social work and prevention services are the main professions involved in Belgium). When it comes to their possible deviant behaviour, the survey pointed out that the majority appear not to use alcohol and drugs in a problematic way, and they don’t seem to have much contact with police or other legal actors. Furthermore, the respondents have very limited experience with and knowledge about prevention activities in their area, not only about secondary and tertiary but also general prevention initiatives. This could imply that the ‘best’ prevention is the activity that is not brought forward and perceived as such, a new hypothesis that would be interesting for further research.

Research Limitations/Implications:

Conducting research in the field of prevention should move beyond the school and more into the field of prevention practices, from different epistemological

perspectives. This implies that the actual target groups of these practices should be included and be given a voice. If we want to find out more about 'best practices' in the prevention of youth crime, it is essential to question the views and perspectives of youngsters who were actually involved in prevention projects.

Practical Implications:

To take into account the views of the target groups in the study of the field of youth crime prevention may open up new, and maybe very different, directions for policy and practice on how to approach and react to youth delinquency and deviance. In an European Study regarding the prevention of youth deviance and violence ("*YouPrev: Youth deviance and youth violence: A European multi-agency perspective on best practices in prevention and control*"), Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain have conducted surveys among 13 to 17 year old students. Based on the new ISRD-3 instrument, in addition to the classic self-report questions, the survey also focused on their perceptions and views regarding practices and initiatives aimed at preventing youth delinquency. In this article, we will present the results collected in Belgium. The aim is to stimulate reflection and contribute to the international discussion regarding a very popular topic today by adding the perspective of the seemingly 'unpopular' key players.

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Keywords: prevention, youth crime, young people's perspective, Belgium

Prisluhniti glasu 'današnje mladine': pogledi in mnenja mladih o kriminaliteti mladih in njenem preprečevanju v Belgiji

Namen prispevka:

Namen članka je predstaviti ugotovitve raziskave na področju preprečevanja mladoletniškega prestopništva in odklonskosti v Belgiji. Raziskava je potekala v okviru evropske raziskave *YouPrev*, ki je vključevala šest evropskih držav.

Metode:

Raziskava je bila izvedena med učenci v starosti med 14 in 17 let v treh regijah: mestni, delno podeželski/delno mestni in podeželski regiji. Poleg klasičnih samonaznanitvenih vprašalnikov in novem ISRD-3 je raziskovalni instrumentarij vključeval tudi poglede in dožemanja mladih glede praks in pobud, katerih cilj je preprečevanje mladoletniškega prestopništva. Za povečanje uporabnosti teh rezultatov so bile organizirane skupinske razprave in intervjuji z mladimi v istih regijah, kjer je bila obravnavana ta tematika.

Ugotovitve:

Glavna ugotovitev je bila, da mladi, ki so sodelovali v raziskavi, ne predstavljajo del klasičnih ciljnih skupin za preventivne dejavnosti. Velik pomen pripisujejo neformalnim akterjem, ki nadzorujejo in preprečujejo mladoletniško prestopništvo (medtem ko so formalni akterji, kot so npr. policija, socialni delavci in preventivni delavci, glavni poklici, ki delujejo na področju preprečevanja v Belgiji). Ko gre za primere njihovega morebitnega deviantnega vedenja, je raziskava pokazala, da večina ne zlorablja alkohola ter drog in nimajo veliko stikov s policijo ali drugimi

formalnimi institucijami. Poleg tega imajo anketiranci zelo malo predhodnih izkušenj in znanja o preventivnih dejavnostih na svojem območju, ne samo o sekundarnih in terciarnih, ampak tudi o pobudah generalne prevencije. To bi lahko pomenilo, da je »najboljša« preventivna dejavnost tista, ki se je ne naznanja in ni zaznana kot taka, kar bi lahko bila nova hipoteza za nadaljnje raziskovanje.

Omejitve/uporabnost raziskave:

Izvajanje raziskave na področju preprečevanja mora preseči šolski prostor in stopiti na področje praks preventivnih dejavnosti, analiziranih iz različnih epistemoloških perspektiv. To pomeni, da je treba dejanske ciljne skupine teh pristopov vključiti in jim prisluhni. Če želimo izvedeti več o "najboljših pristopih" na področju preprečevanja mladoletniškega prestopništva, je bistveno analiziranje pogledov in razmišljanj mladih, ki so bili dejansko vključeni v preventivne projekte.

Praktična uporabnost:

Upoštevanje stališč v raziskavi zajetih ciljnih skupin lahko odpira nove ter morda zelo drugačne poglede in poda smernice za oblikovanje politike in prakse o tem, kako pristopiti in se odzvati na mladoletniško prestopništvo in odklonskost. V projektu v teku, tj. evropski raziskavi o preprečevanju mladoletniške odklonskosti in nasilja ("*YouPrev: Youth deviance and youth violence: A European multi-agency perspective on best practices in prevention and control*"), so bile v Belgiji, Nemčiji, na Madžarskem, Portugalskem, v Sloveniji in Španiji izvedene ankete med 13–17 let starimi učenci. Poleg klasičnega anketiranja z metodo samonaznanitve je bil uporabljen ISDR-3 instrumentarij, raziskava pa se je osredotočila tudi na stališča in mnenja glede pristopov in pobud, katerih cilj je preprečevanje mladoletniškega prestopništva. V tem članku so predstavljeni rezultati raziskave v Belgiji. Cilj je spodbuditi razmišljanje in prispevati k mednarodni razpravi o zelo priljubljeni temi na način, da vključujemo perspektivo "neprijubljenih" ključnih akterjev.

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Ključne besede: preprečevanje, mladoletniška kriminaliteta, pogledi mladih, Belgija

1 INTRODUCTION

'To prevent is better than to cure', a classic idiom that can count on a great deal of support within the field of crime control, especially when it comes to tackling youth crime. Youngsters are still in a process of full development so it seems very logical that when they display problematic behaviour or even commit offences, it is best to intervene as early as possible. That way they can be 'saved' from developing a criminal career.

The prevention-philosophy lies at the heart of Belgium's juvenile justice system. With the introduction of a separate juvenile justice system in 1912, the protection model replaced penal responses to juvenile offending for minors under the age of 16. Apart from children prosecuted for delinquency, the Belgian protection system also intervened with non-delinquent children. Children who

misbehaved or displayed socially undesirable behaviour (*status offences*) could also be subjected to an intervention by the children's judge (Christiaens, 1999). This reaction to pre-delinquent behaviour clearly stems from a preventive perspective. The reform in 1965 expanded the scope to young people 'in danger' and a few years later (between 1980 and 1990), this intervention towards non-delinquent minors (POS) was separated from the protection for young offenders (MOF). The interventions towards 'non-delinquent' minors or juveniles 'in a problematic situation' are often related to problems with family, school, environment, ... that are remarkably similar to the (in)famous risk factor paradigm. Deriving from the developmental criminology several factors were, through empirical research, identified as predictive for future offending" (Loeber & Farrington, 2000; West & Farrington, 1975).

Not only has developmental criminology but also rational choice theories (such as *broken window theory* by Wilson & Kelling, 1982) and social ecological approaches (such as *the defensible space* by Newman, 1978) contributed significantly to the so called '*reinvention*' of prevention (O'Malley & Hutchinson, 2007). Related to the a great emphasize on (urban) safety and security, crime preventions techniques are no longer solely used as an instrument to prevent crime but also to inform other aspects of social control and to exclude 'risky' populations (Evans, 2011: 186). This consequently led to the extension of judicial intervention to non-delinquent minors (Cartuyvels, Christiaens, De Fraene, & Dumortier, 2010). In the past decades, prevention has clearly become the new core principal, the 'defining logic' (Groenemeyer & Rousseaux, 2007: 69) and is often referred to as 'the preventive turn' (Crawford, 2009; Edwards & Hughes, 2005).

The Belgian prevention field can be characterized as very chaotic and scattered (Melis & Goris, 1996; Vettenburg et al., 2003). This is partially a consequence of the Belgian state structure and the complex division (and overlap) of competencies between the Federal government and the Communities. An important development, contributing to the scattered Belgian prevention landscape, was the creation of federal strategic prevention and safety plans in Belgium, which were introduced in 1999. In short, these contracts implied that local authorities receive financial resources to establish preventive projects that are more often aimed at young people (Swinnen, Hoste, & De Gruijter, 2006). The underlying philosophy clearly stems from the assumption that local authorities are the most appropriate actors in tackling crime specific for the region or area. There was a growing awareness of the fact that crime prevention should encounter structural and urban social factors, especially at the local level, with a focus on disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the Belgian cities (Hebberecht, 2012). This (decentralisation) trend can also be observed on an international level. The UK policies in the 1990's are illustrative of this development, introducing more responsibility to local authorities to prevent youth delinquency (Muncie & Hughes, 2002: 4) and incivilities. This was part of the new strategy of tackling crime, as famously announced by Tony Blair: "tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime" which was reflected in the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) where these causes ought to be found in anti-social behaviour. Turning to the situation in Belgium again, a similar move can be observed. With legislation on municipal administrative sanctions, the enforcement authority of local governments

expanded to include incivilities (De Hert, 2005). The local government also became primarily responsible for tackling this phenomenon and were allowed to impose a fine for breaches of municipal regulations (Meerschaut, De Hert, Gutwirth, & Vander Steene, 2008). In both countries, we can see the emergence of incivilities as a new field of intervention at the local level. New measures to deal with incivilities and the target groups are installed, merging with already existing crime prevention initiatives. The result is the establishment of numerous projects to tackle anti social truant youth who hang around in public spaces and present a risk. Not only a risk to engage in criminal behaviour, but also for society, its civilians and their feelings of security and safety. The vast majority of local crime prevention initiatives are targeted at risk groups (Hörnqvist, 2004).

However little is known about these prevention projects and initiatives. Which youngsters are parts of these risk groups? Do these practices actually work? And how do the target groups perceive them?

Within the framework of our European *YouPrev* study, a self-report school survey was conducted in each country among 13 to 17 year olds, including a section on their views of prevention. Furthermore, we conducted several group interviews with minors where we focused on their perception of possible problems in the area and how they view and experience prevention activities.

This article aims to shed some explorative light on the youth crime prevention domain in Belgium seen through the eyes of the most important actors involved: young people. By touching upon some interesting results deriving from the group discussions and the school surveys, we will attempt to reflect on possible theoretical and methodological consequences for scientific research into the field of the youth crime prevention.

Before elaborating in detail our research results, we will first provide a brief overview of the research framework related to the school survey and group discussions.¹

2 RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 Background

One phase of the research project focused on the study of youth problem behaviour as a local phenomenon. We studied the reaction of involved local actors, institutions and the community. In Belgium, this local study was performed in three regions.² Due to the bilingual context, we deemed it necessary to represent both the Flemish and French speaking area of Belgium. Therefore, we chose bilingual Brussels as an urban area, Hasselt as a Flemish semi-rural/urban area, and Dinant as a French speaking rural region.

1 For a more in-depth overview of the Belgian study we would like to refer to the specific reports available on www.youprev.eu

2 The other participating countries selected two areas.

The local study consisted of qualitative and quantitative parts. On the one hand, a school survey based on the ISRD-3 (international self-report delinquency) questionnaire was conducted among 14 to 17 year olds in schools of the selected regions. On the other hand we conducted interviews with local actors and organized group discussions with youngsters.

For this contribution, we can only briefly focus on the results of the school survey and our findings based on group discussions with young people.

2.2 Self-Report School Survey

Self-report studies have become widely acknowledged as a useful instrument to measure delinquent behaviour. Official statistics reproduce a highly distorted image of crime rates and are more likely to be the product of selectiveness of police activity and the justice system. It should be noted that non-reported crime (dark number) remains absent in these figures. Self-report studies have significantly contributed to resolve these problems (Van Kerckvoorde, 1995). However, self-reports as a method and technique to measure (juvenile) delinquency are not without important critiques themselves (Moriau & Van Praet, 2011).

In general, the International Self-Report Delinquency Survey aims to describe and explain juvenile delinquency cross-nationally. Its key objectives are primarily to compare trends in (youth) offending and victimization between countries, and secondly to explain delinquent behaviour and test criminological theories (Junger-Tas et al., 2010). The self-report study is helpful in finding out more about young people's experiences as perpetrators and victims of deviance, crime and violence. According to lifestyle approaches, delinquent behaviour and victimization was tested with lifestyle aspects via statistical analysis. Considering the aim of the *YouPrev* project, namely a broad perspective on successful prevention practices of youth deviance and violence, questions were also included about young people's views, experiences, and opinions on prevention activities and strategies. The questionnaire was generally built around the following domains: demographic background, family, school, victimization, leisure and peers, attitudes, offending, substance use and prevention.

As mentioned above, three regions were selected in Belgium for the local study. We began by listing up all the schools in these areas that offer the different types of education. In Belgium, education is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 18. The primary school takes 6 years and is divided in 3 cycles. From the age of 12 until 18, youngsters usually go to secondary school. In general, there are public sector schools and privately run schools (more often by the church). These privately run schools are subsidized like the public schools. Secondary school consists of different options. There is general secondary education, technical secondary education, vocational secondary education, art secondary education and special schools for children and youngsters with antisocial behaviour, personality or psychological problems.

In total, 82 schools were contacted: 12 schools in Hasselt, 60 in Brussels³ and 9 in Dinant. To increase the response rate and to counterbalance the high number of urban schools, we also contacted institutions in other rural areas besides Dinant. Unfortunately, only one additional school was willing to participate. It is clear that the number of schools was disproportionate across our 3 areas, and therefore this variable was excluded in the major part of the analysis.

In the end, 15 schools participated in the survey. Several reasons can explain this low response rate. First of all, the timing of our research was problematic. Requests to participate were distributed in the middle of the school year. However, many schools had already decided in September in which research they would participate, so our request to participate came much too late. On the other hand Belgian schools are 'over demanded', due to high amount of research in collaboration with schools. But also several institutions would not cooperate because they didn't want their pupils to be stigmatised again by classic 'results' and prejudices regarding the relation between delinquency and a certain type of (professional) education (see also Moriau & Van Praet, 2011).

The participants in our original sample were between 13 and 25 years of age. Initially, we planned to focus on youth between 14 and 17. On the basis of an *Independent samples t-test*, we concluded that in our sample, respondents aged 18 and older significantly differ from the ones under 18 in terms of self-reported delinquency. For this reason, ideally we would have deleted all respondents older than 17 from our sample. However, this sample resembles well Belgian school population. Moreover, in that case our sample size would diminish dramatically from 1172 to 900. Therefore, we decided to include 18 year old respondents in our sample, as well as 13 year olds which led to a final sample of pupils aged 13–18. Respondents who did not respond with their age ($n = 8$) were deleted. The final sample contained 1058 respondents with an average age of 15.9 and 48.1% males and 51.9% females.

2.3 Group Discussions

In addition to the school survey, young people's perspectives were also included in this research through group discussions. We opted deliberately to organize these discussions with youngsters only, since they would feel more comfortable to express their opinions and experiences in the presence of peers instead of in discussions including (adult) professionals.

A semi-structured instrument served as a guideline for the discussions. A first discussion was organised during a lunch break at a school participating in the school survey. We asked in several classes who would be willing to participate, and eventually 4 youngsters aged between 15 and 17 volunteered. The two other group discussions were held during class in a school located in the centre of Brussels. The

3 For Brussels we selected all schools in the Brussels Capital Region in order to reach as many schools as possible.

youngsters taking part were between 16 and 20 years of age. In the first discussion 10 students participated, 15 in the second one.

3 FINDINGS

3.1 Youth Offending and Deviance in Belgium

3.1.1 Results from the School Survey: 'The Kids are Alright?'

The school study revealed some interesting, yet rather classic findings on young people's criminal or deviant behaviour. The Figure 1 displays the lifetime prevalence for the different offenses. It is immediately clear that the rates for illegal downloading stand out. This can be explained by the fact that many participants are not aware or don't perceive downloading from the internet (e.g. music or movies) as illegal. Furthermore, it seems that a majority of the respondents commit rather adolescent-related offenses. Only a small group covers the more serious acts like the use of a weapon or motorbike and car theft. This confers with previous Belgian self-report research (SRDBEL, 2013).

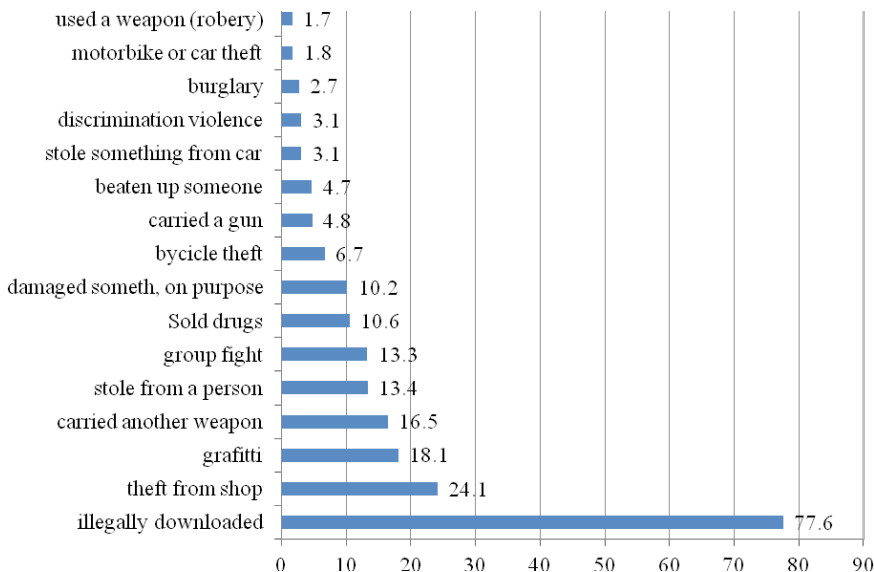


Figure 1:
Lifetime percentages of respondents who ever committed a criminal offense

Note that the offense type 'carried another weapon' is very broad described. This can vary from possessing scissors to a penknife or a chain to lock a bicycle. In the course of conducting the surveys, several students asked whether carrying a knife for art class comes under this category.

Our research pointed out that the number of participants indicating never having committed any of the given offenses in their lifetime is quasi equal to the percentage of respondents who did (Table 1). Moreover, the self-reported frequencies show a very modest/low delinquent activity on the latter. Once more, a finding that clearly corresponds with previous Belgian self-reported studies (Pauwels & Pleyzier, 2009).

Table 1:
Frequencies
offences
except illegal
downloading

Number of offences	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
0	538	50.9	50.9
1.00	218	20.6	71.5
2.00	124	11.7	83.2
3.00	54	5.1	88.3
4.00	28	2.6	90.9
5.00	38	3.6	94.5
6.00	19	1.8	96.3
7.00	11	1.0	97.4
8.00	9	.9	98.2
9.00	8	.8	99.0
10.00	1	.1	99.1
11.00	1	.1	99.1
12.00	4	.4	99.5
13.00	3	.3	99.8
14.00	1	.1	99.9
15.00	1	.1	100.0
Total	1058	100.0	

Regarding truancy, it appears that 69% of our participants never skipped classes during the last 12 months; the remaining 31% reported an average of 4 times being absent at school in the last year. It should be noted that these findings can be a result of the applied method. Self-report school surveys do not reach the so-called 'persistent truant' or 'dropout'. They are significantly absent in these samples, which is one of the basic critiques of self-report studies.

Police contact appeared to remain scarce as well, with only 11.9% of the participants. The respondents were also asked which event led to this contact and what consequences it entailed. A majority claimed that theft, vandalism or violence triggered an involvement with the police. The consequences for the majority contained a notification to the parents. This may mean that the 'unlawful' youngsters (reached by this survey) have very limited experience with legal actors or measures aimed at problematic or delinquent youth.

Finally, the rates for alcohol and drug use show that we cannot detect problematic alcohol and drug use among the students in our sample. The majority has not been drunk in the last 30 days and almost half of them (49.3%) were never drunk during their lifetime. With regards to soft drug use, similar results could be

found: 74.6% said they never used cannabis in the course of their young lives, even a majority never used it in the last 30 days.

3.1.2 Young People's Perception of Problems

The group discussions were also organised with pupils. However, the approach is qualitative. Therefore, the findings of these discussions have an important added value since more room is provided to discuss youngster's views on delinquent behaviour. The interviewer can get more in-depth information on what delinquent behaviour (and prevention) mean for youngsters.

In the discussions youngsters were asked which problems they think occur in their area. Apparently they perceive theft, alcohol and drug use as the most important juvenile problems. This observation rather contradicts the findings from the school survey, where no problematic alcohol and drug use could be detected.

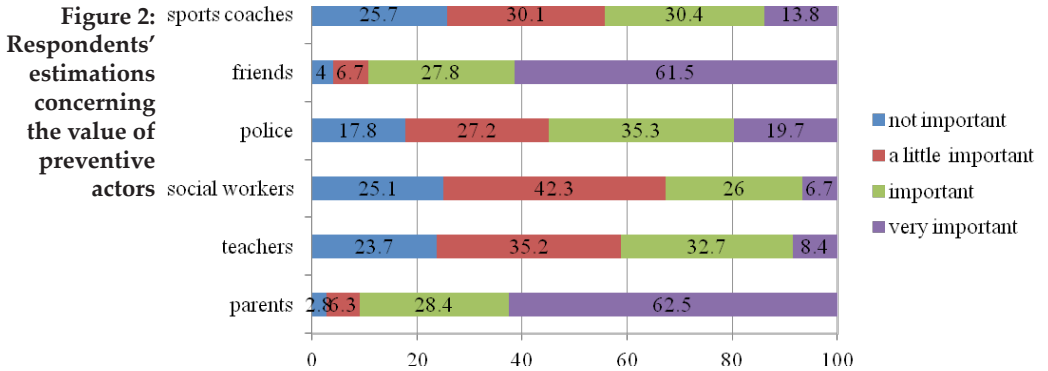
Furthermore, harassing people and hanging around in public space is viewed as highly present. Finally in each group discussion the problematic relation with police was addressed several times. Many participants stressed the negative approach of the police and the way of communication with youngsters, stop-and-search action and racist attitudes (in the urban area) that in general lead to frustrations. However the self-report study showed a very low rate of police contact (11.9%). This contradiction could be attributed to the way respondents interpreted 'police contact'. The question was formulated as follows: "**Have you ever had contact with the police because you yourself did something illegal like one of the things listed above?**" Therefore, it could be that in the survey participants only reported police contact if it was related to an offense. While during the group discussions students mainly talked about 'regular' contact with police (not restricted to the occurrence of a specific illegal act).

If we take a moment to reflect upon these results, we could ask ourselves the question whether our sample is part of the target groups of the youth prevention field in Belgium. It seems that our respondents do not commit offenses very often, show no problematic drug and alcohol use, and are rarely in contact with the police or even with other legal actors in case they did actually something wrong. It seems up until now that our respondents may not have much experience with prevention actors, institutions or measures. Therefore we will, in the following section, take a closer look at their views and experiences regarding prevention practices.

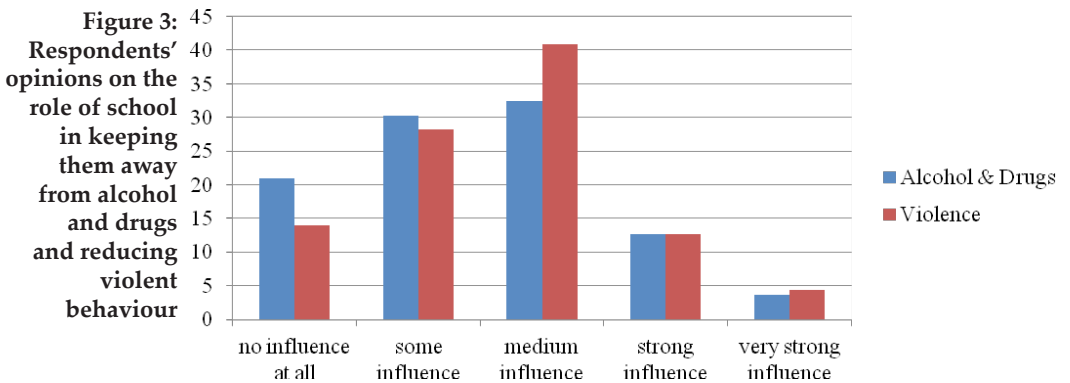
3.2 Views and Experiences with Prevention

A first interesting fact resulting from the self-report survey deals with the students' opinions on possible effective strategies in preventing youth delinquency. The survey pointed out that youngsters think that listening to their sorrows and problems is *the* most effective strategy. Secondly, the survey provided the opportunity to evaluate preventive actors. Figure 2 shows that a majority of them attach rather much value to informal actors like parents and friends. Formal actors such as social

workers are perceived as of little importance. These are precisely the formal actors in Belgium that have a central role in the field of youth crime prevention.



When we turn to the school as a preventive actor, it appears that 58.9% of the youngsters indicated teachers are not so important. The respondents were also asked to estimate the influence of school on violence and/or drug abuse (Figure 3). Apparently youngsters perceive school as not very influential, as well. However, 60% answered affirmative when questioned about information on drugs and alcohol during the last 12 months. Youngsters indicated that it was in general the school and/or a teacher offering this information. So although they do not estimate the school as very important in the prevention of drug and alcohol use, they do receive information in that context. Perhaps young people do not perceive this information as part of 'real' prevention of youth delinquency.



Finally, when we take a look at the experiences of the respondents with prevention activities aimed at reducing violence, it seems that these remain scarce for the majority. On this specific question, we faced a great deal of missing values.

While conducting the survey, many students asked for additional explanation. This could imply that they did not understand what “their experience with” meant, or that they have very limited knowledge about prevention practices in Belgium. In our analysis, we also compared the answers of students who reported at least one offense with the ones who reported none. It appeared that the ‘delinquent group’ attaches less importance to teachers, social workers and police, and more to friends. They are in general also less positive about all kinds of preventive strategies (like e.g.: good general education, training for better social behaviour, information on possible consequences, counselling for parents).

The group discussions mainly focussed on their experiences and views of prevention practices organised in their neighbourhood. This part of the discussion confirms our survey findings that a majority of our participants seem to have very little knowledge about existing prevention initiatives. Many stressed the lack of activities and available space where they can spend their time as challenges for prevention. Finally, several students mentioned an important contribution of structural factors to (youth) crime. Youngsters stressed the influence of the neighbourhood where one grows up in as well as poverty as important factors influencing youth problems.

4 CONCLUSION

Besides the classic (methodological) pitfalls of the use of self-report studies, our analysis entails some other problems as well. The survey sample was rather small and not equally divided across the different school types in Belgium, and the group discussions were only conducted in two areas. Therefore, the results discussed in this article have a merely explorative character. Therefore, from a scientific and epistemological perspective the views and perspectives of young people may have some consequences for researching youth crime prevention.

The Belgian youth crime prevention field classically aims at ‘typical’ risk groups. A lot of prevention projects focus on preventing drug and alcohol use, truancy, problematic behaviour at school, hanging around in public space and anti-social behaviour in general. Also the actors involved in the prevention of youth crime are more the classic ones like social workers, schools, police, etc.

One interesting result of our research is that our participants attach great value to informal actors in reducing or preventing youth delinquency. Furthermore, they appear not to use alcohol and drugs in a problematic way, they don’t have much contact with police or other legal actors, and have very limited experiences with and knowledge about prevention initiatives. These findings all seem to point in one direction: our sample is not part of the classical prevention target group.

Therefore, to study the prevention of youth delinquency we have to move beyond the school. Researching the prevention of youth delinquency needs to move into the field of prevention projects and activities. Hence, giving a voice to “targeted” youngsters implies also that we have to move beyond the school. ‘Clients’ or participants in prevention activities or projects should be included in

researching prevention practices; especially when focussing on the 'best' practices issue.

What entails 'best' in best practices? Scientific evaluation of practices is not common in Belgium. Usually projects need to define their objectives beforehand and afterwards prove the achieved results in order to receive future funding. Evaluation comes down to verifying if a certain activity achieved its predefined goal and result. We are dealing with practices that take place in society, where it is impossible to control all potential influencing factors or variables. When can we be absolutely sure that a certain intervention led to a change in a youngster's behaviour? The answer is simple, we can't. What we can do is study the prevention field from a whole different epistemological angle. We need to listen to young people, as they indicated it themselves. What are the experiences and views of youngsters who were actual subject of a prevention project? What are their views on 'best' practices? This could provide a whole different perspective on how to approach and react to youth crime and deviance.

Finally, more research is necessary on primary prevention. Our participants have not only limited experience with secondary and tertiary (targeted) prevention, they also have very little knowledge about general (primary) prevention. This could mean (hypothesis!) that the 'best' prevention is an approach or practice that is not labelled and therefore perceived as such.

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Adolescents as Delinquent Actors and as Targets of Preventive Measures

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Anabel Taefi, Thomas Görden, Benjamin Kraus

Purpose:

The article aims at examining the prevalence of deviance and delinquency in a sample of students, at explaining property and violent offending via risk factors and examining students' experiences with and views on preventive approaches.

Design/Methods/Approach:

Data stem from a school survey conducted among 2186 13–17 year old male and female students, who attended school in an urban or a rural northwest area of Germany. The instrument was developed on the basis of the new ISRD-3 questionnaire and included newly developed questions on students' experiences with and views on preventive actors and approaches. Descriptive as well as multivariate methods are applied.

Findings:

Deviance and delinquency were found to be widespread, but mostly of low severity. Different predictors for violent and property offending can be found. Groups of students with differential involvement in delinquency show clearly differentiated profiles with regard to risk factors. Evaluations of preventive actors and approaches are very similar across groups of students with differential delinquent involvement.

Research Limitations/Implications:

Special schools have been excluded from the sample. Generally, school surveys may fail at including high risk individuals, such as students who skip school.

Practical Implications:

Findings hint at the importance of including peers and family in preventive approaches.

Originality/Value:

Extension of a self-report study among youngsters as targets of prevention with questions on their experiences and evaluations of preventive approaches may give implications on differential receptiveness of young people for preventive approaches.

UDC: 343.91-053.6

Keywords: self-reports, deviance and delinquency, prevention, youth violence, substance abuse

Mladostniki kot prestopniki in kot ciljne skupine preventivnih ukrepov

Namen prispevka:

Namen prispevka je proučiti razširjenost deviantnosti in prestopništva v izbranem vzorcu dijakov, pojasniti kršitve na področju premoženjske kriminalitete in nasilništva v luči dejavnikov tveganja in proučiti izkušnje dijakov s preventivnimi pristopi ter njihova mnenja o slednjih.

Metode:

Podatki izvirajo iz ankete, opravljene v šolah in izvedene na vzorcu 2.186 dijakov obeh spolov, starih med 13–17 let, ki so obiskovali šolo v mestnem in podeželskem okolju severozahodne Nemčije. Instrument temelji na novem vprašalniku ISRD-3 in vključuje nova vprašanja o izkušnjah in pogledih dijakov na dejavnike preprečevanja in zadevne pristope. Uporabljene so opisne in multivariatne metode.

Ugotovitve:

Ugotovitve kažejo, da sta deviantnost in prestopništvo zelo razširjena, vendar večinoma v blagih oblikah. Napovedi glede nasilništva in premoženjske kriminalitete je mogoče utemeljiti na različnih dejavnikih. Skupine dijakov so v prestopništvo vpletene prek različnih oblik in kažejo na različne profile glede na dejavnike tveganja. Ne glede na vrsto in težo prestopkov so si vrednotenja dejavnikov preprečevanja in z njo povezanih pristopov v vseh omenjenih skupinah zelo podobna.

Omejitve/uporabnost raziskave:

Šole s posebnim programom so bile iz vzorca izključene. Ankete prav tako ne vključujejo posameznikov z visokim tveganjem, npr. dijakov, ki izostajajo od pouka.

Praktična uporabnost:

Ugotovitve kažejo na pomembnost vključitve vrstnikov in družine v preventivne pristope.

Izvirnost/pomembnost prispevka:

Obseg študije, v kateri mladi kot ciljne skupine prevencije prek samonaznanitvenih vprašalnikov odgovarjajo na vprašanja o svojih izkušnjah in oceni preventivnih pristopov, lahko opozori na nekatere vidike vzrokov za razlike glede dovzetnosti mladih za preventivne pristope.

UDK: 343.91-053.6

Ključne besede: samonaznanitev, deviantnost, prestopništvo, preprečevanje, mladoletniško nasilje, zloraba substanc

1 INTRODUCTION

In multiple ways, adolescents are specifically connected to topics of delinquency: Compared to older adults, they are highly involved in many types of delinquent behaviour, both as offenders and as victims. At the same time, they are the main target group of prevention programmes and measures. Based on juveniles' self-

reports, this study has a dual focus both on juvenile offending and on youngsters as persons addressed by prevention efforts. 2186 8th to 10th grade students¹ in German schools have been surveyed with a standardized self-report instrument between December 2011 and March 2012. This article presents data on deviance and victimization with special emphasis on students' differential involvement in delinquency. It analyses predictors of violence and property offences and focuses on connections between juvenile involvement in offending on the one hand, and young persons' experiences with prevention and their perceptions of preventive actors and approaches on the other.

2 CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH

In the last couple of decades, self-report studies (e.g. Baier, Pfeiffer, Simonson, & Rabold, 2009; Enzmann et al., 2010; Junger-Tas et al., 2010) have become an indispensable complement to police and court statistics on crime. Surveys on self-reported delinquency, mostly conducted among easily accessible populations of adolescents and young adults, have multiple strengths that are important for criminological research. First, they go beyond offences reported to law enforcement agencies and provide information on prevalence and incidence of delinquent behaviour. Second, they provide insight into relationships between reported and unreported offences. Third, they have produced substantial knowledge on risk factors and protective factors related to delinquent behaviour.

Among the findings based on self-report studies are the following:

- Rule-breaking is widespread in adolescence and is part of the process of growing up.
- The majority of all offences committed by juveniles are of low severity.
- For most adolescents, delinquent behaviour is a transient phenomenon that does not develop into criminal careers.
- A small group of juveniles commits a large proportion of all offences, and this concentration is especially strong for serious offences.
- Risk factors for persistent and serious offending are connected to socialization and family processes, neighbourhood characteristics and social structure, lifestyle and peer behaviour, but also to personal characteristics such as self-control, norms and morality.
- Serious juvenile offending is rarely an isolated phenomenon but usually connected to other types of problem behaviour such as drug and alcohol abuse, school absenteeism and other forms of deviance.
- There is a considerable overlap between victim and offender characteristics and populations.

While instruments used in self-report studies touch upon a broad range of topics – criminal behaviour, other types of deviance, family, school, leisure time activities, peers, attitudes and values, victimization, etc. – and also include contacts with police and law enforcement agencies, topics of involvement of youngsters

1 In Germany, these grades cover mainly the age group of 13–17 year old boys and girls.

in crime prevention measures and their perceptions of preventive approaches targeted at them have remained outside the focus of this strand of research.

Prevention is always “prevention as perceived” by the target group. This makes the way juveniles perceive attempts to reduce delinquent behaviour an important topic in studies on juvenile delinquency. The research presented here adds questions on prevention to an advanced type of self-report instrument. It measures juveniles’ experiences with preventive approaches on one hand, and the way they think about prevention on the other. Whom do young people consider to be influential, what kind of approaches do they regard as potentially successful, how do they judge the potential impact that school can have on substance abuse and violent behaviour? These aspects are relevant to assess the way in which prevention customers perceive and evaluate measures and actors and can be linked to differential involvement in delinquency.

3 METHODS

The survey was conducted in two neighbouring areas in the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia. The city of Muenster (290 000 inhabitants, 303 km²) was chosen as an urban area, the county of Warendorf (280 000 inhabitants, 1318 km²) as a rural region. Muenster, the administrative centre of the surrounding region, is home to a large university and multiple other institutions of higher education. More than 80% of the workforce is employed in the tertiary sector. In the county of Warendorf, the secondary sector (mainly mechanical engineering and metal processing) is equally important as the tertiary sector. The percentage of citizens who are not German nationals is slightly lower in the city (6.8%) than in the rural area (7.0%). Nonetheless, if first and second generation migrants are combined, 26.6% of Muenster’s and 19.8% of Warendorf’s population have a migration background (Ministerium für Arbeit, Integration und Soziales des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2012).

In the German school system, secondary education is stratified and leads to three divergent qualification levels (“Hauptschule”, “Realschule”, “Gymnasium”). Additionally, there are schools that teach children in stratified courses or classes under one roof (“Gesamtschule”).²

In order to gain access to the sample, approval had to be obtained at multiple levels. The first step was to provide information on the aims and structure of the survey to headmasters/headmistresses of schools, and ask for their willingness to participate in the study. In case of approval, each class teacher decided whether he or she agreed to participate. Afterwards, written consent from parents of underage students needed to be obtained. Participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous. In total, 19 out of 34 schools agreed to participate. The overall response rate of students in the classes that were participating was 65.9%. Non-response occurred due to lack of parental consent, students being absent at the time of the survey (because of illness or truancy), or students’ refusal to participate.

² Furthermore, there are schools that prepare for vocational training after grade 10 (“Fachoberschule”) as well as several types of special schools (“Foerderschule”) for children with learning disabilities or other handicaps.

The relative proportions of these different backgrounds of non-response cannot be quantified.

The survey was conducted as a paper and pencil survey in class, and the questionnaire was based on instruments used in the International Self-Reported Delinquency Study (see Enzmann et al., 2010; Junger-Tas et al., 2010, on the second wave ISRD-2, and Junger-Tas, Marshall, & Ribeaud, 2003, on the first wave). Via contacts with the ISRD Steering Committee for the third wave, the newly developed ISRD-3 instrument could be used.³ It was adapted for the specific purposes of the *YouPrev* survey, and the instrument was shortened in order to be applicable in one lesson. Additionally, a section on experiences with and attitudes towards preventive measures and preventive actors was included (http://youprev.eu/pdf/YouPrev_Instrument_SchoolSurvey_English.pdf).

4 SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Characteristic	Urban % (n)	Rural % (n)	Total % (n)
Total sample	47.2 (1.031)	52.8 (1.155)	100 (2.180)
Sex: female	46.4 (478)	48.5 (559)	47.5 (1037)
Mean age (in y.)	14.79	14.75	14.77
Students' place of residence			
Large city	69.9 (698)	1.6 (18)	33.5 (716)
Small town	16.2 (162)	56.3 (642)	37.6 (804)
Village	13.8 (138)	42.1 (480)	28.9 (618)
School type			
Gymnasium (high school)	45.9 (473)	29.0 (335)	37.0 (808)
Realschule (junior high school)	26.0 (268)	50.0 (578)	38.7 (846)
Hauptschule (lower secondary school)	28.1 (290)	21.0 (242)	24.3 (532)
Grades			
8 th	33.4 (344)	34.9 (403)	34.2 (747)
9 th	35.6 (367)	36.2 (418)	35.9 (785)
10 th	31.0 (320)	28.9 (334)	29.9 (654)
Migration background			
Migr. backgr. 1 st & 2 nd generation	31.2 (313)	20.3 (230)	25.4 (543)
Among those: language spoken at home not German	39.0 (115)	21.5 (47)	31.5 (162)

Table 1:
Sample characteristics by region, 2138 ≤ n ≤ 2186

Of the 2 186 respondents, 52.8% were attending school in the rural, and 47.2% in the urban area. Nearly half of the students were female (47.5%), mean age was

³ Special thanks to the ISRD Steering Committee and Dr. Dirk Enzmann.

14.77 years ($SD = 1.11$, $Min = 12^4$, $Max = 19$, $n = 2170$). Table 1 gives an overview on sample characteristics subdivided by the area in which the school was situated.

Most of the students who attended school in Muenster also lived there (see Table 1), while 30% lived outside of the city in smaller towns or villages. Percentages of students attending Gymnasium and Realschule differed between urban and rural area. Most of the students in Muenster (73.6%) and Warendorf (79.8%) lived with both parents (or a stepparent) and siblings (urban = 79.0%, rural = 86.2%). Over 30% of the students attending school in the city were first or second generation migrants; in the rural area this was only true for around 20% of the sample. The average age of migration to Germany among first generation migrants was six years ($SD = 5.074$, $n = 132$). As indicated above, the rate of students with a migration background approximately concurs with the overall figures for this German region.

The majority of students with a migrant background had their origins in states belonging to the former Soviet Union or Poland, another large share came from other European countries, including Turkey. Around 20% of migrant students stemmed from the Middle East, from South/South East Asia or Sub-Saharan Africa. Very few students came from North or Latin America, North Africa or Australia.

5 SELF-REPORTED DELINQUENCY

In the questionnaire, delinquency was surveyed via 16 questions relating to different types of offending and asking for students' life-time as well as twelve-month prevalence of offending. The 16 offence types relate to several forms of property and violent offences, vandalism, illegal downloading and drug-trafficking. Two of the items, carrying a firearm⁵ and carrying other weapons or weapon-like objects, relate to acts which are not in every case illegal according to German law.

Illegal downloading of music or movies is the most widespread type of offence. 47.3% of all boys and 33.2% of all girls reported at least one illegal download during the past twelve months. Life-time prevalence was 55.3% for boys and 39.0% for girls. 21.1% of all students reported illegal downloading as their only offence during the last twelve months.

The overall rate of self-reported offending is high (cf. Table 2) with a life-time prevalence of 59% and a 12-month prevalence of 51.6% for the total group of students. No significant differences of life-time and twelve-month prevalence could be found between the two regions, but rates for boys and girls differ significantly.

4 Relates to students who attended school at the age of 5 and have skipped another year.

5 In the legal case this could refer e.g. to airsoft guns (some are even legal for minors), air rifles or gas pistols, which are mainly accessible for adults.

Self-reported offending	Urban % (n)	Rural % (n)	χ^2	df	p
All offences: life-time prev.	57.5 (576)	60.3 (689)	1.72	1	.190
All offences: 12-month prev.	49.4 (437)	53.5 (548)	3.16	1	.075
Self-reported offending	Boys % (n)	Girls % (n)	χ^2	df	p
All offences: life-time prev.	67.9 (759)	49.4 (506)	76.35	1	***
All offences: 12-month prev.	60.2 (583)	42.8 (402)	57.89	1	***

Table 2: Overall rates of self-reported offending by region and sex

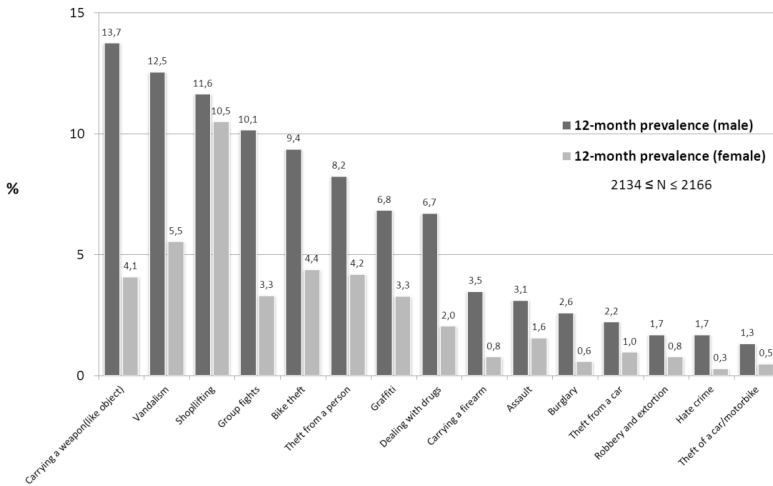


Figure 1: Twelve-month prevalence of boys' and girls' self-reported delinquency

Figure 1 gives an overview on the prevalence of offences (except illegal downloading), subdivided by students' sex. Among the offence types shown in Figure 1, the ones reported most often by students were those which supposedly are of lower severity; vandalism was reported by 9.2% of the sample for the last twelve months, among the property offences, shoplifting and bicycle theft were the most prevalent ones (11.1% vs. 7.0%), and among violent offences, participation in a group fight (6.9%) was most wide spread. The share of students who reported having committed more serious offences such as assault (2.4%) or robbery and extortion (1.3%) was comparably small. In total, 19.1% reported they had committed at least one property offence during the last year, and 8.5% stated they committed a violent offence (participation in a group fight, assault, robbery and extortion, hate crime). Apart from shoplifting where differences are not significant, all offences were committed by more boys than by girls.

The overall offence rates demonstrate the ubiquitous nature of juvenile delinquency. Spraying graffiti and other forms of vandalism, shoplifting, theft of a bicycle, carrying a weapon or weapon-like object and illegal downloading may be considered as petty offences, while burglary, theft of personal belongings, of a car or motorbike or from a car, robbery and extortion, participation in group fights, carrying a firearm, assault, hate crimes and drug-trafficking constitute a more severe category. If this distinction is applied to the number of offences reported for

the last twelve months prior to the survey, 92.3% of all reported incidents belong to the group of petty offences, while only 7.7% were characterized as serious ones.

Students were also asked whether they ever had contact with the police because they did something illegal. 19.6% of all respondents reported such police contacts at least once in their life. Boys (24.9%) experienced this significantly more often than girls (13.9%, $\chi^2 = 40.933$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$), and differences between rural and urban areas were not significant. 83.1% of those who had contact with the police because of doing something forbidden (also) had an encounter during the last twelve months prior to participating in the survey. Of the 424 students who reported a police contact, 392 of them also indicated why they had been in contact with the police (which was asked in an open question format). Table 3 presents an overview on the most frequent reasons. In nearly one third of the cases (31.4%), police contacts were linked to minor traffic offences, committed by riding the bicycle on the wrong side of the road or without a light, for example. To some extent, this may be specific for the regions where the survey was conducted. Situated in the North German Plain, bicycle use is very common in all age groups – and the police are known for frequently controlling bicycle traffic.

Table 3:
Most frequent reasons for students' last contact with police, $n = 392$

Offence	%
Minor traffic offence (bicycle)	31.4
Theft	18.6
Violent offence	11.0
Violation of youth protection regulations	6.6
Vandalism	6.4
Possession of drugs	2.8
Trespassing / breaking and entering	2.3
Shooting with airsoft guns	2.3

Theft – in many cases shoplifting – was the reason for 18.6% of the police contacts. 11% of students' last contacts with the police were linked to violent offences. Another considerable group of students were in contact with the police because of violations of youth protection statutes (6.6%). In most cases, this meant they were approached by the police because of underage drinking. Vandalism was the reason for 6.4% of the contacts with police officers, only a small amount of youngsters were caught possessing drugs (2.8%), trespassing/breaking and entering (2.3%) or shooting with airsoft guns. The 18.6% which are missing in Table 3 contain offences which were only named seldom, such as arson, harassment, cyberbullying, fare evasion or driving without a license.

6 DIFFERENTIAL INVOLVEMENT IN OFFENDING

For all further analyses, three groups with different levels of self-reported delinquency (during the last twelve months) were distinguished. Offence types

accounted for were property offences, violent offences, vandalism, drug-trafficking, carrying of weapons or weapon-like objects. Illegal downloading was excluded; consequently, students who reported illegal downloading as their only offence were classified as non-offenders. The first group consisted of frequent violent offenders (FVO, 2.8%, $n = 59$), i.e. students who reported five or more violent offences for the period of the last twelve months. The second group was composed of all other offenders (25.9%, $n = 556$); the third group were non-offenders who did not report any of the offences given in the questionnaire or indicated illegal downloading as their only offence (71.4%, $n = 1561$).

Differential involvement in delinquency may be linked to differences in exposition to risk factors. Some – mostly familial – factors, were indicators for the presence of social problems and characteristics of own deviant behaviour are displayed subdivided by offender types (cf. Table 4).

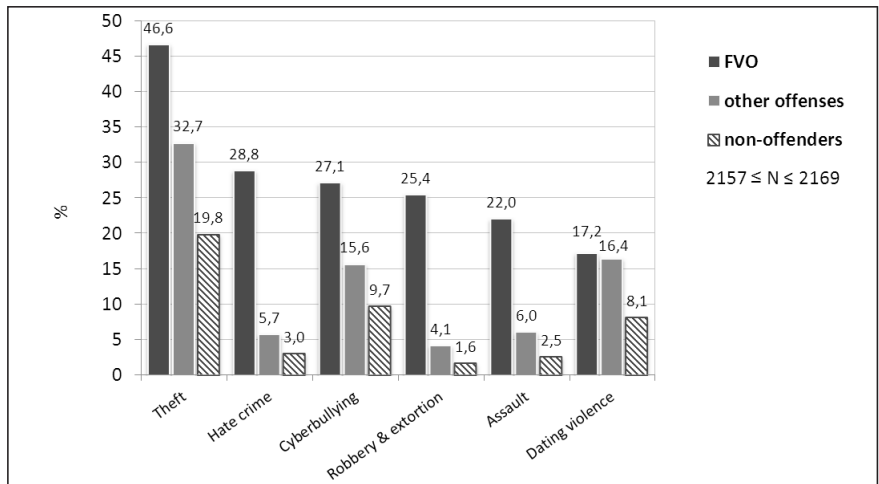
Characteristic	≥ 5 violent offences (FVO) ($n = 59$)	all offenders except FVO ($n = 566$)	no offence ($n = 1561$)
Male	74.6%	63.4%	47.7%
Age	15.2 y.	14.9 y.	14.7 y.
Attending "Hauptschule" (lower level secondary school)	57.6%	29.9%	21.1%
Mother does not live at home	23.2%	10.0%	9.3%
Father does not live at home	28.6%	23.7%	19.0%
Father has a steady job/is self-employed	80.0%	91.7%	93.4%
Migration background	44.6%	31.2%	22.6%
Language spoken at home not German	22.4%	9.4%	6.7%
Truancy (> 3 entire days during last 12 m.)	42.9%	13.5%	2.3%
> 2x heavily drunk during last 30 days	62.5%	21.4%	4.9%
Cannabis use, last 30 days	40.8%	15.6%	2.3%
Drug use (life-time prev., w/o cannabis)	61.9%	35.1%	8.8%
Deviant Peers	91.5%	86.6%	47.8%
Violent Peers	74.9%	35.0%	9.6%

Table 4: Characteristics and risk factors of offender types (last twelve months)

Offenders are more strained than non-offenders and frequent violent offenders are more strained than other offenders. Not having a mother or father around in one's everyday life may be an indicator of "broken homes"; having an unemployed father can be an indicator of a low socio-economic status. Attending the lowest school type and having a migration background should be seen as constructs that often come along with social marginalization and exclusion and disadvantaged conditions for socialization. Deviant behaviour such as excessive consumption of alcohol and drug use has a much higher prevalence among the two groups of offenders, as well as prevalence of deviant and violent peers, who are also known to be main risk factors for delinquency (see e.g. Farrington, 2008).

Since victimization and offending are closely related, especially at a young age, there should be differences found between the three groups. Figure 2 shows that victimization rates increase with the level of involvement in delinquency. For all victimization types given in the questionnaire, frequent violent offenders have the highest victimization rates. Group differences are very pronounced for violent victimization, except for dating violence, which was mainly reported by girls. Non-offenders have lower rates of victimization than the other offenders. Overall, 74.1% of FVO stated they had become a victim of one the offences during the last 12 months; so did 52.8% of the group of other offenders and 32.1% of the non-offenders.

Figure 2:
Self-reported
victimization
during the last
twelve months
by offender
types



Overall, both offending and frequent violent offending clearly appear to be linked to certain characteristics and risk factors. In the following section, predictors of offending will be examined systematically by multivariate analysis.

7 PREDICTORS OF OFFENDING

In order to determine the effects of predictors of offending, binary logistic regression models were applied. As possible risk factors for deviance, some attitudes and external characteristics have been included in the ISRD questionnaire. Five scales⁶ on personality, family and neighbourhood risk factors were included in the analyses. The self-control scale was introduced by Grasmick, Tittle, Bursik, and Arneklev (1993, shortened version) in order to test Gottfredson and Hirschi's general theory of crime (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990), and has high reliability

⁶ Parental supervision scale had five, the other scales had four answer categories.

($\alpha = .833$).⁷ The morality scale features “pro-social values” and “shaming” (Wikström & Butterworth, 2006; Wikström & Svensson, 2010) which are core aspects of Wikström’s Situational Action Theory of Crime Causation. Reliability is high with $\alpha = .778$. The adherence to violence-legitimizing norms of masculinity scale was developed by Enzmann & Wetzels (2002) on the basis of culture of honour theory (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). Reliability is high with $\alpha = .792$. Parental supervision and perception of neighbourhood (“social disorganization”) scales have been constructed by the ISRD research group. The parental supervision and control⁸ scale consists of twelve items that address parental knowledge, child disclosure, parental supervision and whether parents set a time. Reliability of the scale is high with $\alpha = .848$. Regarding social disorganization of the neighbourhood, three items were added to the ISRD-3 scale; they address perceived security of the neighbourhood, presence of police and possibilities for leisure time activities for youngsters. Reliability was high with $\alpha = .760$. Further classical risk factors have been included in the regression models.

Since the two main types of offending – property and violent offences – differ in their phenomenology and may be influenced by divergent predictors, two separate explanatory models were tested.

Table 5 gives an overview of the analysis of predictors of violent offending. The regression model on 12 months prevalence of violent offending has a very good model fit with an R^2 -value of 0.423.

Predictor	<i>p</i>	Exp(<i>B</i>)
Region	.878	.967
Sex (ref. = male)	***	.411
Age	.613	.950
Violence-legitimizing norms of masculinity	**	1.706
Morality / acceptance of norms	**	.476
Low self-control	*	1.501
Social disorganization of neighbourhood	.361	1.263
Low parental supervision	.624	1.087
Drunk (last month)	***	1.526
Cannabis (last month)	**	1.411
Deviant peers (drugs, property offences)	*	2.266
Violent peers	***	5.412
Constant	.079	.032

Table 5:
Binary logistic regression on 12-month-prevalence of violent offending, $n = 1891$, R^2 (Nagelkerke) = 0.423

The strongest predictor for violent offending is contact with violent peers (cf. Table 5). High impact of peers who are engaged in violent activities themselves

⁷ The Cronbach’s α -values were calculated on the basis of the YouPrev-dataset.

⁸ Abbreviated below as “parental supervision scale”.

may have a special meaning in this sample, as the most prevalent violent offence is participation in group fights. Being male and the frequency of getting drunk also show to be strong predictors. Adherence to violence-legitimizing norms of masculinity, morality, cannabis consumption, self-control and deviant peers are further significant predictors. In this model, offending is not predicted by attending school in an urban or rural area. Age, social disorganization of the neighbourhood and parental supervision do not have a significant impact on whether a student belongs to the group of self-reported violent offenders or not.

The model explaining self-reported property offending during the last twelve months (cf. Table 6) also has a very good model fit with $R^2 = 0.358$.

Table 6:
Binary logistic regression on 12-month-prevalence of property offending, $n = 1819$, R^2 (Nagelkerke) = 0.358

Predictor	<i>p</i>	Exp(<i>B</i>)
Region	.169	1.224
Sex (ref. = male)	.656	1.070
Age	.814	1.016
Violence-legitimizing norms of masculinity	.297	1.146
Morality / acceptance of norms	***	.282
Low self-control	.183	1.192
Social disorganization of neighbourhood	.281	1.192
Low parental supervision	**	1.497
Drunk (last month)	***	1.387
Cannabis (last month)	*	1.224
Deviant peers (drugs, property offences)	***	3.434
Violent peers	***	2.254
Constant	.392	.309

Predictors of property offences are morality, contact with violent and with deviant peers, low parental supervision, and consumption of alcohol and drugs. Compared to the model explaining violent offending, sex and adherence to violence-legitimizing norms of masculinity lose their influence. There were only minor differences between property offending of boys and girls, and the adherence to VLNM is conceptually linked to violent offending but not to property offences. Self-control, which may be especially important for violent offences that more often occur on the spur of the moment, is not a significant predictor. Property offending is strongly connected to acceptance of norms as well as to parental supervision and enforcement of norms. Alcohol and drug use, as well as belonging to a deviant and delinquent peer group, are key predictors in both models.

8 STUDENTS' VIEWS ON PREVENTIVE MEASURES AND APPROACHES

In addition to the questions adapted from ISRD, the study included a section addressing students' experiences with and views on preventive measures, especially in a school context. Students were asked what approaches would work in preventing juvenile delinquency and who is important as a preventive actor. Results are displayed in Table 7 and Table 8.

Again, the columns shows mean values of students who, based on their self-reports, were categorized as frequent violent offenders, other offenders or non-offenders.

All of the approaches given are ranked rather positively. However, while students do not completely oppose punitive approaches, they prefer those approaches which are directed at the improvement of individual problems and reduction of societal marginalization. For all items, support for preventive measures decreases with level of involvement in delinquency.

Approach	<i>M (SD):</i> ≥ 5 violent offences (52 ≤ <i>n</i> ≤ 56)	<i>M (SD): all other</i> offenders (546 ≤ <i>n</i> ≤ 554)	<i>M (SD):</i> no offence (1517 ≤ <i>n</i> ≤ 1522)
Improve their prospects to get a job.	1.87 (.912)	1.79 (.776)	1.74 (.741)
Listen to their sorrows and problems.	2.00 (.934)	1.87 (.834)	1.75 (.767)
Provide good opportunities for leisure time activities.	2.26 (.915)	1.89 (.842)	1.81 (.758)
Provide training for better social behaviour.	2.25 (.998)	2.09 (.883)	1.92 (.786)
Give them a good general education.	2.30 (.972)	2.13 (.903)	1.97 (.791)
Give information on possible consequences.	2.42 (.937)	2.17 (.921)	2.01 (.858)
Provide counselling to their parents.	2.69 (1.058)	2.40 (.974)	2.11 (.851)
Punish them severely when caught.	2.66 (1.116)	2.39 (.984)	2.13 (.876)

Table 7:
Students' perceived efficacy of preventive approaches (4-point scale from 1 = works very good to 4 = is rather harmful; items sorted by means of the total sample)

Table 8 shows that in accordance with criminological findings, students perceive their parents and friends to be the most important persons who can keep them away from doing forbidden things. While values for friends and parents given by non-offenders and the group of other offenders are rather similar, larger differences can be found regarding the estimates given by frequent violent offenders. Again, rank orders are similar across groups, but in most cases, offenders perceive the potential influence on their behaviour as smaller than non-offenders. With regard

to professionals, relatively strong influence is assigned to police; but again, both groups of offenders show lower values. The group of frequent violent offenders attributes a higher influence to sports coaches than the other two groups, while little influence is ascribed to teachers. This may be due to a general age-related opposition to this profession, students' everyday experience of teachers' limited influence on their behaviour, and the perception of teachers as being responsible for education but not for prevention of delinquency.

Table 8:
Students' views on the importance of preventive agents (4-point scale from 1 = very important to 4 = unimportant, items sorted by means in the general sample)

Agent	M (SD): ≥ 5 violent offences (46 ≤ n ≤ 53)	M (SD): all other offenders (522 ≤ n ≤ 545)	M (SD): no offence (1449 ≤ n < 1510)
Friends	1.43 (.910)	1.42 (.749)	1.35 (.669)
Parents	1.92 (1.152)	1.58 (.832)	1.42 (.689)
Police	2.80 (1.241)	2.13 (1.031)	1.96 (.910)
Social workers	2.98 (1.120)	2.62 (.944)	2.39 (.926)
Sports coaches	2.67 (1.226)	2.81 (1.047)	2.73 (.986)
Teachers	3.33 (.967)	3.06 (.932)	2.68 (.903)

When asked about the overall influence school can have on keeping students away from substance use and violent behaviour, students in general and especially offenders assign limited influence to school (cf. Table 9). Offenders and non-offenders are somewhat more positive in their views of school's potential influence on violence than on use and abuse of alcohol and drugs.

Table 9:
Students' perceptions of school's potential influence on substance use and violence (5-point scale from 1 = very strong influence to 5 = no influence at all)

Influence of school on ...	M: ≥ 5 violent offences (n = 53)	M: all other offenders (538 ≤ n ≤ 550)	M: no offence (1506 ≤ n ≤ 1508)
Substance consumption	3.68	3.70	3.25
Violent behaviour	3.32	3.38	2.93

Experiences with and Perceptions of Drug Prevention Measures

A majority of students (72%) reported having been provided with information on alcohol, drugs and other harmful substances during the last twelve months (cf. Table 10), mainly in school or by their parents. Also, some students stated they received information on the internet or from social workers.

Information on substance use provided?	% (2069 ≤ n ≤ 2096)
No	28.0
Yes, in school by a teacher	43.2
Yes, in school by another person	26.2
Yes, by parents	30.3
Yes, on the internet	19.9
Yes, in a youth centre	3.9

Table 10: Students' experiences with provision of information on substance use during the last 12 months (multiple answers possible)

Those students who were given information on substance abuse were asked for their views on the information provided and on the effects this information had on them. Table 11 gives an overview of students' evaluations of substance abuse prevention measures, subdivided by offender types.

Answer categories	≥ 5 violent offences (42 ≤ n ≤ 43)	Other offences (399 ≤ n ≤ 412)	No offence (1002 ≤ n ≤ 1028)
I learned new facts about alcohol and drugs.	53.5	54.4	65.8
I learned new facts about the health effects of alcohol and drugs.	61.9	54.0	71.6
It made me curious about some drugs.	35.7	28.2	9.1
It was nothing new to me.	54.8	50.4	35.4
I learned new facts about how to keep away from alcohol and drugs.	35.7	38.6	45.3
I learned new facts on how to help my friends staying / getting away from drugs.	52.4	37.7	38.1

Table 11: Students' views on information provided on substance use/abuse during the last twelve months (multiple answers possible), percentages of students who responded with "yes"

While most students stated they learned new facts about substances and their health effects, a considerable number also said it was nothing new to them. The overlap between both groups may be due to divergent evaluations of multiple sources of information used during the last twelve months. The most interesting results can be found focussing on the answers of both offender groups when contrasted with non-offenders. Around one fourth to one third of them indicated that the information provided made them curious about some drugs; this percentage is considerably higher than in the group of non-offenders. It could be assumed that information that made youngsters curious was less often provided by professionals and more often by friends or via internet, but this is not the case: Students who became more curious mainly received their information by

professionals and parents. Among all who reported having been more curious after the intervention, male students and those from the rural region were somewhat overrepresented and there is a very high share of persons who report having used multiple substances. Given the question formats used and the cross-sectional nature of the data, it cannot be determined whether the information on substance abuse provided to them really had stimulating effects on substance use. However, it appears that for a minority of students substance abuse prevention via provision of information (i.e. using a mainly cognitive approach) may either be ineffective or rather have detrimental effects. What makes this finding worrisome is the fact that this 15% (overall rate among all students) minority is characterized by a relatively high level of deviant behaviour both in the fields of substance use and violence.

While they show the highest share of persons with unwanted effects of receiving information, more than half of the frequent violent offenders also stated that they learned how to keep their friends away from drugs; when compared to the other two groups, this proportion is very high. Given the perceived influence students attribute to their friends, these skills may be very valuable especially for the highly strained group of frequent violent offenders who have both a high prevalence of substance use and a high ratio of deviant friends who might consume substances themselves.

Experiences with and Perceptions of Violence Prevention Measures

One quarter of all students reported they had participated in a measure aiming at the prevention of violence during the last twelve months. These measures mainly were realized in school (Table 12).

Table 12:
Students' participation in violence prevention measures during the last 12 months (multiple answers possible)

Participation in violence prevention measures	% (1886 ≤ n ≤ 2042)
Yes	25.6
No	74.4
Yes, outside of school	4.6
Yes, in school ...	21.9
Training against bullying at school	10.2
Training on how to settle conflicts without violence	18.7
Other activities	4.9

The majority of students evaluated the activities they participated in as helpful and useful (Table 13).⁹ A questionable effect seems to be that 90% of frequent violent offenders who participated in prevention measures reported that they learned how to protect themselves from attacks (see Table 13), and 78% said they learned about what to do if under attack. This suggests that violence prevention measures in the

⁹ Results have to be interpreted with consideration of the very small number of FVO who responded to the questions.

school context may be adapted by highly delinquent youths in an instrumental manner to boost their potential for defence. Given the elevated victimization rates among FVO, this group can be considered to be especially receptive for such messages and interpretations.

Most of the students agreed with the statement that the measure showed them the negative consequences of violence for themselves and others. Nearly half of the students stated they felt more secure after the measure. The frequent violent offenders may have the highest ratio of persons who agreed to the statement that their way of thinking about violence had been changed, but at the same time they have the lowest values of consent to the statement that they learned to solve problems without use of force or that they learned about the consequences of their actions.

Another unintended effect of participation in a violence prevention measure may be a risen feeling of insecurity. Large differences between the three groups can be found regarding this effect; especially the difference between non-offenders (14.3%) and frequent violent offenders (47.4%) is high. The increased feeling of insecurity of frequent violent offenders may be based on perceived better defence skills by their peers and the bigger awareness of possible punishments. Types of measures were similar across the three groups.

Answer categories	% ≥ 5 violent offences (18 ≤ n ≤ 19)	% All other offenders (134 ≤ n ≤ 138)	% no offence (364 ≤ n ≤ 375)
Helpful to protect myself from attacks by others.	89.5	59.9	70.0
Taught me how to intervene when I see violence against others.	73.7	68.8	69.0
Changed my way of thinking about violence.	57.9	44.4	42.9
Taught me how to resolve problems without violence.	55.6	65.7	74.5
Taught me what to do if somebody tries to attack me.	77.8	59.9	59.7
Provided information on where to turn to when I am under threat by others.	68.4	63.2	73.0
Made me feel more secure.	47.4	48.5	49.7
Made me feel more insecure.	47.4	20.7	14.3
Made me more aware of how violence harms people.	63.2	54.7	71.7
Made me more aware of possible punishments and other consequences.	52.6	62.7	66.5

Table 13: Students' views on effects of violence prevention measures they participated in during the last twelve months (multiple answers possible), percentages of students who responded with "yes"

Students were asked for their own ideas on how to prevent substance use and violence if they were themselves teachers. Especially with regard to the prevention of violence, bandwidth and heterogeneity of suggested measures were large. Students suggested providing information on effects of violence on the victim's side and consequences on the offenders' side, as well as providing information on alternative modes of conflict resolution. Many students also suggested encouraging talks, communication and mediation between persons involved in violent incidents. A smaller number of students stated they would clarify norms, rules, and collectively ban violence in the school context. Strengthening relevant skills and resources via training, e.g. anger control training for offenders, self-defence classes for victims or conflict mediation courses were concrete approaches named by some students. Some boys and girls indicated that in case of violence there should be strict sanctions (judicial ones as well as sanctions in the school context). Other students pleaded for involving the parents of offenders, and some pointed out that teachers should talk to students involved in violent incidents in order to understand the causes and problems underlying their behaviour and provide support. Furthermore, some students recommended improving the atmosphere in class and building trust between students and teachers, but some also suggested non-intervention, as teachers can do nothing about violent offending of students in any case. Interestingly, responses of students who have been categorized as frequent violent offenders show nearly the same variety, and their ideas on how to prevent violence coincide with the approaches non-offenders suggest. All three groups recommended providing information about the effects of violence, deterrence by clear sanctioning, communication with the conflict parties and strengthening skills for peaceful conflict resolution. As opposed to the other two groups, frequent violent offenders pointed out that possibilities for interventions are limited and teachers cannot do anything against the violence among students.

Diversity of suggested approaches to reduce substance use was somewhat smaller: The main measures suggested were to provide information on substances and the possible consequences of substance use for health and social development, to deter students via negative examples (e.g. by inviting former substance abusers to school) and to talk with substance abusing students in order to understand the underlying causes and problems and to be able to provide support. Furthermore, students suggested sanctions and drug and alcohol controls in schools if rules are broken. Again, they recommended involving the parents but also to provide leisure time and sports activities offered by the school. Some students had different ideas, and pointed out that school should refrain from prevention and intervention in this field – either because these school measures are regarded as inefficient and drug abuse prevention is not seen as teachers' business, or because students claim a right to self-harm.

9 CONCLUSIONS

Limitations of the study mainly relate to the problems all school surveys have to face: Even though they reach a large number of participants they may miss

information from students who skip school or of those whose parents did not allow their participation. Also, special schools have been excluded from the sample. Furthermore, the sample is not a nationally representative one but was recruited in two neighbouring regions in the Northwest of Germany. The similarity of urban and rural data must be interpreted with regard to proximity and similarity of the urban and the rural region and the fact that a considerable number of students regularly commute between both spaces.

Most findings from the German school survey are in accordance with what is known from other recent self-report studies: Juvenile delinquency is widespread and mostly of low severity. Overall, offences are mainly committed by youngsters, but girls are highly engaged in property offences, especially theft. There is a small group of violent offenders which feature many risk factors for persistent offending and they are accountable for the majority of all reported offences. Victimization rates of students are quite high; especially theft, cyberbullying and dating violence have often been experienced.

The *YouPrev* school survey showed that self-report studies can be extended to include young people's views of and experiences with prevention. Juveniles hold relatively elaborated concepts of preventive approaches to be initiated by school. These concepts partially mirror approaches endorsed and taken in prevention practice.

The survey results indicate significant links between offending and the way preventive measures and approaches are seen and interpreted by juveniles. On one hand, perspectives of delinquent and non-delinquent youths have much in common. They regard parents and peers as the most important prevention agents, and are not completely opposed to prevention via deterrence but they consider measures targeted at a delinquent person's individual problems and at reduction of social marginalization to have stronger beneficial effects. Offenders and non-offenders share the view that school may have more influence on violence than on students' use of legal and illegal substances.

On the other hand, skepticism towards potential preventive effects increases with involvement in delinquency. Offenders, and especially frequent violent offenders, attribute less influence to preventive measures than non-offenders do; these results are similar for all different kinds of potential measures that were given in the survey. In the same way, offenders in comparison with non-offenders attribute less importance to actors who might have preventive influence on them. Peers appear to be the most important preventive actors in the eyes of juveniles. Preventive strategies should consider that juveniles are socialized in peer groups to a large extent; approaches that aim at peer groups could be promising alternatives and supplements to preventive efforts which are mainly targeted at individual problematic youngsters.

Finally, the results point to possible differential effects of preventive efforts for groups with different levels of involvement in delinquency. While most self-reported effects of prevention measures in which youngsters have participated are in an intended direction, smaller groups of participants report unwanted or critical effects such as a heightened level of curiosity towards drugs or an increase

in knowledge on how to defend against attacks among youngsters classified as frequent violent offenders.

The study shows that surveying youngsters about their perceptions of preventive measures can provide valuable results that preventive strategies may take into account. Juveniles' answers give hints as to their accessibility for prevention, as well as on the fact that preventive measures are understood and utilized by youngsters in the light of their own experiences and needs and not necessarily in the way intended by those designing and implementing the programmes or measures.

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Youth Drug and Crime Prevention Practices in Hungary as Reflected in the Opinions of Students and Professionals

Fruzsina Albert, Olga Tóth

Purpose:

In this article, we will try to compare how different actors view/experience current prevention practices of youth delinquency in Hungary.

Design/Methods/Approach:

We use both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the views of the professionals involved in working with young people and 14–17 year old students' opinions on existing prevention programs on youth violence and delinquent behaviour and their perceived effectiveness.

Findings:

The repressive approach, although increasingly important, is not considered very effective. The educational system seems to be the best framework for prevention, but also community development should be important, as useful free-time activities and locations for such are widely missing. Central policy making efforts could be useful to introduce elements of crime prevention (in the broadest sense) in the school curricula. There is a significant difference between the opinion of students and professionals regarding the role of teachers in prevention activities. While experts consider that teachers should play an increased role in prevention in the future, young people are often quite sceptical about these actors.

Originality/Value:

A unique feature of this article is that it brings together and can reflect opinions of the actors involved in prevention.

UDC: 343.91-053.6(439)

Keywords: youth delinquency, crime prevention programs, efficiency, Hungary

Pristopi preprečevanja kriminalitete in zlorabe drog na Madžarskem skozi pogled dijakov in strokovnjakov

Namen prispevka:

V prispevku bomo skušali primerjati, kako različni akterji vidijo/izkusijo obstoječe pristope preprečevanja mladoletniške odklonskosti na Madžarskem.

Metode:

V prispevku uporabljamo kvalitativne in kvantitativne podatke, ki se nanašajo na poglede strokovnjakov, vključenih v delo z mladimi, in stališča 14–17 let starih dijakov o obstoječih programih preprečevanja mladoletniškega nasilja in delinkvence ter njihovo oceno o učinkovitosti teh programov.

Ugotovitve:

Represivni pristop, ki postaja vedno bolj pomemben, ni učinkovit. Izobraževalni sistem je očitno najboljši okvir za preprečevanje. Poleg tega bi moral biti pomemben tudi razvoj skupnosti, organizacija koristnih prostočasnih dejavnosti in zagotovitev prostorov za njihovo izvajanje, ki jih primanjkuje. Koristno bi bilo, če bi v načrtovanje politik vključili uvedbo preprečevanja kriminalitete (v najširšem pomenu) v šolski program. Obstaja veliko razhajanje med stališči dijakov in strokovnjakov glede vloge učiteljev v preventivnih aktivnostih. Strokovnjaki ocenjujejo, da bi morali v prihodnosti učitelji imeti večjo vlogo pri preprečevanju, medtem ko so mladi glede tega razmeroma skeptični.

Izvirnost/pomembnost prispevka:

Prednost prispevka je predstavitev mnenja različnih akterjev, vključenih v preprečevanje.

UDK: 343.91-053.6(439)

Ključne besede: odklonskost mladih, programi preprečevanja kriminalitete, učinkovitost, Madžarska

1 INTRODUCTION

It is a very important characteristic of the criminal policy of a country to what extent, if at all, it focuses on and allocates resources to crime prevention, or the proper solution for criminal activity is considered to be in the hands of the criminal justice system. In the EU, crime prevention is defined as: "... all measures that are intended to reduce or otherwise contribute to reducing crime and citizens' feeling of insecurity ... either through directly deterring criminal activities or through policies and interventions designed to reduce the potential for crime and the causes of crime".¹ As it is pointed out in one Commission communication, "experience shows that an unbalanced focus on repressive measures leads to ever increasing costs for the criminal justice system, growing prison populations and recidivism

¹ EUR-Lex, 2001 (See Article 1.3).

rates. If well conceived and implemented, preventive measures can, to varying degrees, contribute to a considerable reduction of crime."²

In this article, we compare how different actors view/experience current prevention practices of youth delinquency in Hungary. In doing so, we use several sources of information collected using qualitative and quantitative methods within the framework of the *YouPrev* project during 2011–2012. Quantitative information on the views of various professionals involved in working with young people is gained from the Institutional and Expert Survey, and qualitative material from the Local Interview Study.³ Students' opinions are available from the School Survey carried out on a sample of 2104 14–17 year-olds in Budapest and in Veszprém County.⁴ Some additional local data collection has been conducted on the schools themselves, by having schools complete a data sheet with relevant school level data on the background of student populations (e.g., Roma, disadvantaged, high proportion of students commuting from a number of settlements, etc.), availability of extra services (psychologist, social worker, etc.) and some school-level information of prevention activities. In Veszprém County, we also received data from the public health authority where they offered such programs prior to our data collection.

It is well-known that socio-economic background and deviant behaviour are related, and since the transition, the poverty risk of children has increased continuously. The profile of the poor in 2009 showed that almost one third was age 0–17, whereas only 5% were older than 65 years. Half of the poor were living in completely inactive or unemployed households with zero work intensity, and more than 53% lived in villages, as compared to 1/3 of the total population (Gábos & Szívós, 2010: 74). At present, the poverty rate in households with children is nearly 50% higher than the overall rate for all Hungarian households, and is nearly double the rate for households without children. The proportion of children living in jobless households is the second highest in the EU (Gábos & Szívós, 2010: 73), and labour market opportunities have also significant regional differences. The risk of poverty increased in the 1990s by geographic location. Although the settlement type (villages) and/or the settlement size (small settlements) have always been risk factors for poverty, the risk of poverty and social exclusion in rural areas

² Commission of the European Communities, 2004.

³ *The professional background of the respondents in the Institutional and Expert survey was very diverse: sociologist, lawyer, therapist, psychiatrist, teacher, psychologist, economist, criminologist, police officer, mental health specialist etc. In the Local Interview study altogether 20 semi-structured interviews were prepared based on an international interview guideline in Budapest and in Veszprém County. We applied a multi-professional sample for the mostly individual interviews, which have been supplemented with a group discussion with selected experts and a group discussion with youngsters.*

⁴ *In all participating countries in YouPrev the aim was to select a rural and urban area for study. Budapest, the selected urban area, is the capital city of Hungary, with almost 2 million inhabitants (1/5 of the whole Hungarian population). It also hosts almost all institutions with a national scope as well. Veszprém County, selected as a rural area, is one of the 19 counties of Hungary and is situated in the region of Central Transdanubia, in the more developed Western part of Hungary. It has a total population of 358807 who live in altogether 212 settlements. It has 6 cities with a population of at least 10000 people. The biggest one, Veszprém, the county capital has almost 65000 inhabitants.*

increased dramatically during the 1990s. Today, we see that long-term poverty is mostly concentrated in rural areas and in the North-Eastern regions of the country (Vukovich, 2008). Poverty in large cities is far below the average, smaller towns around the national average, while villages are much more affected by poverty than any other settlements. Thus, regions with significant rural areas and many small villages are more extensively affected by poverty. Those living in villages are among the poor with a six times higher risk in 2009 as compared to a double risk in 2007, and the smaller the settlement one lives in, the higher the risk of poverty. While only 2% of those living in the capital city of Budapest are poor, 20% of those living in villages are thus classified (Gábos & Szívós, 2010: 71).

In Hungary, we have a clear hierarchy amongst secondary schools. After finishing primary school (at the age of 14), students may choose from three types of secondary schools. In vocational schools, few general subjects are taught, the stress is on the vocational training. The dropout rate is more than 30% in these schools with several students coming from lower educated, unemployed families. Vocational secondary schools teach general and vocational subjects equally. Some of these schools offer an outstanding level of education but others are similar to vocational schools. Parents with medium levels of education send their children to these schools. The secondary grammar school is similar to the German “gymnasium”; academic performance is the highest here, and it is the typical school for the children of highly educated parents. Students in various secondary schools differ not only by their family background and academic level of teaching, but by the school climate too (Róbert, 2010; OECD, 2010). Therefore, we find significant differences between students of different schools.

In our sample, urban schools and boys are overrepresented.⁵ One fourth of respondents are 8th graders, and are primary school students. We included more 9th and 10th graders as they are learning in various secondary schools and we supposed that the type of secondary school is one of the most important factors in young people’s behaviour. The mean age of our respondents was 15.5 years ($SD = 1.06$).

2 PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF YOUTH DEVIANCE AND VIOLENCE IN HUNGARY IN GENERAL

Regarding the variety of prevention programs for our target group, the most wide-scale and systematic information is available regarding drug-prevention, mostly prepared in the framework of international co-operation. Results show that in the target group, the programmes/services show a diverse picture. When comparing the objectives of school-based programmes to other programmes, it was found that out-of-school programmes generally operate with a lower number

⁵ During the data collection stage we realized that in some schools, especially in urban vocational schools many students were not able to finish questionnaire or they did not take it seriously. We asked persons who were responsible for data collection to gather more questionnaires from these types of schools. After data cleaning (throwing out unfinished or joking questionnaires) some overrepresentation remained.

of objectives. When compared to school-based programmes, a significantly lower proportion of out-of-school programmes use the methods frequently applied during school work, such as frontal lecture or visual demonstration (Bozsonyi et al., 2010).

As to health promotion programs for this age-group more generally, which often have specific crime-prevention elements as well, several types of programs are present, often in the school system (Kulin & Darvay, 2012). However, our knowledge regarding program offerings is quite sporadic, often based on local data collection or project data, but these all indicate that both methods applied by these programs or the theories behind them vary quite widely and show significant heterogeneity and often lack precise descriptions or evaluations regarding their effectiveness (Paksi et al., 2006: 8–9).

In our research, “*small programs from small money*” is how an expert characterised a majority of existing crime prevention programs. Most actors active in the field perform state responsibilities, with crime prevention just a part of their job. A police officer respondent called the present preventive activities “*trying to put out fire*”, as there is a serious lack of resources, including human resources. Although there are police officers responsible for prevention, almost all of them have a number of other tasks as well. The fact that a number of prevention programs are realised “*from the enthusiasm*” of involved professionals, a number of programs arise. “*It is a problem that everything works on an interpersonal basis, not systematically.*” (interview with a probation officer)

Although the question regarding juvenile problem behaviours targeted by preventive measures pointed to broad categories and widespread behaviours, experts did not consider primary and universal approaches or measures targeted at strengthening protective factors as the ones emphasized. Approaches with a narrow focus on crime and those based on punishment and deterrence clearly dominate most, followed by situational and targeted approaches. Sadly, primary/universal approaches and measures targeted at strengthening protective factors are considered to be the least widespread in Hungary. Experts were in relatively strong agreement with regard to the importance of interagency cooperation and multi-professional approaches, still most experts have the impression that such cooperation is not a widespread common practice in addressing youth crime and violence.

From the experience of experts, target groups for preventive activities are mainly youth with substance abuse problems and those living in care homes/foster care, together with ethnic minority (Roma) youth. Groups who are not in the spotlight of preventive approaches are young females (18–24 years), homeless youth and witnesses. Only a small minority of experts indicated further target groups, such as victims of psycho-terror, young adults having left foster care, those under probation.

The experts also noted that sources of financing and funding in the field of prevention and control of youth crime, deviance and violence are the European Union, followed by non-profit organisations, foundations, and the Government. Private companies were regarded as least important by far.

Evaluation of prevention programs is a basic expectation. In earlier years, much criticism was formulated against the low level and the poor methodological grounding of program evaluations (Farrell, Meyer, Kung, & Sullivan, 2001; Gottfredson, 2001). Today in the USA and some European countries, frequency and level of evaluation process improved much (Taylor, Stein, Mack, Horwood, & Burden, 2008). In Hungary, we find a backlog in this activity. Almost 40% of the experts judged the status of evaluation of prevention measures in Hungary to be “extremely poor” and almost another third as “below average”. The judgment on program evaluation does not seem to be sector-specific. Answers to additional open-format questions⁶ on funding and commissioning of evaluation revealed that evaluation would be ideally very important but is still neglected too often. Some funding institutions consider evaluation as an important condition (especially in case of EU funded projects), but even the small number of experts having an opinion on the issue had doubts regarding the efficiency of evaluation as (if) it is carried out, although they think a good quality evaluation SHOULD be a prerequisite. Obviously, this must be related to the fact that no one knows of standards regarding evaluation; some consider that they are non-existent even at an EU level. Current evaluation is overwhelmingly negatively characterised as hectic, unprofessional, formal, lacking standards, and without professional monitoring. Others see it as almost impossible to carry out, especially to detect direct impact, or consider it would be disproportionately expensive to do so. Overall, experts perceive that there is no opportunity to measure effectiveness, to follow people “*they just disappear from the system*”. Most often the only way to gain some information on effectiveness is the feedback from teachers and participating young people (usually positive). However, some experts mentioned that maybe only the program implementation is bad and if so, effectiveness studies may be misleading, as the program as such might have been good.

Institutions register the number of people involved in their programs, and from this one may have a view about at least how big a circle of the target group has been reached. Of course the overlap between various programs/providers cannot be seen this way. Based on these, one can tell that there is still a significant proportion of the target group which is not at all, or only reached by very sporadic prevention activity; during the school year 2010/2011 police prevention programs in Veszprém County reached 19 settlements, 24 schools, 73 classes and approximately 1500 students. In Budapest, 360 students from 48 schools were exposed to the DADA⁷ program, and even so there are hardly any schools where the program can go on till its end. There is significant fluctuation among instructors. In 2008, the “School policeman” program was launched. “*On paper almost all schools have a policeman but*

6 The four following sub-questions of question 15 were:

- a) Who is funding and commissioning evaluation research in the field of youth crime?
- b) To what extent is evaluation a condition for project funding in crime prevention?
- c) To what extent are there standards regarding evaluation of measures in the field of youth crime?
- d) If you were asked to characterize the current status of evaluation of youth crime / youth violence measures in just one or two sentences, how would you say it?

7 The school crime prevention program of the Hungarian Police launched in 1992 on the basis of the American Dare program.

it is formal in almost all primary schools: just a telephone number ... There are not as many policemen as schools in the districts." (Interview with a police officer)

Most experts, regardless of their professional background, emphasised the need for broad-based approaches; e.g., personality development to be introduced into the compulsory school curriculum from the first years of education, development of conflict management and communication skills, preparing youngsters to parental roles (to make up for the hiatus in existing family relationships), the transformation of the school system to be less frustrating for children, the deeper involvement of parents. The school system should by all means play a key role, even in providing quality free time activities, as there are no other agents doing this (apart from NGOs, but their coverage is very uneven regionally and can reach only a fraction of the target group).

Some experts see the future in community building, through which increased community control could influence people.

"There should be several programs at a community level, activities for young people for doing sports, culture: more attention should be paid for them ..." (probation officer)

"At schools after school programs should be organised for this age group: this activity has no prestige; the state should secure and finance this." (NGO representative)

Primary care services should have enough resources to concentrate even more on early intervention, as children come into the child protection system in almost "beyond recovery" condition. In child protection institutions, professionals should acquire further training to gain presently lacking skills to help these very problematic children. In correctional facilities in the future, complex institutional networks, as opposed to prisons, would be needed, with one organisation supervising the process from the beginning to real reintegration.

3 ACTORS AND PROBLEMS TARGETED IN PREVENTION WORK

From the experts' point of view, the major categories of youths' problem behaviour targeted by preventive approaches are substance abuse, primarily drug abuse but also the abuse of alcohol or other legal substances. General acts of violence committed by juveniles as well as school-related violence only rank 3rd and 4th respectively, with significantly lower means on the scale. Problems rarely targeted in prevention are political/religious extremism, adherence to violence-legitimizing knife-crime, and dating violence. From the experts' experiences, the primary institutions and professions involved in prevention work are the police, social work, correctional facilities, probationary service, and to a lesser extent social services/welfare. Professionals from the educational and school systems were ranked very low.

Having learned the experts' opinion on existing practices, in the Hungarian version of the survey we added two additional sections to acquire information about the experts perceptions of current Hungarian youth problem behaviours and also on actors, who should be active in the field of prevention for youth delinquency. The four most important problem behaviours are identical with what is perceived to be the focus of preventive activities. However, there is no such agreement on

who IS or who SHOULD BE doing prevention for the young. Although at present, the police seem to be the primary agent among those institutions involved in prevention and control of youth deviance and violence, ideally it should be primarily the educational system (which is seen to have a minor role at present by the opinion of experts), together with the social/welfare system, which already plays a significant role in the field. This result can also be interpreted as a desired shift from repressive, controlling, punitive approaches toward a more general approach, which targets background factors of youth problem behaviour and is in line with other internationally discussed approaches which also consider that “schools have great potential as a locus for crime prevention”. They provide regular access to students throughout their developmental years, and perhaps the only consistent access to large numbers of the most crime-prone young children in the early school years; they are staffed with individuals paid to help youth develop as healthy, happy, productive citizens; and the community usually supports school efforts to socialize youth. Many of the precursors of delinquent behaviour are school-related and therefore likely to be amenable to change through school-based intervention (Gottfredson, 1997: 5.1.).

3.1 Drug and Alcohol Prevention Programs

Results of the school survey support experts’ opinions that it is drug-and alcohol prevention programs that reach most young people. 75.5% of students in Budapest and 83% of students in Veszprém County claimed to have gained some knowledge on substance use during the previous 12 months. Other nationwide surveys also indicate that schools play a primary role in drug prevention and health education more generally, which is well justified by the fact that more than half of adult drug users got into contact with drugs during their secondary school years or prior to that (Paksi et al., 2006: 6).

	urban students	rural students
primary school	88.3	82.6
vocational school	66.1	84.3
vocational secondary school	72.5	84.8
secondary grammar school	74.8	80.8
total	75.5	83

Table 1:
Ratio of urban and rural students who have received information on alcohol and drugs during the last 12 months
(*n* = 2014)

Of course it is obvious that such information could have been gained via the Internet or in youth clubs, and not with the aim of prevention. On the other hand, we may not err when we consider gaining information at least partly as an activity enhancing prevention, as 50.3% of students in the capital received such information on drugs and alcohol from his/her teachers, and 54.4% in the framework of school activity from other professionals (e.g. policeman, health specialist). This

proportion is even higher in Veszprém County, where 63.8% participated in prevention activities conducted by teachers and 67% in school but taught by other professionals. This quite significant difference may be explained by the fact that in Veszprém County, local institutions (police, local health authority, NGOs etc.) are very active as they organize many drug and alcohol prevention programs. They try to reach most students in the region regardless of school type. Based on students' opinions, the role of teachers and schools even today is a lot more significant, at least quantitatively, than what the experts suppose.

It is quite reassuring that information on drug and alcohol consumption reaches many youngsters. On the other hand, it is also very important what they learned from it. The effects of prevention programmes can be measured by the nature of information students gained from them.

Table 2:
Participant feels that he/she has learned ...

	% of respondents	significant differences from the mean value
new facts	64.4	rural vocational: 73.1
about health effects	63.7	rural vocational: 71 rural primary: 69.6
nothing new	29.5	urban students: 33.3 rural vocational: 37.5
made him/her curious about some drugs	15.2	rural vocational: 26.6
how to keep away from drug/alcohol	53.2	rural primary: 65.5
how to help friends getting away from drug/alcohol	54.4	rural vocational: 63 rural vocational secondary: 61.4

It is impressive to note that two-thirds of the participants who have received information regarding substances mentioned that they have received new information about substance use and its health effects. Especially important is the information for rural vocational school students who are the heaviest substance users in our sample. Unfortunately, only 50% of students learned how to keep away from drugs and alcohol and also the same ratio learned something about how to help friends.

In Veszprém County, not only did more students participate in prevention programs or receive information on substance use at school, but this acquired information is evaluated more positively. As compared to one-third of the respondents in Budapest, only one-fourth consider having received no new information and also about 10% more indicated having heard new things on the health effects of drugs and alcohol, their characteristic features or how to get rid of them or keep away from them. At the same time, an unintended negative side effect of prevention can be increased attention of the young on certain new substances; this phenomenon affects 15% of them, regardless of the place of data collection.

Despite the high participation rate and relatively positive evaluation, we cannot regard these programs to be effective enough, as substance use of both rural and urban students is extremely high. 60.6% of students were drunk at least once during the previous year, 42.8% the previous month, and the ratio of those 14–17 year-olds who were drunk more than three times during the previous month was 13%. The ratio of alcohol to drug consumption is especially high in vocational schools with low prestige. Substance use is a widely accepted leisure time activity and one-half of 14 year-old primary school pupils already started drinking or using some kind of drugs. Only one-third of our respondents indicated neither alcohol nor drug use of any kind. Concerning the high rate of alcohol and drug consumption in Hungary, prevention programs in this area need qualitative and quantitative strengthening too.

As mentioned above, experts consider that schools and teachers should play a more significant role than today in substance prevention activity. The question can be reversed: to what extent do students themselves consider school and teachers to be capable of keeping them away from substance use?

	no effect		low effect		high effect	
	Budapest	Veszprém County	Budapest	Veszprém County	Budapest	Veszprém County
primary school	26.6	25.5	61.1	57.1	12.3	17.4
vocational school	38.7	40.8	55.2	52.5	6.1	6.7
vocational secondary school	34.8	29.9	57.6	65	7.5	5.7
secondary grammar school	31.1	23.9	59.1	67.1	9.7	9

Table 3: How much influence can school have on keeping students away from alcohol or drugs? (%)

As opposed to the opinion of professionals, young people attribute low influence of schools in drug and alcohol prevention. One-third of urban youth and 29% of rural youth think that school has no influence at all on in keeping students away from substance use. Secondary school students and especially vocational school students in rural areas attribute low influence of schools. Previously, we presented data that alcohol consumption and drug use is the highest among them, and all of the professionals emphasised that prevention started at the earliest possible age can be more effective. This is supported by the fact that the impact of the school on substance use was evaluated highest by primary school students, at the same time the proportion of those who attribute no impact at all to school prevention is lowest among them. It seems that for the group of 16–17 year-old students and especially those who attend these low academic level and low prestige schools, it is too late for the school to keep them away from substance

use. These young people accept new information on alcohol and drugs but do not think that school could divert them from substance use.

3.2 Prevention Programs against Violence

School survey data support the opinion of professionals that prevention programs against violence affect a significantly lower proportion of students than programs against substance use. While more than 75% of students received information on drug/alcohol, only one-fourth of them participated in any kind of violence prevention. Having consulted experts, we suppose that real proportion of students who took part in these kinds of prevention programs is even lower. There are some classes where most of the respondents indicated that they participated in some violence prevention activity and we feel they were the ones who really experienced such a thing. In some other classes, only a couple of students stated that they received some kind of training against violence. However, prevention activities in schools typically target students of one class per occasion. It is unlikely that one or two students take part in it and the others do not.

Table 4:
Ratio of urban and rural students who took part in prevention programs against violence (n = 2014)

	urban students	rural students
primary school	25.1	27.6
vocational school	23.4	35.2
vocational secondary school	16.1	18.7
secondary grammar school	30	17.4
total	22.6	23.4

Collectively, students in Veszprém County participated in such programs to a somewhat higher ratio than students in Budapest, and their targeting seems more efficient as well. While in Budapest, violence prevention affects secondary grammar school students to the highest extent, although they are least involved in violent activities. In Veszprém County, such programs reach the most at risk group of vocational school students to the highest extent.

Supported by expert interviews and workshops, we think that training that targets bullying and conflict management would be a very important part of school curricula. Not only students but adults as well are also unable to solve conflict situations without violence. This kind of prevention should enjoy the highest priority in Hungarian society. At the same time, our data indicate that the most frequent violence prevention program, conflict management training, affected a mere 11% of young people (to the highest extent, 15.3% secondary grammar school students from Budapest). Only 9% participated in programs targeting school bullying, this despite the fact that the ratio of cyberbullying is significant in Hungary, with 11% of boys and 19% of girls having experienced it so far. A

significant proportion of violence prevention programs take place in the school setting, other locations play only a very minor role in organising such activities.

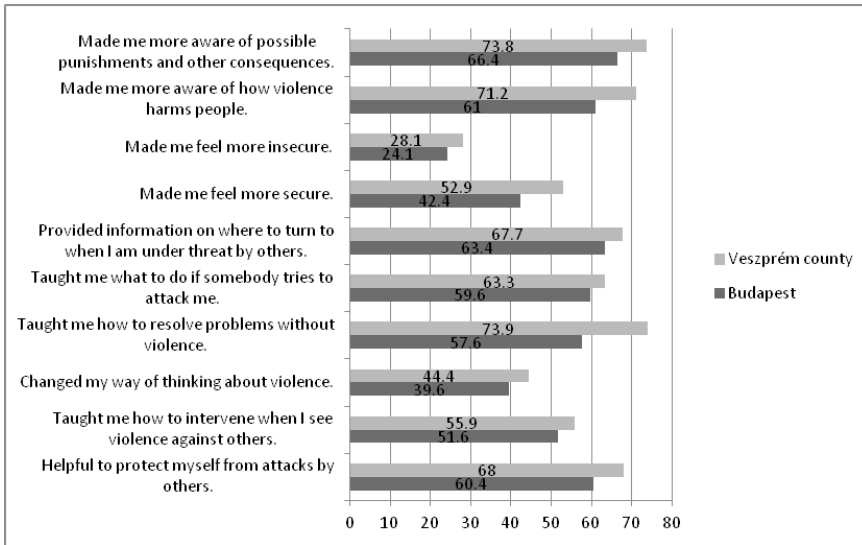


Figure 1:
What was the gained from violence prevention programs? (n = 520) (%)

Figure 1 indicates that violence prevention programs had an effect on most of those involved in them, and they learned valuable information on the various consequences of violent behaviour, and who to turn to in a given situation for help. Young people themselves consider the major positive impact of such programs to be to have acquired non-violent conflict management skills, which is also of paramount importance according to experts as well.

	no effect		low effect		high effect	
	Budapest	Veszprém County	Budapest	Veszprém County	Budapest	Veszprém County
primary school	9.5	10.5	70.2	69.4	20.2	20.2
vocational school	23	23.7	69.1	66.3	7.9	10.1
vocational secondary school	14.8	10.9	69.6	74.8	15.6	14.3
secondary grammar school	9.6	4.5	69.6	73	20.8	22.5

Table 5:
How much influence can school have on decreasing violent behaviour of students? (%)

If we compare Table 5 with the table on substance abuse prevention, one can see that school violence prevention programs are evaluated more positively by students, and that girls trust such programs more than boys. There is no difference at all between those who live in urban or in rural areas, or in Veszprém County or Budapest. Both urban and rural youth attribute a medium or slightly less than medium-level influence of schools in reducing students' violent behaviour. Primary school pupils and secondary grammar school students trust this kind of influence at the highest levels. As secondary grammar school students come from families with the highest educational level and social status, so the values of middle class families and schools point to the same direction.

3.3 Opinions on Criminal Behaviour and Prevention

Students can be divided into four characteristic groups regarding what types of crimes or other breaches of law they have committed so far. The sample distribution is presented in Table 6.

Table 6:
Distribution of respondents based on their involvement in criminal activities, life-time prevalence (n = 2014)

	Budapest	Veszprém County	Total
Committed no crime/minor offence at all.	59.2	70.8	64.7
Only committed one or minor offence (graffiti, damaged something on purpose, petty theft etc.)	20.7	14.1	17.6
Committed crime against property (e.g. stole something from a car, stole a car, broke into a flat) AND committed crime against people (caused injury, engaged in group fight, robbery etc.)	5.4	4.1	5.5
Committed crimes belonging to ALL 3 above mentioned categories (minor offence, crime against property and people)	14.7	8.7	12.2

We compared student evaluation of prevention programs with the variable we constructed based on their involvement in different types of criminal activities. Both violent behaviour and substance abuse prevention programmes had similar rates of attendance when comparing the four student groups based on criminal activities. At the same time, one can find significant differences regarding the evaluation of such programs. Violence prevention programs are considered to be ineffective by 9% of those never involved in crime or minor offences, and 26% of those involved in all three types of offences. In case of substance abuse programs, these two opposite values are 26% and 47.6%, respectively. The more serious crime students have been involved in, the more sceptic (s)he is concerning the efficiency of prevention programs.

Those involved in (a number of) crimes obtained information on drugs and alcohol from the Internet, at youth centres or from someone else to a greater extent than others, and a lot less so from teachers and other professionals at school. Those

most involved in criminal activities participated to the lowest extent in conflict management training and to the highest extent in activities against bullying at school or in programs organised outside of school.

As referred to earlier, the Hungarian judiciary system recently made a major move toward repression. Experts called attention to the fact that severe punishment has high levels of support both among policy makers and the general public. In this regard, it is notable that members of the group most involved in criminal activities (who themselves can experience the force of law on their own skins) claimed to a significantly higher extent than all other students, that punishment does not keep them away from forbidden things entirely (18.8% claimed that compared to the sample average of 9%). On the other hand, those young people most involved in criminality considered improving their prospects to get a job to be a good method to the highest extent (54% compared to the sample average of 47.8%).

The importance of family background may be indicated by the fact that while 87.1% of those having not committed any crimes attributes a major role to parents, while only 68.5% of those having committed all 3 types of offences feel that way. The highest ratio of this latter group considers the role of teachers, social workers or the police to be unimportant in keeping young people away from forbidden things. For these young people, school is not a point of reference, in their case prevention activity at school is almost ineffective.

3.4 What Can Keep Young People Away from Forbidden Things?

To find capable persons who can influence young people is the crucial point of prevention. If school has weak influences on student substance use and violent behaviour, it is an important question to ask which institutions or persons would be suitable for that in the respondents' opinion.

It is obvious that respondents think that parents and friends are the most important actors in keeping young people from forbidden things. 82.6% of students consider the role of parents to be very important, and that of friends 68%; rural students attribute even higher importance to parents. The experts also stated that the role of the family and parents is outstanding in prevention work; effective crime and drug prevention is unimaginable without the support of family and parents. Respondents attribute medium influence to police and sport coaches in keeping young people from forbidden things. This reflects the fact that information both from students and professionals indicate that currently among institutional actors, it is the police who play the most prominent role in crime prevention and prevention of substance use. Students also evaluated the role of social workers (together with teachers) in prevention. It is important to mention that they know very little about social workers, and they do not realize that trainers coming from various NGOs can be social workers. These facts draw attention to the low efficiency of both teachers' and social workers' prevention work. It seems they should find new methods and curricula to improve their activity.

Students consider that listening to young people's problems is the best way to keep them from doing forbidden things, and the availability of positive activities in which to spend their free-time is considered to be very efficient. Better future job prospects and a good general education also play an important role in prevention. It is important to mention that the efficiency of punishment was rated the lowest; young people are expecting more empathy and prospects from the adult society and not more punishment so as to avoid forbidden things. There are significant differences between students from different school types in this regard. Punishment is considered to be effective regarding both boys and girls; two times more often by vocational school than secondary grammar school students (compare: vocational school male students 40%, vocational secondary school male students 30%, secondary grammar school male students 20%, vocational school female students 34.4%, vocational secondary school female students 22%, secondary grammar school female students 14.8%). Prospects to find employment is considered to be a significantly higher factor by vocational than secondary grammar school students (boys 56.8% vs 41.8%, girls 59.1% vs 46.8%). It may have two causes: on one hand, due to the nature of their education, vocational school students are a lot closer to the time when they have to find their place in the labour market. On the other hand, as the educational level of parents and children strongly correlate, and chances to find a job differ very much depending on the level of education, unemployment must be a more frequent experience in the families of vocational school students. However, it should be highlighted that regarding the importance of listening to their problems, there is no difference in students' opinions based on school types. Yet, girls as compared to boys consider this to be very effective (10% higher) in keeping them away from forbidden things.

3.5 Another Aspect: the Comparison of the Prevention Activity of Schools and the Opinion of Students Attending Them

In the framework of the school survey, data were gathered in 29 schools in Budapest and 27 in Veszprém County. Not only students from 8–10 grades were interviewed but the headmasters of the schools were also asked to fill in a data sheet on the school outlining the major characteristics of the institution (number of students, number of disadvantaged students, number of commuting students, preventive activities at school). Altogether, 49 schools provided data with the exception of 7 schools in Budapest. In the following section, we demonstrate how targeted or ad hoc the allocation of limited resources for prevention is. It would be most important to have prevention programs in schools with the highest ratio of at risk students. In addition, we try to compare information gained from the students and from the school management on prevention.

The schools have been divided into three groups on the basis of the ratio of disadvantaged students⁸ in them.

⁸ *The legal definition of disadvantaged students/children: who are entitled to regular child protection benefit on the basis of his/her family and social situation, which the notary of the settlement*

	Budapest	Veszprém County
low (-12%)	36.4	29.6
medium (13–25%)	40.9	37
high (26+%)	22.7	33.4

Table 7:
Distribution of schools based on the ratio of disadvantaged students in them ($n = 49$)

(%)

Our data indicate that in the countryside, the ratio of schools with large numbers of disadvantaged students is significantly higher. This is in line with the trends described in the introductory section of the article.

In Budapest, prevention programs reach more schools than in the countryside; only 5 out of 22 schools had no prevention program at all during the previous year. In Veszprém County, out of 27 schools, in 11 there were no prevention programs. At the same time, as indicated previously, prevention programs seem significantly better targeted there than in Budapest. Our data indicate that mostly those schools targeted are those in which most of the disadvantaged students attend. A good example for this is the prevention programs of the Public Health Authority⁹ in Veszprém County. Based on a list provided by them, one can see that from the 27 schools in the school survey during the school year 2011/12, only ten had programs. Seven out of these 10 schools have explicitly high ratios of disadvantaged students.

Data sheets completed by school directors also support regional differences. Altogether 11 schools in Budapest and 10 in Veszprém County had drug/alcohol prevention programs. In Budapest, these programs were not focused in schools with the most disadvantaged student populations while in Veszprém County more than half of such programs targeted the schools with the most disadvantaged students.

Based on the school data sheets, four schools in Budapest had crime prevention programs (none in the disadvantaged schools) whereas in Veszprém County there were eight, of which six were very disadvantaged schools regarding student populations.

The next question can be if there is a correlation between the fact that the schoolmaster claims to have had a prevention program in the school and how many students from that school claim to have participated in such program. We are aware that in case there is a prevention program in the school, not all students are involved in it, especially as they are most often done in a class framework. Thus, it may be that even if a school had prevention programs, the students interviewed in the school survey were not necessarily the ones involved in them. At the same, we suppose that the presence of such programs in the school increases the chance that students got acquainted with the idea of prevention and the management of the school considers prevention to be important. The following table shows the extent (if any) that a prevention program took place in the given school and what

evaluates.

⁹ *Crime and substance abuse prevention is considered to be part of public health programs as well. Public Health Authorities employ district nurses (a system which works very efficiently from pregnancy to the end of school years) and a number of health educators.*

percentage of students claimed to have participated in substance abuse or violence prevention programs.

Table 8:
Availability of programs and the average number of students who participated in prevention programs (*n* = 56, the number of schools)

Student took part in	By headmaster	There was some prevention program in the school (<i>n</i> = 16)	There was not any prevention program in the school (<i>n</i> = 32)	No data (<i>n</i> = 7)
drug/alcohol prevention – Budapest		79.5	44.8	70.5
drug/alcohol prevention – Veszprém County		84.3	79	
Drug/ alcohol prevention together		82	71.4	
prevention against violence - Budapest		24.4	11.4	15.2
prevention against violence - Veszprém County		25.5	17.7	
prevention against violence together		25	16.3	

Our hypothesis is supported by the data obtained. In schools which had any kind of prevention program, a significantly higher ratio of students claimed to have participated in such programs. This may be reassuring for those who do prevention: their work is not without effect.

4 CONCLUSION

When assessing measures and approaches of prevention and control, the majority of experts agreed that intervention should occur at an early age, aim at reducing risk factors and strengthen competencies, and follow a multi-professional approach. However, at present they see a dominance of one-time or very temporary programs which are not seen as very effective for this age group. The repressive, punitive tone of some approaches and the institutional focus on deterrence is also criticised.

Experts widely agree, that

- Prevention should start with preparing children to be (good enough) parents and/or helping their parents to fulfil their parental roles.
- The major arena for (esp. primary) crime prevention for the target group should be the school system.
- The inter-sectorial, complex approach should be applied on an organized, regular basis.
- A very significant proportion of experts working in various organisations do a good part of their preventive work in their free time, from their own enthusiasm.¹⁰

¹⁰ Which, taking into consideration to low wages in the public sector, is even more depressing.

- Financing is scarce and periodic and it has a number a limitations. Very good model programs seize to exist as sustainability should be achieved via state financing which hardly ever happens. Mainly due to political changes, everything must be started all over again all the time.
- In prevention work, restorative practices including mediation should be used, which is a relatively new method in Hungary, are considered very positive.
- There should be more focused programs for 12–18 year old.

“Systematic solutions are needed. It is not enough if at school one lesson is given for prevention. School psychologists should be employed together with other experts. Both young people and their offenses are increasingly violent. Also more stress should be given to help victims.” (police officer)

There is a significant difference between the opinion of students and professionals regarding the role of teachers in prevention activities. While experts consider that teachers should play an increased role in prevention in the future, young people are quite sceptic about these actors. This may be attributable to a number of factors, perhaps the most important among these is the rigid, hierarchic structure of the Hungarian school system. But almost as importantly, it may be the lack of necessary competencies in teacher training; teachers often do prevention without them or the students being aware of it. Eötvös Lóránd University¹¹ formerly had an MA in school child protection, but it was abolished due to new reforms in teacher training. The disappearance of these special modules is a problem, as realistically there will not be social workers in all schools due to lack of funding, so it would be good if at least some teachers would have expertise in this area. Teachers seem quite interested, but they cannot finance these kinds of training for themselves, and the school management finds it unimportant or does not have enough resources to pay for this training. It is another important problem that in Hungarian schools the number of well-trained experts apart from teachers, who could help preventive activities (school psychologists, district nurses, social workers), is very low.

The current, increasingly important repressive approach is not considered very effective, although consistency and things having a consequence is thought to be important. Mediation and restorative approaches should be further stressed. The educational system seems to be the best framework for prevention, but also community development should be important, as useful free-time activities and locations for such are widely missing. Central policy making efforts could be useful to put elements of crime prevention (in the broadest sense) to be part of the school curricula, available for all children, regardless of the commitment of the directors of their schools. The professional basis of prevention should also be strengthened, both regarding the number of such available professionals and their training. Crime prevention should be an integral part of the training of a number of professionals, e.g., teachers, social workers. The involvement of the family and ways to improve the functioning of this social institution is seen as key in prevention.

¹¹ It is the major university in Hungary for training secondary school teachers.

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Self-Control and Morality in Slovenian Primary and Secondary School Sample: The Results of YouPrev Study

Eva Bertok, Gorazd Meško

Purpose:

The purpose of this paper is to test one of the main concepts of Situational Action Theory – the concept of the crime propensity on a large Slovenian sample of young people ages 13–17. Crime propensity is constructed from self-control scale and moral values scale.

Design/Methods/Approach:

The factor analysis was used to see if separate dimensions of self-control could be distinguished. A multiple regression was run to predict 16 self-reported delinquent acts from morality and self-control variables, which represented generalized crime propensity index.

Findings:

On the basis of 19 questions concerning self-control and moral values, almost one third of variance of self-reporting of 16 different delinquent acts was explained. The construct of crime propensity was proven relevant even with different methodology.

Research Limitations/Implications:

Even though YouPrev study employed a similar set of questions concerning self-control and moral values, some very crucial differences should be noted between the two studies; the most important is the inclusion of risk-taking component in the self-control scale in the YouPrev study which was not included in the PADS+ study.

Originality/Value:

The paper presents the analysis that hasn't been made yet in connection with self-reported delinquency acts in Slovenia.

UDC: 343.91-053.6(497.4)

Keywords: juvenile delinquency, morality, self-control, crime propensity, Slovenia

Samonadzor in moralnost mladih v slovenskem osnovnošolskem in srednješolskem vzorcu: ugotovitve raziskave YouPrev

Namen prispevka:

Namen prispevka je preverjanje zanesljivosti enega najbolj ključnih konceptov situacijskoakcijske teorije, in sicer koncepta nagnjenosti h kriminaliteti na vzorcu skoraj 2.000 adolescentov iz Slovenije, starih 13–17 let. Koncept nagnjenosti je sestavljen iz posameznikovega samonadzora in moralnih vrednot.

Metode:

Različne dimenzije koncepta samonadzora so bile preverjane s faktorsko analizo. Večkratna regresija je bila opravljena z odvisno spremenljivko samonaznanjenimi prestopniškimi dejanji in neodvisnimi spremenljivkami samonadzora ter moralnih vrednot.

Ugotovitve:

Skorajda tretjina variance odvisne spremenljivke prestopniških dejanj je bila pojasnjena na podlagi 19 vprašanj glede samonadzora in moralnih vrednot. Konstrukt nagnjenosti h kriminaliteti se je izkazal za relevantnega tudi pri spremenjenih vprašanjih in v drugačnem kulturnem okolju.

Omejitve/uporabnost raziskave:

Čeprav je raziskava YouPrev uporabljala podoben nabor vprašanj, ki so se dotikala samonadzora in moralnih vrednot, je treba opozoriti na nekatere bistvene razlike med raziskavama; najbolj bistvena razlika je vključitev spremenljivk, ki merijo tvegano početje v raziskavi YouPrev in odsotnost te komponente samonadzora v raziskavi PADS+.

Izvirnost/pomembnost prispevka:

Prispevek predstavlja analizo, ki v povezavi s samonaznanjenimi prestopniškimi dejanji v Sloveniji še ni bila opravljena.

UDK: 343.91-053.6(497.4)

Ključne besede: mladoletniško prestopništvo, moralnost, samonadzor, nagnjenost h kriminaliteti, Slovenija

1 THE INFLUENCE OF THE MORALITY AND SELF-CONTROL ON JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Gottfredson and Hirschi have combined classical theory with the concept of »self-control« and named it general theory of crime. They have defined self-control as the »tendency to avoid acts whose long-term costs exceed their momentary advantages (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1994: 3). Similarly to the classical authors Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) also assume that all individuals are pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain, thusly maximizing their individual well-being. By both theories, individuals have a constant motivation to deviate. Authors themselves reflect upon the idea of Bentham and other classical theorists that moral and social sanctions are more crucial than the penalties, brought by law (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990: 85).

What distinguishes general theory of crime from classical theory is that classical theory does not explain the individual differences in propensity to commit crimes; by their account, offenders are different from the nonoffenders only by the result of their calculation of the costs and benefits of their crime. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990: 87) propose that the difference is "self-control", which persist regardless of different risks. While the classical theory is more concerned with the external control of behavior (perception of the costs of crime), the focus of the general theory is internal control of behavior: "Combining the two ideas thus merely recognizes the simultaneous existence of social and individual restraints on behavior." (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990: 88)

There are many different dimensions of character in Gottfredson and Hirshi's (1990: 91) description of the concept of self-control, like attachment to others, delay of gratification etc.

Low self-control stems from ineffective parenting, characterized by »poor monitoring of children's behavior, the inability or reluctance to recognize children's deviance, and the unwillingness to punish children for their misdeeds« (DeLisi, Hochstetler, & Murphy, 2003: 242). Hay (2001: 725) found that parental monitoring and discipline were in connection with self-control and delinquency; self-control mediated a part of the relationship between parenting and delinquency. Rebellon, Straus, and Medeiros (2008) have tested this assumption across 32 national settings and came to the same conclusion (Rebellon et al., 2008: 355). Perrone, Sullivan, Pratt, & Margaryan (2004) found that parental efficacy (mother's attachment to her child, her effectiveness in recognizing problematic behavior and responding to this behavior) was "a major precondition for self-control in youngsters" (Perrone et al., 2004: 306).

High self-control is connected to persistency, diligence in individuals; those, who have low self-control cannot tolerate frustration and want to attain thing in an effortless way. They do not have the cognitive or academic skills¹ and seek thrills and adventures, whereas people with high self-control tend to be cautious and cognitive. According to authors: "people who lack self-control will tend to be impulsive, insensitive, physical (as opposed to mental), risk taking, short sighted, and nonverbal, and they will tend therefore to engage in criminal and analogous acts" (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990: 90–91), and on the other side of the scale "people with high self-control are less likely under all circumstances throughout life to commit crime" (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990: 118). People who lack self-control are not concerned with the needs of others and are indifferent to the harm they might create with their actions (Sorenson & Brownfield, 1995: 24).

To sum the characteristics of people with low self-control: they tend to be impulsive, insensitive, short sighted, risk takers who are unable to resist the opportunity to offend. As a result, they are likely to choose the immediate gains of crime even through the long-term consequences are greater.

This characteristic is not just limited to the adolescence: "crime as a consequence of relatively stable characteristics of people and the predictable solutions and opportunities they experience ... it may therefore be adequately tested at any point

1 Or as DeLisi et al. (2003: 242) put it: "fail to see the long-term benefits of investing in social institutions".

in the life course" (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990: 249). This also means that "life events, including those of marriage, peers, employment, and the like, should exert little influence on criminal activity once self-control is taken into consideration" (Piquero & Bouffard, 2007: 2). This assumption was generally confirmed by Arneklev, Elis, & Medlicott (2006), with the exception of marriage, which was associated with a significantly lower involvement in crime.

The general theory of crime, also known as self-control theory (Grasmick, Tittle, Bursik, & Arneklev, 1993), has been tested extensively and has received strong support as one of the most significant correlates of juvenile delinquency (DeLisi et al., 2003; DeLisi & Vaughn, 2008; Rebellon et al., 2008; Winfree, Taylor, He, & Esbensen, 2006) and also victimization (Pauwels & Svensson, 2011). The theory was tested in different cultural settings (Lu, Yu, Ren, & Haen Marshall, 2013; Rebellon et al., 2008), races (Cheung & Cheung, 2008; Vazsonyi & Crosswhite, 2004), including various offences, even binge drinking, marijuana use and prescription drug misuse (Ford & Blumenstein, 2013), cyberdeviance (Holt, Bossler, & May, 2012) and with a criminal sample (Longshore, Turner, & Stein, 1996). A meta-analysis of the theory, done by Pratt and Cullen (2000), has shown that a lack of self-control was in all cases significantly (and positively) connected to criminal activity, even if the measures were different.² What it also showed was the fact that self-control wasn't always the only (or the strongest) predictor of criminal activity.

Grasmick et al.'s (1993) measure continues to be the most commonly used, but is not the only one in use; Burton, Evans, Cullen, Olivares, and Dunaway (1999), for instance, devised a 12-item scale which measured impulsivity, temper, physicality, and risk-taking.³ Sorenson and Brownfield (1995: 26–27) have used in their study measures of parental attachment, academic effort and school performance, all of which had a significant correlation with drug use in adolescents. Attachment to teachers, evaluation of academics, time spent on homework and educational expectations proved statistically insignificant in their effects on drug use (Sorenson & Brownfield, 1995: 31).

Authors have contested some of the assumptions of the theory; Winfree et al. (2006) and DeLisi and Vaughn (2008) have proved – even though Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) were very vocal critics of the theories that dealt with "career criminals" saying that the majority of crimes are committed in adolescence or young adulthood, hence the studies in criminal careers are of no use – that there was a statistically significant difference in self-control between young people that have been marked as career criminals and nonhabitual offenders. Also, findings of DeLisi et al. (2003: 256), Winfree et al. (2006: 278) and McKee (2012: 373) have shown that self-control is not a stable propensity and it might not even be unidimensional.⁴ Arneklev, Grasmick, and Bursik (1999) wrote on the subject of unidimensionality

2 Marcus (2004) in his article on "theoretical implications of a measurement problem" writes that every comparison that was made is essentially wrong, because all of them use the operationalization that doesn't encapsule the original theory behind it.

3 Perhaps the most important reason, why Grasmick et al.'s (1993) measure is so widely used is the high reliability in different replications, while Burton et al.'s (1999) measure had relatively low ($\alpha = 0.64$) reliability.

4 It should be stated that all abovementioned studies have used the operationalization of self-control by Grasmick et al. (1993). Items are the same as in YouPrev study.

of the concept, that "the six dimensions discussed in Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory do seem to coalesce into a final latent global trait" (Arneklev et al., 1999: 327), but at the same time comment that "impulsivity seems to be more important central dimension of low self-control, relative to the other components" (Arneklev et al., 1999: 327).

In his later reassessment of the approaches to measure the concept of self-control, Hirschi expressed that the measures that used their list of elements of self-control »were mistakes and that they have 'muddied the waters'« (Piquero & Bouffard, 2007: 3), mainly because they have operated on the assumption that offenders and nonoffenders have different personality traits; offenders are impulsive, selfish, risk takers, and nonoffenders aren't. This is in direct conflict with the original theory, which is based on the assumption that potential offenders act upon a consideration, and those factors influence that consideration in a manner that presents a crime in more appealing way that it does to a nonoffender (Piquero & Bouffard, 2007: 4).

2 SITUATIONAL ACTION THEORY (SAT) AND THE CONCEPT OF CRIME PROPENSITY

SAT explains crime involvement of young people with a concept of propensity, which they define as "their tendency to see, and if so, to choose to break a rule of conduct (stated in law)" (Wikström, Oberwittler, Treiber, & Hardie, 2012: 132). Their propensity is a "consequence of morality and ability to exercise self-control" (Wikström et al., 2012: 15).

Morality is defined as person's moral rules and to this moral rules attached moral emotions. These moral rules are not just general, but also specific, pertaining to an exact situation (*action relevant moral rules*), which are more important as motivators when assessing propensity to participate in individual delinquent activities.

Second component of crime propensity is the ability to exercise self-control, which is important in situations, where there are external encouragements to break a moral rule. This ability depends on a set of factors, most importantly on person's executive capabilities (Wikström & Treiber, 2007), but also on factors such as alcohol drinking, using drugs, stress or emotive state.

SAT does not, however, propose direct influence of crime propensity on delinquent behavior, but focuses also on how much time do young people spend in the environment, that is conducive to delinquent behavior – *criminogenic exposure* (Wikström, 2010). The acts of crime are thusly "an outcome of a perception-choice process initiated and guided by exposure". Propensity and exposure influence individual's perception of action alternatives, which after a perception-choice process results in an act of crime.

Crime propensity and exposure are the causal factors, that start the causal process which in turn engage people to participate in acts of crime.

SAT comes close to the new definition of self-control theory, proposed by Hirschi – it is based on an assumption that offender and nonoffender are not that

different and that factors, such as self-control influence the perception of a specific activity as appropriate or less appropriate. SAT, in the same way as the original self-control theory, views delinquency as an outcome of a dynamic process, rather than a state of someone's personality traits.

3 MEASURES

Self-control in the *YouPrev* study was captured using three core elements of Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) theory (impulsivity, risk-seeking, and self-centeredness) borrowed from the original Grasmick et al. (1993) scale. Self-control in the PADS+ study was captured also using three core elements of Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) theory (impulsivity, risk-seeking, and temper) borrowed from the original Grasmick et al. (1993) scale, but with certain new elements, added by authors (Wikström et al., 2012: 136).

YouPrev self-control scale was formed in a way so that first three questions tap into impulsivity, next three into risk-seeking and last three into self-centeredness. In PADS+ self-control scale, questions 1, 2 and 7 are measuring impulsivity, 3 and 4 measure risk-seeking and 5, 6 and 8 deal with temper component of self-control.

Responses to each question capturing low self-control ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). These responses were reverse coded for consistency so that higher scores indicated lower levels of self-control. PADS+ used the same principle, coding the answers from 0 (strongly disagree) to 3 (strongly agree).

The scores for the 9 items were summed, creating a measure ranging from 9 to 36 (mean = 21.12; standard deviation = 5.06). Higher scores on the scale indicate less self-control; a positive correlation was thus expected between this measure and the dependent variables. Cronbach's alpha for the index was 0.87, indicating good reliability. Similar to previous research, principle components analysis indicated six factors with eigenvalues over one. The scree discontinuity test, however, revealed a one-factor solution with the largest drop between the first and second factors.

The morality scale also differed from the one used in PADS+; it omitted three questions concerning morality of substance abuse and small offences (namely, skateboarding in a place where it isn't allowed and riding a bike through a red light). The responses ranged from 1 (very wrong) to 4 (not at all wrong). The scores of the 10 items were summed, creating a measure ranging from 10 to 40 (mean 16.13; standard deviation = 4.25).

In *YouPrev* study, we have included multiple types of delinquency (i.e. minor delinquency, violent delinquency, drug selling, and drug / alcohol use). There were 16 dichotomous questions asking whether or not the respondent had ever done the delinquent act (0 = no, 1 = yes). A Delinquency index was created from all 16 questions (Cronbach's $\alpha = .70$). Respondents were asked if they had ever done the said delinquent act. Due to an expected positive skew, the delinquency scale was logged (ln).

4 RESULTS

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on 9 low self-control questions using principal component analysis with Varimax rotation. The EFA found that all 9 questions from the 3 constructs of self-control loaded onto 3 factors explaining nearly 64% of the variance (Eigenvalues > 1.0). These three scales were then combined to create a global measure of self-control. See Table 1 for all appropriate factor loadings and α reliabilities.

Table 1:
Exploratory factor analysis factor loadings and communalities based on principal components analysis with Varimax rotation for 9 self-control items

Question/ Scale	Component		
	Risk-seeking ($\alpha = 0.83$)	Self-centeredness ($\alpha = 0.72$)	Impulsivity ($\alpha = 0.48$)
1. Participant acts on the spur of the moment without stopping to think			.583
2. Participant is doing what gives him / her pleasure			.619
3. Participant is more concerned with what happens to him / her in the short run than in the long run			.797
4. Participant likes to test himself / herself every now and then by doing something a little risky	.816		
5. Participant will sometimes take a risk just for the fun of it	.854		
6. Participant thinks that excitement and adventure are more important to him / her than security	.805		
7. Participant tries to look out for himself / herself first, even if it means making things difficult for other people		.829	
8. Participant thinks that if things he / she does upset people, it's their problem not participants'		.737	
9. Participant will try to get the things he / she wants even when he / she knows it's causing problems for other people		.740	
Eigenvalues < 0.5 suppressed			

Table 2 shows which items were included in our self-control scale, which was recoded, so the higher values meant that participant agreed more with a statement, thus showing poorer self-control (1 – strongly disagree, 4 – strongly agree).

	13	14	15	16	17
Participant acts on the spur of the moment without stopping to think.	2.60	2.65	2.72	2.74	3.04
		0.05	0.07	0.02	0.30
Participant is doing what gives him / her pleasure.	2.45	2.61	2.73	2.91	2.74
		0.16	0.08	0.18	-0.17
Participant is more concerned with what happens to him / her in the short run than in the long run.	2.91	2.92	2.98	2.99	2.78
		0.01	0.06	0.01	-0.21
Participant likes to test himself / herself every now and then by doing something a little risky.	1.90	2.15	2.25	2.51	2.48
		0.25	0.10	0.26	-0.03
Participant will sometimes take a risk just for the fun of it.	2.00	2.22	2.30	2.59	2.43
		0.22	0.08	0.29	-0.16
Participant thinks that excitement and adventure are more important to him / her than security.	2.05	2.17	2.22	2.40	2.17
		0.12	0.05	0.18	-0.23
Participant tries to look out for himself / herself first, even if it means making things difficult for other people.	1.94	1.99	2.06	2.06	2.26
		0.05	0.07	0.00	0.20
Participant thinks that if things he / she does upset people, it's their problem not participants'.	2.14	2.21	2.25	2.46	2.30
		0.07	0.04	0.21	-0.16
Participant will try to get the things he / she wants even when he / she knows it's causing problems for other people.	1.84	1.86	1.94	2.14	2.09
		0.02	0.08	0.20	-0.05
Ability to exercise self-control scale	19.77	20.79	21.43	22.74	22.30
		1.02	0.64	1.31	-0.44
Alpha	0.76	0.77	0.79	0.81	0.80

^a1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Agree, 4 – Strongly agree

Table 2: Mean scores for the ability to exercise self-control scale and individual items by age, with change in scores at the different age groups

The self-control scale is a limited version of the self-control scale presented by Grasmick et al. (1993) and differs from the self-control scale, used in PADS+ in one factor – self-centeredness (PADS+ used temper factor instead).

Remarkably, the results of age means in comparison were very similar to the results of PADS+, showing quite stable self-control scores across ages. There was a tendency (also seen in PADS+) for participants to express willingness to participate in risky activities more with age.

Table 3 shows the morality scale's mean scores and stability over different ages of participants. Our »morality« scale was different from the one, used in PADS+, since it had mostly serious moral infractions and had no substance use moral infractions, which influenced the results and made the comparison more difficult.

Most serious moral infractions according to the answers given were considered "to humiliate, hit or threaten one's girlfriend / boyfriend", "to use a weapon or force to get money or things from other people" and "to break into building to steal something". Those three actions were considered very wrong by majority of respondents, and opinion about those acts changed only to a small degree with older participants, with an exception of 17-years old, who on average expressed a little bit more favorable opinion (still the average for 17-years old is in between the

answers "very wrong" and "wrong"). Same pattern was observed with answers to how wrong it is "to humiliate, hit or threaten someone at school just for fun", "to hit someone with the idea of hurting that person" and "to purposely damage or destroy property that does not belong to him / her" with a little bit higher averages in general (participants considered those act as less wrong as the first three we mentioned). Answers to the statement "to knowingly insult someone because of his / her religion etc." were on average at the age 13 similar to the answers to the statements above, but older participants in general still thought that this is very wrongful thing to do; at the age 17, participants considered this act to be the most wrongful act on the list besides "to humiliate, hit or threaten one's girlfriend / boyfriend".

Table 3:
Mean scores
for the morality
scale and
individual
items by age,
with change
in scores at the
different age
groups

	13	14	15	16	17
How wrong does participant thinks it is to lie, disobey or talk back to adults	2.07	2.00	2.14	2.19	1.96
		-0.07	0.07	0.12	-0.11
... to knowingly insult someone because of his / her religion etc.	1.34	1.36	1.32	1.41	1.50
		0.02	-0.02	0.07	0.16
... to purposely damage or destroy property that does not belong to him / her	1.38	1.45	1.41	1.47	1.87
		0.07	0.03	0.09	0.49
... to illegally download films or music from the internet	2.96	3.04	3.29	3.38	3.09
		0.08	0.33	0.42	0.13
... to steal something small like a chocolate bar from a shop	1.90	1.88	2.03	2.10	2.25
		-0.02	0.13	0.20	0.35
... to break into a building to steal something	1.19	1.20	1.25	1.35	1.71
		0.01	0.06	0.16	0.51
... to hit someone with the idea of hurting that person	1.28	1.31	1.35	1.48	1.79
		0.03	0.07	0.20	0.51
... to use a weapon or force to get money or things from other people	1.14	1.12	1.16	1.24	1.63
		-0.02	0.02	0.10	0.49
... to humiliate, hit or threaten someone at school just for fun	1.27	1.27	1.25	1.37	1.71
		0.00	-0.02	0.10	0.44
... to humiliate, hit or threaten one's girlfriend / boyfriend	1.11	1.13	1.15	1.22	1.50
		0.02	0.04	0.11	0.39
MORALITY SCALE	15.64	15.76	16.35	17.21	19.01
		0.12	0.71	1.57	3.37
Alpha	0.84	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.93
*1 – very wrong, 2 – wrong, 3 – a little wrong, 4 – not at all wrong					

At the age of 13, participants on average thought that it is wrong to steal something small like a chocolate from a shop and to disobey, lie and talk back to adults; both acts were considered less wrongful by the older participants. As expected, statement "to illegally download films or music from the internet" had the highest average among the acts in the morality scale; on average, participants

felt it was only little wrong to download; their opinion didn't differ that much between age groups.

The generalized crime propensity index was calculated from measures of self-control and morality to reflect key variation among young people in their crime propensity according to their age. Variables in both scales were added, then standardized, and the z-scores for self-control and morality scales were finally added together, forming new composite measure of crime propensity.

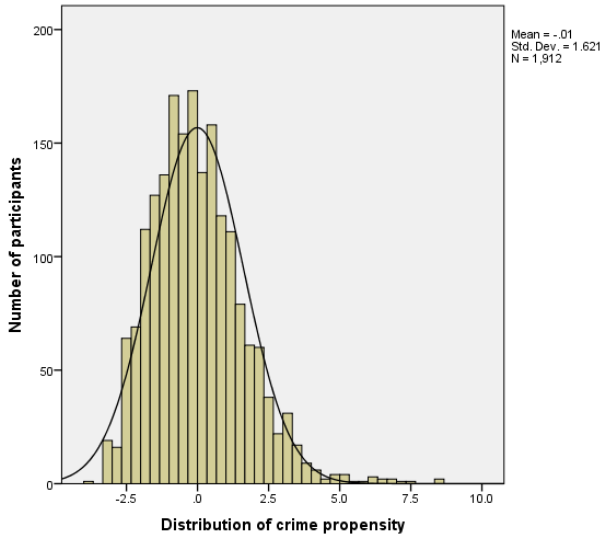


Figure 1:
Distribution
of crime
propensity in
the Slovenian
sample

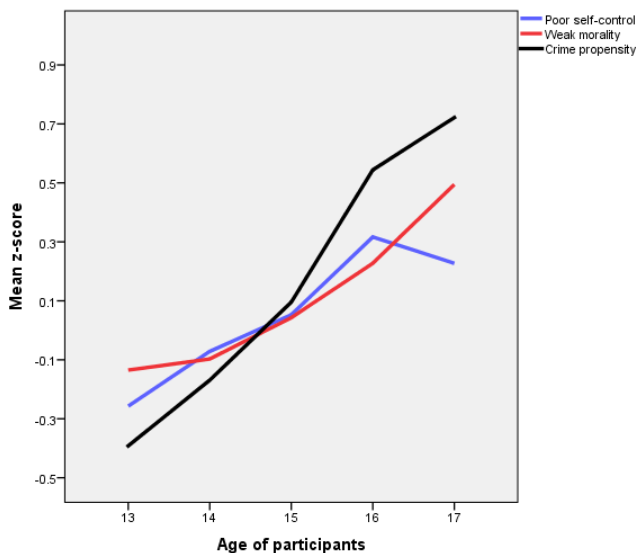


Figure 2:
Poor ability
to exercise
self-control,
weak morality
and crime
propensity by
age

Crime propensity in the Slovenian sample was normally distributed (Figure 1). Even though the self-reported ability to exercise self-control showed decline after the age of 16 (meaning that the older respondents showed better self-control), the crime propensity continued to rise with age, as shown in Figure 2.

A multiple regression was run to predict self-reported delinquent acts from morality and self-control variables, which represented generalized crime propensity index. The decision to employ multiple regression with all the variables, instead of linear regression with the composite measure was taken to see which of those variables contributes statistically significantly to the regression model. The assumptions of linearity, independence of errors, homoscedasticity, unusual points and normality of residuals were met. These variables significantly predicted self-reported delinquent acts, $F(19.1889) = 0.061$, $p < 0.0005$, $R^2 = 0.301$. Variables, that added statistically significantly to the prediction are presented in the Table 4 below.

Table 4:
Summary of multiple regression analysis

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE_β</i>	<i>β</i>
How wrong does participant thinks it is to lie, disobey or talk back to adults	0.020	0.008	0.056
How wrong does participant thinks it is to illegally download films or music from the internet	0.069	0.006	0.234
How wrong does participant thinks it is to steal something small like a chocolate bar from a shop	0.051	0.008	0.146
How wrong does participant thinks it is to use a weapon or force to get money or things from other people	0.043	0.019	0.070
Participant is doing what gives him / her pleasure	0.021	0.007	0.065
Participant likes to test himself / herself every now and then by doing something a little risky	0.024	0.008	0.084
Participant will sometimes take a risk just for the fun of it	0.028	0.008	0.096
Participant thinks that excitement and adventure are more important to him / her than security	0.019	0.008	0.064
* $p < 0.05$; <i>B</i> = unstandardized regression coefficient; <i>SE_β</i> = Standard error of the coefficient; <i>β</i> = standardized coefficient			

5 DISCUSSION

In this paper the SAT theory and the results of longitudinal study PADS+ were tested using similar measures in the *YouPrev* study. The point of interest was the measure of crime propensity; high crime propensity was defined as a composite of low self-control and weak moral values.

Both self-control measures used the core elements of Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory (1990); two of them (impulsivity and risk-seeking) were common for both studies, whilst PADS+ study employed temper (and added some new elements, added by authors) and *YouPrev* employed self-centeredness.

Morality scales, although tapping into the same general area, used somewhat different wordings; the morality scale, used in *YouPrev* study omitted three questions

concerning morality of substance abuse and small offences (namely, skateboarding in a place where it isn't allowed and riding a bike through a red light).

The results show that crime propensity measure can explain 30% of variance of the dependent variable, which was all the self-reported delinquency in the previous year. This means that the crime propensity explained almost a third of variance with such a diverse list of acts, such as shoplifting, burglary, vandalism, and even illegal downloading over the internet. The variables, that had the most influence on the dependent variable were the moral values about lying/disobeying adults, downloading from the internet, stealing something small from a shop and using a weapon or force to extort things from others; self-control variables were seeking pleasure, and all the three variables that measured taking risks.

Statistical significance of the risk-taking component of the self-control measure is not coincidental, as McKee (2012: 373) noted in the results of his study that "It appears, then, that children in this study from intact homes had higher levels of risk-seeking, which was predictive of delinquency. [...] The distinct differences in risk-seeking is similar to past research that has also found subcomponents of the self-control scale to vary from each other and from the combined unidimensional measure." (Arneklev et al., 1999; Winfree et al., 2006) Author concludes that some of the components of self-control relate to delinquency, and other don't.

The research field of criminology is still divided concerning how to measure low self-control; some researchers like Hirschi & Gottfredson (1994) prefer using behavioral, others like Piquero & Bouffard (2007), Arneklev et al. (2006) like to use attitudinal measures. Pratt & Cullen (2000) have in their comprehensive meta-analysis of the theory showed that both measures have similar effect.

Piquero and Bouffard (2007: 15–16) have used the redefined theory, as proposed by Hirschi in 2004, and created a measure, based on scenarios and participants' evaluation of sailence of difference deterrence factors or "costs". They have used a measure, similar to the one we used in *YouPrev* study and found out, that both had significant and positive effect on drunk-driving and sexual coercion intentions. But when the authors controlled for newly defined Hirschi self-control measure, it retained its significant effect in both hypothetical situations, while previously used instrument proved insignificant. This means that self-control research in the future should also include situationally based measures.

A very controversial question is also whether the self-control variables can help explain the variance in delinquent acts with older population; Burton et al. (1999: 51) concluded that lower levels of self-control meant the person was more likely to engage in criminal acts or imprudent behaviors, but only in age groups 18–30 years and 31–50 years; low self-control had no significant effect on crime over the age of 50, which contradicts Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) predictions about the wide applicability of the theory across all age groups.

Connection between cyberdeviance and low self-control has been noted before with Holt et al. (2012: 389), which on the results of their study concluded that the low self-control was positively correlated with the commission of cyberdeviance.

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Juvenile Violence Prevention: The Gap between Ideals and Practices

María José Bernuz Beneitez, Daniel Jiménez Franco

Purpose:

When speaking about juvenile violence and delinquency, most experts believe that the best solution is the development of preventive programs and, specifically, primary and early intervention through more comprehensive social policies.

The purpose of this article is to present some Spanish findings of a European research on prevention of the juvenile delinquency, *YouPrev*. Mainly the gap between the ideal of the prevention as a means to avoid troubles and the little ideas to implement these ideals. At the same time it shows the main reasons why Spain has not got a real policy prevention of juvenile delinquency.

Design/Methods/Approach:

This work compares some of the theoretical key factors in the prevention of juvenile delinquency by using a sample of experts and soliciting their views in all areas of intervention with juvenile delinquents: formal and non-formal education, juvenile justice, police, child protection, health, etc., within the framework of the European project *YouPrev*. Two workshops (of 14 or 15 participants) and 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted in which, among others, the subject of the prevention of juvenile delinquency was addressed, both from an analytical and a purposive point of view.

Findings:

In both interviews and discussion groups, experts in juvenile violence demonstrate clearly that their proposals do not manage to go beyond the idealistic level. They find structural obstacles to the improvement of the effects of preventive interventions on young people. This is the case for all the experts both in coordination and networking and even in the evaluation of programs with no clear goals.

Research Limitations/Implications:

The research results have implications for policy making in the fields of juvenile delinquency prevention.

Practical Implications:

The article is also useful for social and judicial operators dealing with the young people in different areas (health, education, justice).

Originality/Value:

The research presented in this article is showing the main obstacles to a effective prevention policy of juvenile crime and violence.

UDC: 343.91-053.6

Keywords: violence, juvenile delinquency, prevention, implementation, children's rights

Preprečevanje mladoletniškega nasilja: razkorak med ideali in praksami

Namen prispevka:

Ko govorimo o mladoletniškem nasilju in prestopništvu, večina strokovnjakov meni, da je najboljša rešitev razvoj preventivnih programov ter predvsem primarno in zgodnje posredovanje preko obsežnejših socialnih politik.

Namen članka je predstaviti nekatere španske izsledke evropske raziskave o preprečevanju mladoletniškega prestopništva, tj. *YouPrev*. Obstaja razkorak med idealom o preventivi kot metodi za izogibanje težavam in pomanjkanjem idej za implementacijo teh idealov. Hkrati se pokažejo tudi glavni razlogi, zakaj Španija nima prave politike preprečevanja mladoletniškega prestopništva.

Metode:

V članku je predstavljena primerjava nekaterih ključnih teoretičnih dejavnikov pri preprečevanju mladoletniškega prestopništva na vzorcu strokovnjakov in zbiranjem njihovih stališč o vseh področjih ukrepanja pri mladoletnih prestopnikih: formalno in neformalno izobraževanje; sodišče za mladoletnike; policija; varstvo otrok; zdravstvo itd. v okviru evropskega projekta *YouPrev*. Izvedeni sta bili dve delavnici (od 14 do 15 udeležencev) in 20 pol-strukturiranih intervjujev, pri čemer je bila (med drugim) obravnavana tema o preprečevanju mladoletniškega prestopništva z analitičnega in ciljno usmerjenega vidika.

Ugotovitve:

Tako pri strukturiranih intervjujih kot tudi debatnih skupinah se kaže dejstvo, da predlogi strokovnjakov s področja mladoletniškega nasilja ne uspejo preseči ravni idealističnega. Odkrivajo strukturne ovire v postopku izboljševanja učinkov preventivnih ukrepov v zvezi z mladimi. To velja za vse strokovnjake, tako na področju usklajevanja kot tudi mrežnega povezovanja ter celo pri vrednotenju programov brez jasnih ciljev.

Omejitve/uporabnost raziskave:

Rezultati raziskave imajo lahko vpliv na oblikovanje politik na področju preprečevanja mladoletniškega prestopništva.

Praktična uporabnost:

Članek je koristen za socialne in pravosodne delavce, ki se na različnih področjih (zdravstvo, šolstvo, sodstvo) ukvarjajo z mladimi.

Izvirnost/pomembnost prispevka:

V pričujočem članku predstavljena raziskava prikazuje glavne ovire za učinkovito politiko preprečevanja mladoletniške kriminalitete in nasilja.

UDK: 343.91-053.6

Ključne besede: nasilje, mladoletniško prestopništvo, preprečevanje, implementacija, otrokove pravice

1 PRESENTATION AND METHODOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION

Political discourse on intervention with minors who have committed a crime often begins with a “nothing works” or “nothing can work” premise, whether referring to the age of the child, the socio-familial background, or paradoxically insisting that the child’s criminal career is well established, despite being underage. It is not easy to find clear solutions to a complex phenomenon involving various theories and explanations. It must be noted that, with the same frequency, this discourse includes the proposal to “invest more and work better” for an effective prevention of criminal behaviour.¹ Furthermore, the opinions about what theoretically does not work or cannot work are very clear, i.e., any measure that comes “when evil has already occurred”. However, concrete proposals for preventive intervention are by no means clear, despite the frequency with which the subject is addressed. Perhaps due to the fact that, as Crawford (1998) said, the concept of prevention is very strict, broad and can include almost any activity or program which aims to reduce crime, or even (we could add) any program to improve, materially and psycho-socially, living conditions and to ideologically keep social profiles away from the concepts of “crime” and “offender”. Evidently, if there is no clear concept of prevention, it implies that prevention plans will not be sharply defined. The concepts that we present in this introduction comprise a symbolic framework which is essential for a proper grounding in the field of policies, programmes and practices. This fragmented, diffuse and uncertain knowledge is directly related to the opinions of legal and social actors regarding the issue of the prevention of juvenile delinquency.

From a methodological perspective, this work compares some of the key theoretical factors in the prevention of juvenile delinquency by using a sample of experts’ views from all areas of intervention with juvenile delinquents: formal and non-formal education, juvenile justice, police, child protection, health, etc., within the framework of the European project *YouPrev*. Two workshops (of 14 or 15 participants) and 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted in which, among others, the subject of the prevention of juvenile delinquency was addressed, both from an analytical and a purposive point of view. From these starting points, the work is divided into two parts. The first (section 2) will address the main reasons established by those who are involved in juvenile violence and delinquency prevention policies. The different preventive resources that have been proposed by experts will be analysed in the second (section 3). Finally, the fourth section presents the main contradictions between ideals and practices at the different levels.

¹ The term “prevention” is accompanied by an ambiguity that makes especially complex to differentiate different partners’ prospects, diagnosis and proposals throughout the study. The mere definition of prevention is often an issue of discussion.

2 REASONS FOR JUVENILE VIOLENCE AND REASONS FOR CRIME PREVENTION

2.1 The Reasons: Prevention and Children's Rights

Crime prevention and the protection of children's rights are closely linked, both in theoretical and budgetary terms, and also in the ideas of professionals in the field. The most obvious reason to advocate the prevention of violence rather than the repression of criminal behaviour is that the preventive option leads directly to a non-retributive intervention and signals indirectly the promotion of an effective realization of basic rights. In other words, it is assumed that the realization of children's rights represents an adequate means of preventing young people from committing offences and behaving anti-socially or violently. In the same vein, there is much literature which considers that better protection and a wider realization of children's rights can lead to an improvement in their development and a moderation of their anti-social and criminal behaviour (Howe, 2008). Howe states that when families and social policies promote the rights of children, protective factors are built up through a more cohesive and healthier environment, either in the family, the school or the community. One could say that protecting the rights of children ensures that in the medium and long term we are all protected.

Allusion to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is inevitable. However, as Abramson (2006), among others, has shown, when the Convention extends these rights to "everyone under 18 years" it actually refers to children more than to teenagers. In addition (or maybe for this same reason), he sidesteps the issue of juvenile delinquency and therefore the rights of those who commit crimes before reaching the age of majority. The reasons that both the reality and the rights of the child are neglected lie in the fact that talking about young offenders is unpopular because it undermines the image of the child as an innocent and vulnerable individual. This seems to support the idea that young offenders lose the confidence they once enjoyed from society and, therefore, the rights that are granted to children by their special status of "citizens in training".

In this way the basic idea of "human rights as a product of the dignity inherent to every human being" is displaced by the idea of "human rights as an individual achievement". In some ways, as Feld (2006) said, two contrasting social and cultural conceptions of childhood lead to policies which pull in opposite directions: an increase in punitive control and a greater focus on social and protective approaches. On one hand, we have the image of children as innocent, vulnerable and fragile beings who depend on their parents and on protective public policies. On the other, young people are seen as vigorous, autonomous, responsible and "almost adult" individuals that society must be protected from. Despite this schizophrenic perception of young offenders, Abramson (2006: 16) insists on the holistic conception: "every single right in the Convention on the Rights of the Child is a right of juvenile justice".

2.2 Prevention through Social Policies

This connection between prevention policies and children's rights leads us to another key idea in the study, which is the close link between social policies and efficient instruments for violence and crime prevention. In the case of Spain, this connection incorporates an increasingly smooth dynamic of life stories and pathways of a large number of children who "jump" from protective to criminal institutions.

As Feld (2006) confirms, the tension between welfare and social control is present in policies designed to manage children's violent attitudes and criminal acts. In this regard, as mentioned above, while some authors and practitioners take a strict perspective of prevention related to criminal policies, others take a broader perspective that leads them to identify the prevention of juvenile delinquency almost solely with the promotion of social policies. The vast majority of our interviewees stress that the best preventive policy is not only a firm commitment to social policy, but also to the promotion of solid educational policy. A general allusion to social policies (which by definition guarantee a preventive environment) implies more objective approaches. They focus on poverty, segregation, exclusion and such problems directly linked to the responsibilities of the public administration, in terms of housing, healthcare, education and minimum wage. On the other hand, most direct allusions to the signifier "education" are also more ambiguous, especially when pointing to the "crisis of values" that is usually attributed to "youth": not infrequently, the analysis of the causes often leads to an idealistic approach that emphasizes the need for "education in values" as a solution itself.

However, this direct identification between social policies and prevention could also be read as confusing the principles supporting the policies. At this point, we encounter the most serious theoretical, methodological, dialectic and political obstacle. If social policies include the aim of building a more egalitarian society, crime and violence prevention policies should be based on principles of security. The meanings of the signifier "security" are definitely distorted here. One could say that while social policies aim to build something (a more equal society), the latter intend to avoid unnecessary and irreparable harm. It could also be said that, even when strong social policies contribute effectively to reduce violence and crime, they should not be promoted with this purpose, since that could determine their content and then generate false expectations. Felson and Clarke (2010: 188) underline that: "if these policies are good, they must be defended for their own sake, without adding any gratuitous promises. In fact, it seems most unethical to use crime prevention as a device to promote public opinion's acceptance of programmes that are designed with other purposes." And, above all, the link between both policies means ignoring the approaches that tend to identify a creation of institutions that aspire to prevent crime among the indicators of the "new culture of control" or of the "risk society" (Medina Ariza, 2011).

In that sense, as Medina Ariza (2011) clearly highlighted the association of preventive and social policies can generate two perverse effects: the first is the criminalization of social policies, and the second is the evidence of their limitations when trying to influence the expected levels of security or crime. From the first

perspective, we must emphasize that the previously mentioned association can lead to the management of social problems through security enforcement." This sidelines attention to basic needs and considerations of social equity, as well as requiring collaboration between professionals with totally different aims and functions, for example between educators and police officers. In that vein, participants in *YouPrev* reject the criminalization of social policy by rejecting the "punishment" policies that restrict social benefits to families in accordance to their children's acts. In reflective terms, however, they do consider that families are partly to blame, together with an educative model that progressed from the "authoritarian" pattern to the "negligent" or "absent" one. Some stress that "bringing the police into school" perverts their educational dynamics. This is why they insist on the idea of considering juvenile delinquency as an issue of social justice, bad family educational models or a lack of rights, which must be prevented by out-of-court means.

Cario (2004) felt that preventive intervention is justified for reasons of criminal justice, since punishment in penal institutions does not comply with the legal functions for which they were designed. It is also justified for reasons of social justice (Cario, 2004), since those who end up before the judge or serve their sentence in a prison for minors are the "excluded among the excluded". However, all the participants in this study speak of a recent "democratisation" of juvenile justice, because the "clientele" no longer comes only from deprived environments. It is also true that institutionalized children are mostly those who have had fewer choices of proper socialization and legal defence. According to the interviewees' descriptions, many of these children suffer mental health problems; almost all of them have significant problems of illiteracy or low educational achievement, addictions to alcohol and/or other drugs, severely dysfunctional families or even a prior history of contact with protective institutions.

Many categories and environments included in our participants' speeches show varying degrees of contradiction but also varying degrees of connection between the state/public administration and the private market/management as agents of intervention. This latent paradox can be summarized as follows: on one hand, we find formal approaches in non-formal settings, while on the other hand, an attempt is made to carry out non-formal approaches in formal institutions. Some formal approaches survive in formal institutions such as formal education. "Last but also least", non-formal approaches in non-formal settings, "out of the State", outside administrative control and also areas "outside the market" outside management, point to the horizon some experts speak of: the necessary disappearance of social intervention as a discipline and prevention as an institutionalized and commoditized commodified object.

3 YOUTH VIOLENCE AND CRIME PREVENTION MECHANISMS

Amongst the many proposals to classify crime prevention mechanisms, Medina Ariza (2011) puts forward one of the most comprehensive and successful, which comprises five preventive models. Firstly, the most traditional (but by no means the least important) aims to prevent crime through criminal sanctions either

legislated or effectively applied. The severity and effectiveness of this model is assumed to discourage the commission of crime. Effective enforcement can prevent delinquents from committing further crime merely by resocializing them or by keeping them away from social opportunities. The second model, which Hastings (1991) considered to be left-wing criminology, speaks of community-based prevention that asserts the importance of social contexts in the source of the crimes and supports the right to prevent delinquency in the “natural environment” of minors. The third model stresses the role of early intervention policies on children, or even during pregnancy, according to the elements that encourage a positive socialization process. A fourth model based on situational prevention, according to Hastings (1991), an example of “right-wing criminology,” regards the offender as a responsible individual who takes free decisions. Its primary objective would be to reduce the opportunities to commit an offence, often focusing on those circumstances that can be provoked by the victims themselves or those factors that imply a reduction in the fear of crime. As Felson and Clarke (2010: 174) note, this is a question of environmental management measures “which intend to make the committing of criminal acts more difficult and dangerous and which also contribute to the fact that offenders’ acts may bring them fewer benefits and may be seen as unpardonable”. These four classic models are supplemented by a fifth, the most specific and reductionist, but consistent in its terms: police prevention as the central duty of the police force in the protection of “public safety”.

Of these five proposed approaches, interviewees highlighted only social and community-based prevention, that is to say, the need to intervene from the earliest age in risk factors such as quality education (which, for example, does not include expulsion from school as a tool for working with minors), healthcare (to cater for the emerging phenomenon of children with mental health problems) or family (which seems to require stronger support in a social context where codes and behaviours have rapidly changed in recent decades). Furthermore, experts clearly favour prevention which is implemented “as early as possible”. Despite that, they made no mention of situational prevention perhaps considering that other actors are responsible for its implementation. In terms of tertiary prevention, they were very keen to highlight the role of police officers in the repression and surveillance of youngsters, their behaviours and risk environments (e.g. street drinking), but they also rule them out as key actors in prevention tasks.²

In the discussion groups however, young people emphasized the preventive interest of establishing harder and longer penalties, as well as the importance of visible police presence.³ It is obvious that situational prevention offers a shorter term solution in both proposals, according to the acceptance among minors of the discourse published by the media. Obviously, the reproduction of these clichés by children does not consider the criticism of this type of prevention (which generates

2 *It is must be noted one of the classic programs highlighted in secondary schools is courses on knowledge and prevention of drug use and dealing, as well as on the prevention of violence and its proper management. These programs are often implemented by police officers. A second program focuses on monitoring the environment of schools or leisure areas.*

3 *The literature on this subject shows that the strengthening of criminal penalties is not enough to prevent crime and there is a need to complement such an approach with other programs (Howe, 2008).*

a displacement of delinquency or avoids addressing the social roots of juvenile delinquency), but it does bring to light an important issue: children demand “control”, requiring contact, communication, relationships, and adults who are ready to act as a point of reference. But they demand in the terms of their own language and the “relational toolbox” that is currently available to them.

Be that as it may, our “*YouPrev* experts” make clear that institutions still envision a more traditional classification of preventive policies depending upon target groups or profiles. Following this criterion, we can distinguish between: a) primary prevention, which targets the general population so as to influence the generic factors of crime; b) secondary prevention, which identifies “at-risk populations”; and c) tertiary prevention, which works with those who have already committed a crime, to avoid them repeating the act and subsequently consolidating a criminal career. Regardless of their training or the work they do with children, the professionals interviewed agreed on the need for a greater commitment to the promotion of primary and secondary prevention policies, while limiting tertiary interventions. They are aware, especially in these times of economic crisis that the main focus is on out-of-court procedures. However, this is being promoted “from and within” the context of juvenile justice institutions, when minors have already committed an offence or misconduct. This trend coexists with the increase in sentences for the most serious crimes (terrorism, recidivism or gang violence). In these cases, it is clear that the function of legal modifications is not so much reintegration as the provision of a threat to potential criminals, consequently legitimising the system to potential voters who are not satisfied with methods of criminal justice. These potential voters want to see the authorities cracking down serious crimes committed by children and isolating those who do not respond to the measures imposed or those who commit crimes that generate social concern.

Regarding the possible options offered by our participants, four different directions could be highlighted according to the area in which every option is developed. Firstly, since families appear as a key element in the proper socialization of children, the need for a better and wider policy of support to families, especially those without the tools required to educate their children, raises questions. The primary concern here is whether to plan universal support or only selective support for families in which problems have already been detected. Secondly, students highlight the crucial importance of peer groups in avoiding or promoting criminal behaviour, and again, many of those minors also call for emotional support and reference points (even mentioning the television show “Older Brother” as an influence), in a sort of “listen to us” attitude. Furthermore, better organization of children’s leisure time is demanded by all sectors.

In this same vein, experts stress that one of the educational keys in violence prevention is to help young people be responsible for and get involved in managing their own conflicts and assuming the consequences of their decisions. At school, most of the proposals tend to promote programs for the prevention of violence, drug/alcohol use, bullying, or misuse of new technologies. The striking fact that minors consider teachers to be a less important point of reference than friends, parents, coaches, police or social workers in the prevention of violence and substance abuse, suggests the need for a careful reconsideration of the current role

of schools. In the area of juvenile justice, the programs that were highlighted as more effective in preventing recidivism are linked to out-of-court measures (repair or conciliation), social skills training or education in values (bearing in mind that experts refer to an alleged social regression or the so-called “absence of values and limits” as the main factor behind juvenile delinquency), intervention with minors under age 14 or community services.

In terms of “how to do it”, Medina Ariza (2011) highlights two key elements for the promotion of an effective prevention policy. The first is coordination among the different agents working with the same target population. It is clear that prevention requires monitoring, control and supervision, and these tasks can only be accomplished through collaboration between these agents. The second key is the evaluation of preventive policies to analyse achievement of objectives and to make suggestions for improvement. These two elements, or rather, the absence of them proves that juvenile crime prevention policies in Spain are deficient. The perspective is even worse if we consider the climate of budgetary cutbacks, which are a result of the country’s economic crisis.

All of the experts interviewed are aware of the importance of collaboration among professionals working in health services, education, social work, psychology or social policies, to prevent the “burnout” of families, professionals and children. According to the professionals themselves, this deficient coordination is explained by the concerns for privacy of children, professional secrecy, the need to avoid intrusive interventions and in some cases, personal issues. It also seems clear that coordination is more effective in juvenile justice institutions, which is a more limited field of intervention with more precise objectives, than among professionals working in primary prevention, where there is a greater diversity of perspectives and goals. As for the evaluation of interventions to analyse effectiveness, the expert opinion is unanimous: “evaluation is non-existent”, “there is no assessment”, or in the best of cases, “it is only internally applied”. The reasons are: lack of clear objectives in prevention programs, low budgets, lack of time and staff to develop evaluation reports, lack of conviction and fear of criticism of programmes. Recasens i Brunet (2007) also adds that the uneven distribution of powers between government departments, especially in terms of social policies, has also favoured the creation of different preventive policies (both in quality and quantity) in the different autonomous communities. Considering that experts favour a social and preventive policy defined and implemented at the local level, it is especially clear that intervention in protection and juvenile delinquency risk factors requires the participation of those actors who are aware of the needs and available resources in a given context.

Experts believe that the best way to prevent violence among young people is to make them responsible for their own actions, teaching them to manage conflicts in a collective, equal and non-violent way. This approach takes into consideration the “best interest of children” and the promotion of their independent participation to interact, discuss and take their own decisions. Experts also highlight the need for more effective action in families and schools, which are among the key elements in the socialization of a child.

In terms of what works with minors in socio-educational aspects essentially means, one can say that there is “nothing new” on the horizon. The main developments here are the increased distance between the theoretical and ideological groundings of intervention and the “hostile battlefields” in which such practices must be implemented, especially in the current context of economic crisis, widespread dispossession and reverse redistribution policies. The following is a critical reflection on why and how the most controversial gaps appear in the context of a paradoxical relationship between values and principles and reality and practice.

4 PRACTICAL FAILINGS IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

4.1 General Prevention: Primary and Secondary Levels

The framework in which the gap between ideals and practices comes about is much more than cyclical. It is conditioned by an unstoppable trend in the contraction of the resources managed by the “left hand” of the State and the simultaneous reinforcement of the demands for reinforcing the “right hand,” as stated by Wacquant (2009), quoting Bourdieu (1999), some decades ago. A number of sectoral examples shape this basic contradiction.

On one hand we have families: Professionals advocate broader support for families while budget austerity focuses on the substitution of the coverage of social rights by minimal residual and welfare measures for the most deprived situations. The rise in domestic violence (children against parents, especially mothers) is stressed by groups such as juvenile justice or healthcare, pointing directly to a “democratization of violence” caused by a rapid deterioration of the living conditions of a large number of “ex-middle class” families whose relational handicaps were previously compensated by resorting to consumer spending.

On the other hand, we have schools. Key factors such as the peer group, the normalization of relations or the commitment of minors to managing their own conflicts clash with the deterioration of working conditions for teachers, the protocolisation of their tasks, disciplinary rigidity or increased student-teacher ratios. Here the most common projects focus on violence, substance abuse, bullying or the misuse of new technologies, largely in a lecture-workshop format. Many activities feature participants from outside the school system and perhaps the presence of police officers in this aspect is one of the most controversial points in the debate “education *versus* the criminal justice system” (see 4.3 and 5). The assumption by police officers of other actors’ duties and objectives leads sometimes to a confusion that reinforces the feeling of poor coordination and lack of communication. Some teachers feel this problem makes their task more difficult, given that they lose their capacity to reinstate disciplined social interaction in the classroom, which goes way beyond the widespread “new behaviourism”. The fact

that students no longer perceive teachers as a point of reference⁴ in preventing violence and substance abuse suggests the urgency of a deep reflection on the current situation of schools.

Finally, we have work. For years, the close relationship between the development of social and occupational centres, or other mechanisms for “training to work” and the growth of the construction business has been an excellent example of the connection between the needs of the market and state’s responsibilities in the field of social inclusion. The syllogism is clear: “inclusion equals integration and integration equals employment”. *Ergo* ... since 2008, given the massive layoff of young, unskilled workers and the rapid dismantling of productive activities and public resources, it is not surprising that so many professionals point to weak, short-term planning that focuses on the attention of the most urgent cases and ignores the need for direction or long-term pathways. What was celebrated just a few years ago as a successful process of integration has taken a “u-turn”. It does not seem unreasonable to demand, as some participants do, that responsibility is taken for the large number of integrated adolescents who are now unprotected.⁵ What does not seem feasible is to rely on a possible improvement of the model of social protection without linking proposals to a prior change in economic policies, a sharp change in priorities, and strict adherence to the constitutional principles of a self-declared social and democratic state.

4.2 Tertiary Level: Special Prevention, Control Agencies and Penal Response

Regarding the previously mentioned dismantling of the welfare state, the priority of punitive reasons over pro-social arguments implies that tertiary control widens the “theory-practice gap”. A symptomatic result of this change in policy for many professionals from the “social sector” is the so-called “cognitive dissonance”, due to the subjective gap between institutional inertia and the critical diagnostics which survive. It is necessary to ask what role idealism plays in the current restrictive, precarious, formalized and punitive framework of socio-educational intervention. The mere term “socio-educational intervention” evokes the specific paradox of “benefactor aggression” and “humanitarian intervention”.

Well, here [street education centre] we're receiving less money as the years go by. We used to deal with many situations and areas and ... now less and less. We still receive some money from the city to focus on follow-up issues, in both families and children, at three levels: general, group and individual.

Although the most common approach tends to locate the “perfect intervention” in social/family background, the temptation to abandon community interventions (i.e., street education) and deal with individual cases by removing

4 Teachers are the last group in the school survey behind friends, parents, coaches, police officers or social workers.

5 Some of these are now parents who are unemployed, in debt and in a situation of risk, which is worsened by the cutbacks in social protection. These are not isolated examples but paradigmatic cases which sum up the current socio-economic crisis in Spain.

the child from their environment is common. This appears to be the general trend of institutionalization in our protection and justice systems in light of the current cutbacks in “open environment” programs and projects. A considerable proportion of the opinions in the surveys and interviews dismiss the claim for a fundamental right, the guarantee of which refers to the previously mentioned “environment in which the minor has developed” in order to, explicitly or implicitly, impact on a classist treatment of crime and emphasize its selective nature.

In a similar vein, the recurrent argument of “we cannot do more” connects the frustration of control services to populist demands for more severe punishment. There is no shortage of positivist legitimization of racism, usually due to a positivist approach that can be detected in policing functions in certain “racial” profiles. Needless to say, the concept of prevention is harder to define in the criminal field than in the field of social intervention, because it incorporates and mixes certain discursive elements from the management of illegality, positivising offences and considering the eternal contradiction of police action as a preventive function. It could be said, based on the information available, that there is a certain consensus on the self-perception of police forces as competent agencies of prevention. However, police officers also mention the lack of training and resources, as well as a certain criticism of the definition of prevention itself, the extent of their possibilities and their effectiveness or their social function.

There are many interventions on the streets where we have detected serious mistakes, such as finding children outside their care (protection) centre and returning them detained in handcuffs, because they believe that leaving a care centre is a crime. Those children do not come under the juvenile justice system; you can only apply protective measures.

Training can be improved. The street helps a lot. Training is good, but it must be reinforced. More re-training is needed. We receive one training course and this is all.

In the field of juvenile justice, the programs highlighted as most effective in the prevention of recidivism are out-of-court measures (reparation or reconciliation), social skills programs or education in values. Many of our experts referred to the so-called “crisis of values” or the “lack of limits” as two factors in youth violence at present.

The percentage of detentions in the total amount of our interventions is between 10 and 15%. The rest are administrative measures. 50% of the cases are dealt with out-of-court.

An unresolved debate questions the ability of the system to reduce the effects of the treatment of criminals even in the most benign out-of-court or most alternative approaches to the punitive response, focused on minors under 14 (the minimum age of criminal responsibility in Spain) or the need to resort to socio-educational tools such as community services.

We must not look for complements but for substitution. The aim is not to beg a company providing services to the administration. Everything to do with detention must disappear. Alternative practices complement the structural factors that generate the labelling of certain profiles or social categories. If we have a closed system, then we conduct open programmes. And this is a source of income for an army of professionals who legitimize the labelling of subjects in certain categories as the most dangerous criminals.

4.3 Coordination and Supervision: The Cliché of Preventive Schizophrenia

The problem of coordination and its related deficient supervision and funding has been examined above. We would like to stress here that the promotion of communication and coordination between a large number of the so-called “social agents” (administrations, primary care resources, health, education, social institutions, neighbourhood associations, private entities ...) is one of the most highly-valued aspects of the conditions required for good preventive practice. However, according to professionals, the effectiveness of this coordination is as necessary as it is poor and is often reduced to personal initiatives or informal contacts between workers from different areas. As we stated previously, coordination is considered key in improving intervention and avoiding overlapping and burnout among professionals, families and children. However, it is very difficult to make it effective. Some interviewees considered coordination even more important than budgets. But the current state of coordination is only described as “good” or “very good” by a few professionals at very specific levels. Coordination is perceived as being most reliable (at least “more formalized in protocols”) in the field of tertiary prevention, and most unreliable at basic or primary levels, where interventions should be more effective. From a broad perspective, it can be concluded that crime prevention does not include comprehensive planning nor does it take into account the design of medium and long-term pathways. The situation is exacerbated in the case of the security forces, to which many professionals from different sectors are reticent and feel that their respective interventions pursue very different and inconsistent goals. Again, we have education *versus* control.

Evaluation is mainly conducted as “self-assessment” in the case of certain teams and projects. Some professionals acknowledge that there is “much self-assessment but no external control”. When put into practice, this evaluation is always quantitative and never qualitative. According to the interviewees, administrative control (on projects and managing entities) does not exist. One of the reasons put forward is that many programs do not have clear goals. “Protocols do not exist” and evaluation in conditions is extremely difficult.

5 CONCLUSIONS

What is best practice? What about prevention? What is juvenile delinquency?

As the study shows, every area of intervention presents its own version of a cognitive dissonance that, in turn, can be read as a symptom of a problem inherent to the policies, programmes and projects for prevention of violence and juvenile delinquency. This is something that, at this stage, cannot seem strange to a critical observer. The immediate need for a consensual framework for the terms of the analysis is the best example of how difficult it is to unravel this knot, both epistemologically and methodologically. However, the untroubled sustainability of this cognitive dissonance is precisely what leaves this knot “incorrupt” and allows many professionals to continue carrying out their duties in institutions

whose practical outcomes are radically opposed to the theoretical reasoning that at a symbolic level are their “golden rules”.

The mere combination of the signifiers “violence” and “crime” presents an irremovable obstacle to any claim to coherence and effectiveness in the analysis. As a structural phenomenon, “violence” is reproduced at a relational level and most participants perceive its influence on children and adolescents as a real concern that is on the increase. So the analysis must be conducted at different levels. “Crime” is, in any case, a legally defined and conceptualized social problem, and much less relevant in the eyes of the participants. In this sense the “offender”, as a social profile and a term politically identified with the legal concept of crime, is the unequal hypostasis of law in social imagery. In the case of children, the dual status of “offender” and “minor” makes the aim of effectiveness in tertiary prevention more complex, given the difficulty of realizing the “best interest of the child” in the criminal treatment of minors who have committed an offence.

In this world there are two types of delinquents: professionals and losers, who haven't got the mechanisms, strategies or tools to be able to avoid the action of the criminal justice system. There is a selection process in this type of crime.

This first combination is followed by a second element of complexity that sabotages the theoretical consensus on a primary prevention that focuses on basic needs and their attached fundamental rights in a social and democratic state. We use the term “prevention” in a sense that is wide enough to include all its meanings in the same area of discussion, which becomes a sort of “Tower of Babel”. It is a dialogue between experts that aims to optimize the management of conflicts outside the criminal justice system, as well as to prevent the reproduction of violence among children and adolescents.

The trend noticed over recent years in the areas of formal education, socio-educational work, protection and juvenile justice does not coincide at all with this ideal approach. Firstly, in response to the economic crisis the political decisions that decide the resources available for each institution have led to much impoverished conditions in primary and secondary intervention. As noted in the previous section, this is an undisputed fact present in all sectors of society. Secondly, the discursive, political, technical and bureaucratic borders that separate each of these areas are more and more permeable. While by necessity educational discourse has to functionally permeate the field of juvenile justice, the logics of control remain present in child protection policies. The practices and institutions of confinement and/or punishment have a superficially educational discourse, while (not too imaginary) neo-behaviourist imagery colonizes more and more formal and informal spaces of education, all of which are suffering cutbacks in resources and capacities. An idea that occurs throughout this study is that professionals take general prevention to be the best means of intervention as it is a way to avoid further damage. However, their ability to carry out specific proposals on how to act is very restricted. This is sometimes because the existing economic and legal structures seem to close every door to change. Other times it is because the coordination required of institutions seems to be unacceptable, due to their diverse and, at times, incompatible approaches. The fact that best practices will only make sense at a very local level is also important, since it leads to a lack of conclusions

regarding proposals for good practices on a wider and transferable level. Finally, as already stated above, it is generally assumed that the best prevention is good social policy and a correct realization of the rights of all people, without any more exact specifications.

Confusion is rife. The “Community model” is a hegemonic signifier in the discourse of social agents, as is “individualized attention”. The discussion of meritocracy, assistance, punishment and education is frequently part of a discourse which is often difficult to comprehend. Finally, from a socio-legal (and therefore critical) perspective, we cannot avoid the temptation to reproduce an example of what could be considered “the mother of all paradoxes”: a sort of meta-discussion of “self-considered” experts’ opinions *versus* their own professional status and habitus. The following much-appreciated quote on delinquency and new technologies is an example of how some issues in the construction and perception of social profiles become a “positivist mirage” (Venceslao, 2010), which does not refer directly to young people but specifically to “young criminals” as a specific, labelled sector that is not only attributed with the monopoly of current aggressions but also the potential committing of “new” crimes.

The criminal expertise of young people who have been tried and sentenced by juvenile courts in recent years is crude and poor with rare exceptions, which implies that in the next few years this expertise is not likely to reach the level of specialization required to commit cybercrimes.

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Juvenile Delinquency School Failure and Dropout in Portugal: Drafting a Picture in Different Voices

Ana Cardoso, Heloísa Perista, Paula Carrilho,
Mário Jorge Silva

Purpose:

The purpose of this article is to address and discuss the relationship between different school paths and self-reported young students' behaviours and perceptions regarding violence and delinquency. Their views on prevention deserve particular attention. This is though a picture drafted in different voices, since young students' opinions contrast with those of several other actors in the domain of juvenile delinquency.

Design/Methods/Approach:

This analysis is based on the YouPrev project findings in Portugal, generated by the different empirical data collection instruments employed, thus combining a quantitative and a qualitative approach. Gender differences as well as differences between urban and rural regions are highlighted whenever relevant.

Findings:

School failure and dropout is a structural problem in Portugal and some expert views anticipate a reversal in recent trends and a new rise of these phenomena as a result of the current crisis. The YouPrev school survey outcomes in Portugal confirm that young people with negative school integration have a higher life-time prevalence of self-reported delinquency.

Among the 1,755 young students surveyed, 29.4% reported they had committed, over their life-time, at least one of the offences listed in the questionnaire. 156 of these students reported that they had committed a violent offence during the last twelve months. Among these, 46 may be described as frequent violent offenders. The concentration of risk factors among the frequent violent offenders shows that these are also victims of other forms of violence in the context where they live in.

Young people share the idea that "what works" best in the prevention of juvenile delinquency is to improve their prospects to get a job and to provide them a good general education.

Both in the rural and in the urban regions the relationship between young people and the family is seen as crucial either by experts or by the young boys and girls.

Research Limitations/Implications:

Self-reported delinquency surveys attempt to overcome insufficiencies of the official statistics – these surveys open the possibility to obtain more diverse information and to identify delinquent practices that are not registered. But one of the possible criticisms is that, in these kinds of studies, chronic and persistent delinquents are not represented. In this particular analysis, information is missing for those students who skip school and those whose parents, for different reasons, did not give consent to their participation in the survey.

The conduction of expert face-to-face interviews complemented the prospective information collected by the Delphi study, compensating and enriching the relative low number of responses to the survey.

Practical Implications:

The outcomes promote the awareness-raising on juvenile delinquency and prevention strategies among different actors: experts, schools, and young students. These can also be used as training material for professionals, working in social services and police forces, in particular.

Originality/Value:

This study contributes to the body of knowledge on the practices and views within the domain of juvenile delinquency and violence. This is a research topic insufficiently explored in Portugal, at least in a comprehensive way, either in terms of subjects or territorial coverage. It also adds to existing research with crossed views, based on a multi-method approach, on the interplay between school failure and dropout and juvenile delinquency and prevention.

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Keywords: juvenile delinquency, violence, school failure, dropout, prevention, Portugal

Mladoletniško prestopništvo, neuspeh v šoli in opustitev šolanja na Portugalskem: skiciranje slike iz različnih mnenj

Namen prispevka:

Namen članka je obravnavati in razpravljati o razmerju med različnimi smermi šolanja in samonaznanjenim vedenjem učencev ter dojetanja mladoletniškega nasilja in prestopništva. Njihova stališča o preprečevanju zaslužijo posebno pozornost. To pomeni, da je slika sestavljena iz različnih mnenj, saj se mnenja učencev razlikujejo od mnenj drugih akterjev na področju mladoletniškega prestopništva.

Metode:

Analiza temelji na ugotovitvah projekta YouPrev na Portugalskem. Sestavljena je iz različnih empiričnih instrumentov za zbiranje podatkov, s čimer sta kvantitativni in kvalitativni pristop združena. Razlike med spoloma in med mestnimi ter podeželskimi regijami so poudarjene, ko je to relevantno.

Ugotovitve:

Šolski neuspeh in opustitev šolanja je strukturni problem na Portugalskem, pri čemer nekateri strokovnjaki pričakujejo preobrat v zadnjih trendih in nov porast

omenjenih pojavov kot posledice trenutne krize. Rezultati raziskave YouPrev v šolah na Portugalskem so potrdili, da so v samonaznanitvenih primerih mladi z negativno integracijo v šoli v dotedanjem življenju storili več prestopkov kot ostali.

Med 1.755 anketiranimi učenci jih je 29,4 % poročalo, da so v svojem življenju že storili vsaj eno kaznivo dejanje s seznama v vprašalniku. 156 teh učencev je poročalo, da so v zadnjih dvanajstih mesecih storili nasilno kaznivo dejanje. Med njimi jih lahko 46 opišemo kot pogoste nasilne storilce kaznivih dejanj. Koncentracija dejavnikov tveganja med pogosto nasilnimi storilci kaže, da so le-ti tudi žrtve drugih oblik nasilja v povezavi z okoljem, v katerem živijo.

Mladi ljudje menijo, da sta izboljšanje njihovih možnosti za zaposlitev in zagotavljanje dobre splošne izobrazbe ukrepa, ki najbolje 'delujeta' pri preprečevanju mladoletniškega prestopništva. Strokovnjaki in mladi fantje ter dekleta se strinjajo v tem, da je razmerje med mladimi in družino ključni dejavnik tako v podeželskih kot mestnih regijah.

Omejitve/uporabnost raziskave:

Študije samonaznanitve prestopništva poskušajo preseči pomanjkljivosti uradnih statistik – te raziskave nudijo možnost pridobivanja več različnih informacij in identifikacije praks prestopništva, ki niso registrirane. Toda ena od možnih kritik je, da v tovrstnih raziskavah kronični oz. trdovratni prestopniki niso zastopani. V pričujoči analizi manjkajo podatki o učencih, ki so opustili šolanje, in o tistih, katerih starši zaradi različnih razlogov niso dali soglasja za njihovo sodelovanje v raziskavi.

S strokovnjaki izvedeni osebni intervjuji so dopolnili predvidene informacije, ki so bile zbrane v okviru študije Delphi, jih nadomestili in bogato dopolnili relativno nizko število odgovorjenih anket.

Praktična uporabnost:

Rezultati spodbujajo ozaveščanje o mladoletniškem prestopništvu in preventivnih strategijah med različnimi akterji: strokovnjaki, šolami in učenci. Lahko so uporabni tudi kot učno gradivo za strokovnjake, ki delajo na področju socialnih storitev, še posebej za policiste.

Izvirnost/pomembnost prispevka:

Ta raziskava prispeva k bazi znanja o praksah in stališčih na področju mladoletniškega prestopništva in nasilja. Na Portugalskem je to premalo raziskana tema, vsaj kar zadeva splošno razumljiv način, bodisi v smislu subjektov ali teritorialne pokritosti. Raziskava je prispevek k že obstoječim raziskavam z različnimi mnenji. Temelji na multi-metodološkem pristopu, na medsebojnem vplivu šolskega neuspeha in opustitve šolanja ter mladoletniškega prestopništva in preprečevanja.

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Ključne besede: mladoletniško prestopništvo, nasilje, neuspeh v šoli, opustitev šolanja, preprečevanje, Portugalska

1 INTRODUCTION

In spite of the rapid population ageing and diminishing numbers of children and adolescents all over Europe, including in Portugal, youth deviance, violence and delinquency remain highly important social problems mainly because of its impact on the perceptions about safety. And feelings of fear and insecurity are exacerbated in times of crisis. Juvenile delinquency has thus been a topic in public debate and policy agenda.

The social construction of “childhood” and of “youth” is influenced the concept of “juvenile delinquency”, seen as a deviation of the ideal-type of child, protected and submissive to authority (namely to family authority). Therefore, the behaviours perceived as “delinquent” also vary in time-space (Gomes et al., 2010).

The dominant perspective today is that delinquency emerges when the process of – either physical or social – growth and identity-building is interrupted, particularly when the family, the school and the community fail in their education role. The concept of juvenile delinquency thus corresponds to a social and institutional construct, around which definitions and ideas on situations and behaviours that contrast with the ideal concept of childhood and youth assemble (Ferreira, 1997).

Youth delinquency has been defined as a sub-category of deviant behaviour that concerns the conduct of young people which breach or violate the rules and standards defined by law (Carvalho, 2003).

Some studies (Agra, 1998; Catalano & Hawkins, 1996; Genovés, 1984; Morin, 1994; Negreiros, 2008) reveal that there is relatively widespread deviant behaviour during youth, only part of this assuming a criminal form. This happens due to the specificities of juvenile psychological and social development; it is also related to the position of young people in societies and their relation to youth cultures in which values, rules and standards are not necessarily coincident with the adult world.

For the large majority of young people, delinquency is a temporary experience during their transition to adulthood, and not a way of life (Ferreira, 1997).

The purpose of this article is to explore the relationship between different school paths and self-reported behaviours and perceptions of young students regarding violence and delinquency. Their views on prevention deserve particular attention. This is though a picture drafted in different voices, since young students’ opinions are cross-checked with those of several other actors in the field of juvenile delinquency.¹

The article is structured into five main sections. First, a brief discussion on the concept of youth and what does it mean to be young in Portugal today is presented. The next section describes the research design and methodological approach. A short description of the school system in Portugal and some school performance-related indicators and future trends are included in section four. The fifth section presents and discusses the empirical finding, from the youth perspective. The views

1 This article draws on the findings of the YouPrev study in Portugal, namely on Perista, Cardoso, Silva, and Carrilho (2012).

of other actors are shortly addressed in the next section. Finally, some concluding remarks are outlined.

2 YOUTH AND BEING YOUNG IN PORTUGAL

Youth is normally associated with a group bound by age limits, and sociological studies usually define youth as the 15–24 years old persons. But looking into the legal framework of juvenile justice, the law applies to all youngsters between 12 and 16 years of age who engage in behaviour qualified as a criminal by law in Portugal. However, the execution of the educational guardianship measures may be extended up to 21 years old.

These ambiguities illustrate well that if youth may be defined by age, youth is much more than an age group or a biological reality; youth is a social condition built in a historical and social process.

In fact, the emergence of youth as a life period with its own characteristics, different from adults, begins in the late eighteenth century with the increasing of an industrial, urban and complex society which leads to a separation between private and public life and gives way to a new social representation of family where love and affection have its place.

This does not mean that age is not important; it rather urges us to also consider age boundaries as fluid and something that can be changed as society changes; it also leads to the conclusion that more than a homogeneous youth, there are different youths and different conditions and ways of experiencing youth.

It is however undeniable that youth corresponds to a life stage where physical, psychological and emotional changes occur; a time where childhood is already gone but adulthood has not arrived yet, and a time to search for a place and new experiences. In this sense youth is also seen as a period of life where different deviant behaviours begin to appear (Agra, 1998).

The transition into adulthood has always been a great challenge in every society, in every time. Today, however, this is a multidimensional process which involves the transition from school to work; from the family of origin to the own family; from parents' home to own home (Galland, 1999).

Given all the transformation occurring in our societies, in particular due to the economic and social crisis, young people are increasingly a group at risk. In Portugal, the current crisis impacts on a dramatic rise in youth unemployment; in the first quarter of 2013 the unemployment rate for people aged under 25 years was 42.1%; in 2000 that figure was 8.6%, and in 2010 22.4% (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2013). The difficulties in accessing a job and the related vulnerability and precariousness in young people's lives feeds on feelings of frustration, anger, and lack of future prospects.

On the other hand, youth unemployment is often a highly qualified one, due to the consistently rising education levels among the younger population. This means that there is an increasingly wider gap between the investment on education and the youngster's expectations, and the possibilities of labour market integration, and therefore of independence and success in the other transitions.

In Portuguese society today, youth is no longer a “soft age” but rather a life-course stage lived with instability and pressure. These feelings stood out in our study, either among young people themselves – *“There is the fear of not having school success; of making the wrong choice”* – or among professionals – *“There are huge contradictions in our society: young people have to be stable in an unstable society; we expect them to draw projects for the future in a society with no future; we expect them not to be rebels in a violent and hostile world”*.

3 METHODS

The *YouPrev* study developed a research using a range of methods and instruments that allowed to listening different actors and to contact with different experiences and perspectives from various fields of expertise: researchers; police officers; practitioners; young people.

On the other hand, data collection was conducted both at a national and at a local level.

Quantitative and qualitative data included in this article thus draw on a range of methods and instruments:

Nationwide Institutional and Expert Survey on Existing Approaches

This survey was conducted between May and October, 2011. Questionnaires were sent to 355 potential respondents, who were selected through a detailed search for experts and relevant institutions; in this process the advice and contacts of the *YouPrev* Portuguese National Advisory Board members were of great use. The sample included professionals from different services and areas: researchers; professionals of local projects addressed to young people and crime prevention organisations; social services; correctional facilities; and probationary services. The overall response rate was 22.5%, i.e., 80 experts participated in the survey.

Some characteristics of the respondents:

- 47.4% are male and 52.6% female.
- 48.7% are aged less than 40 years old; the average age is 39.21 years ($SD = 9.12$, Range 22–61).
- Most are highly educated – over 80% have a university degree.
- Practitioners are the majority of the respondents; among these practitioners there is a balance between those who work under a control and correctional approach and those who work in a preventive perspective.

Delphi Survey Addressed to Experts

This was a two-wave national Delphi survey. In terms of time frame, the first wave was conducted from September until November, 2011, and the second between January and March, 2012. In both waves, 150 questionnaires were sent out: 31 responses (response rate of 20.7%) were obtained in the first wave; in the second wave, we got a response rate of 22.7%, which represents 34 respondents.

The experts included in the Portuguese sample for the Delphi survey have a broad range of professional backgrounds: police officers, social workers working in different fields and organisations, scientists from different universities and research units, and experts in the fields of justice and crime prevention.

In order to complement the information from Delphi (first wave), six face-to-face interviews were conducted and the topics of the interviews were the same used in the questionnaire. The interviews were addressed to: two researchers; one person working in the Social Security System; the responsible person for the Observatory on Safety, Organised Crime and Terrorism; one person from Casa Pia de Lisboa – one of the oldest foster homes in Lisbon; one person from the probation system.

School Survey – Local Self-Report Study

The survey was addressed to young students aged 12–18, and was implemented at schools in two different regions: one urban and one rural municipality.

The urban region is located in the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon. It is a municipality with 175,135 inhabitants very close to Lisbon-capital, where about 26% of the population is aged less than 24 years old. In the last decades, it has hosted a large migrant population, mainly from the former Portuguese colonies in Africa. In 2011, 7.1% of the total population in that municipality was born out of the country. This immigration flow contributed to a decrease in the ageing of the local population (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2012b).

The rural area is located in the Centre Region on the littoral coast. It is a municipality that combines a still strong agricultural activity with fishing and tourism activities. In 2011, the total population was 56,676 inhabitants. Contrary to most rural areas in Portugal, this is a municipality with a relatively high presence of a young population: 25% has less than 25 years old (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2012b).

In Portugal, the implementation of a survey addressed to young students at schools requires previous authorisation from the Ministry of Education. After this consent and in order to involve local organisations in the process and to facilitate contact with experts, as well as in order to get the schools' acceptance and cooperation, the following procedures were adopted: meeting with the municipalities, project presentation in a CLA's meeting², and face-to-face meetings in all schools with school principals / representatives. The main objective was to get the schools' agreement regarding the questionnaire's application and to organise the all process, namely taking into consideration the need for the parents' previous authorization in a written form.

The time frame for the questionnaires' application was from February to June 2012. The survey was conducted in the class room by three elements of the Portuguese *YouPrev* team.

In total, in the urban municipality, 984 questionnaires were completed and validated. In the rural area the 593 completed questionnaires were collected.

² CLA is a local coordination structure where different local organisations (social services, schools, health services, etc.) take part.

In the sample, there is a relative balance between the number of boys and girls surveyed: 52.9% are girls. This is in line with the higher percentage of female among students, namely in basic education. The gender balance is more evident in the rural region than in the urban one.

Sex	Rural	Urban	Total
Boys	49.1	45.9	47.1
Girls	50.9	54.1	52.9
Total	100	100	100

Table 1:
Young students
by sex and
region (%)

Over 60% of the respondents are 15 years old or less. The rural sample is a bit younger than the urban one: 61.7% are less than 16 years old, compared with 60.4% in the urban region.

Interviews with Local Experts and Focus-Group Discussions with Young People

In each municipality (rural and urban), experts from different educational and professional backgrounds and people with different expertise and experiences concerning youth delinquency and prevention were selected.

Following these criteria the interviews were conducted with:

- Urban area: Social worker at a parish council; Person in charge for youth policies at the municipal Council; Leader of a local youth association; Member of the local probation services; Coordinator of a local project addressed to young people; School principal; Police officer (PSP); Persons (two) in charge of the local commission for children and young people at risk; Person in charge of the Municipality programme for prevention of domestic violence.
- Rural area: Person in charge for youth policies at the Municipal Council; Leader of a local youth association; Member of the local probation services; Coordinator of a local project addressed to young people; School psychologists (four in total from different schools); Police officer (PSP); Person in charge of the local commission for children and young people at risk.

In both municipalities, focus-group discussions with young people were conducted. The collaboration of local projects was asked for in the recruiting of participants. In the urban area, we 15 young people (aged 13–18 years) participated, the majority of them living in poor degraded neighbourhoods. In the rural region 18 young people, from different schools and with diverse social origins, participated.

4 SETTING THE SCENE: SCHOOL SYSTEM AND STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE

In Portugal, every student who entered the school system since the school year 2009/2010 are covered by the 12 years requirement of compulsory schooling, which means that they should stay in school until they are 18 years old.

The school system in Portugal is organised as follows:

- Pre-school education is optional for children aged 3–4 years old but it is compulsory for those who have 5 years old. Pre-school education may be delivered by the private sector, private non-profit organisations or public institutions. In the school year 2010/2011 the pre-schools attendance rate was 87.4%.
- Basic education is divided into five levels:

Table 2:
School system
in Portugal –
Basic Education

Levels	School years	Ages
1st level	4 (1st–4th)	6 to 10 years old
2nd level	2 (5th–6th)	10 to 12 years old
3rd level	3 (7th–9th)	13–15 years old
Secondary	2 (10th–11th)	16–17 years old
12 ^o grade	1 (12th)	18 years old

In 2010/2011, there were 1206716 students enrolled in basic education in Portugal. This number has been decreasing due to the ageing of the Portuguese society and the respective decrease in the number of children and young people. About 86% of those students were attending state schools, and this percentage tends to increase with the economic crisis due to the families' financial problems (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2012a).

Education is one of the fields where, following the 1974 Revolution, a more expressive and positive evolution is noticeable in Portugal. The illiteracy rate was, at that time, 33% while in 2011 it had dropped to 5.2% (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2012b). On the other hand, compulsory schooling was increased (from 4 to 12 years) and the school system is now more democratic, being seen as a vehicle to social mobility.

However, many problems still persist such as the still high (but decreasing) early dropout rate from education and training: this rate was 28.7% in 2010; 23.2% in 2011 and 20.8% in 2012 (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2013).

Additionally, the retention and dropout rate for basic education³ is also still significant (although also tending to reduce): 7.9% in 2009–2010 and 7.5% in 2010–2011 (Ministério da Educação, GEPE, 2012).

School dropout in Portugal is an indicator of the unfulfilled democratization of the education system mainly regarding school success. As a matter of fact,

³ This rate is the percentage relation between the number of students who may not be carried forward to the next schooling level and the number of students enrolled in that school year.

school failure in Portugal is socially selective; it is higher among the unprivileged children/youngsters, and it tends to be cumulative – those who failed once have a high probability to fail again. Furthermore school failure often leads to school dropout.

Some authors feel that the building of a mass schooling in Portugal has some adverse effects since there has been a reinforcement of social exclusion mechanisms, while although aiming at the “school for every one”, school is not really prepared for dealing with so many differences (age, ethnical, cultural and social differences); therefore it tends to lose those who already are on the marginalization fringes (Carvalho, 2003; Ferreira, 1997).

Looking at the future, some of the experts in the Delphi study anticipated developments where school is becoming more and more a factor of social cleavage, associated to a risk of increasing delinquency:

“School environment will be more and more demanding in the field of competences and knowledge, and everybody must study in order to get there. But this is very difficult for those who come from a culture where school is not important and family does not give them the adequate support. (...) Kids who do not fit, who are not able to live in society as society demands; who do not feel good in school, who don’t have success; these kids are frustrated. Delinquency is another way for them to get success; it is a process of adaptation, a negative one but of adaptation still.” (Delphi respondent 1)

“We know that a great percentage of the youngsters who are in the judicial system dropped out from school. And now we have a great challenge with compulsory school until 18 years old, because the school system it is not prepared to keep some young people at school for so long.” (Delphi respondent 5)

In the Delphi second wave, respondents were again invited to express their views on this topic. Eighteen out of 34 responses reinforced the view that the anticipated increase in social inequalities will be fed by the inequalities in the educational system. These inequalities do not only have to do with the crisis and with school demotivation, as pointed out in the first wave, but also with other factors that are (re)gaining importance in the Portuguese society mainly due to the current crisis:

- More selective and exclusionary educational system;
- Lack of resources at schools to prevent school failure and early dropout;
- Difficulties of the school system with respect to a greater heterogeneity of students;
- Cut backs in resources for local prevention projects.

According to some experts’ comments included in the second wave Delphi survey:

“With the decrease of public investment in social policies, namely those addressed to families; and given the increasing of economic precariousness and the financial difficulties which are already felt in schools, the trend should be towards higher rates of school dropout.”

“The general trend is to an increasing educational level; however among young people in disadvantaged areas there will be an increase of early dropout from school. Equally fundamental will be the existence of local institutions capable to support these youngsters.”

5 YOUTH DELINQUENCIES

In Portugal, as in most other countries, youth delinquency tends to be statistically measured on the basis of the juvenile crimes reported to the security forces, which obviously represents only a small part of the reality.

According to the 2009 Annual Report of Internal Safety, a total of 3,479 juvenile crimes were reported to the security forces – National Republican Guard (*Guarda Nacional Republicana*, GNR), Public Safety Police (*Polícia de Segurança Pública*, PSP) and Portuguese Criminal Police (*Polícia Judiciária*). In 2010, that figure increased to 3,880 but in 2011 a strong decrease was registered: the number of participations regarding juvenile crimes was 1,978. On the other hand, the figures of the *Annual Reports of Internal Safety* show that juvenile crimes correspond to 0.8% of the total number of crimes registered during 2009 and 0.5% in 2011, which means that youth delinquency has a low and decreasing importance among the reported crimes (Sistema de Segurança Interna, 2010, 2011, 2012).

5.1 Delinquencies – Young People's Self-Reported Practices

Among the 1755 young students surveyed, 29.4% reported they had committed, over their life-time, at least one of the offences listed in the questionnaire. Only in 15.2% of the cases was the offence repeated in the last year.

The most prevalent types of offence are: vandalism, group fights, shoplifting and personal theft.

Boys and girls reported different practices regarding the various forms of offending. Among girls, there is a higher prevalence of two offence types: shoplifting (12.5% in the urban region and 8.6% in the rural) and vandalism (12.5% in the urban region and 6.2% in the rural). Among boys, there is a greater heterogeneity in terms of offence types: the most prevalent offence is also vandalism (24.9% in the urban region and 21.4% in the rural); group fights (22.1% in the rural region and 14.9% in the urban); personal theft (10.7% in the rural region and 12% in the urban), and shoplifting (11.8% in the urban region and 8% in the rural). Carrying a knife was reported by 5.8% of boys.

Differences are therefore evident according to the region where they live. In general terms, young people in the urban region reported a higher life-time prevalence of delinquency. However, group fights are more prevalent among boys in the rural region (22.1% of the rural boys reported that they had been involved in these type of situation). Also hate crimes are more prevalent among boys in the rural region; however this type of offence has a low relative weight: 2.8% among boys in the rural region compared with 2.2% among urban boys.

A primary concern in this analysis is the consideration of the relationship between different school paths, or different levels of school integration, and the self-reported delinquency. Out of the questions included in the school survey, it was considered as indicator of negative school integration: having school failure (estimation based on the relation between the age of the student and the school

year he/she attended); the statement by the young student that she/he does not like school; the self-appraisal as a student below average.

Offence type	Region	Boys	Girls	Total
Vandalism	Rural	21.4	6.2	13.7
	Urban	24.9	12.5	18.2
Personal theft	Rural	10.7	1.3	5.9
	Urban	12.0	6.6	9.1
Shoplifting	Rural	8.0	8.6	8.3
	Urban	11.8	12.5	12.2
Bike theft	Rural	2.8	0.7	1.7
	Urban	3.6	0.6	1.9
Robbery / Extortion	Rural	7.2	0.6	3.9
	Urban	7.1	1.9	4.2
Carrying a gun	Rural	2.4	0	1.2
	Urban	3.1	0.6	1.7
Carrying another weapon	Rural	9.0	1.3	5.1
	Urban	9.8	4.0	6.6
Assault	Rural	3.8	0.7	2.2
	Urban	6.0	1.4	3.4
Group fights	Rural	22.1	5.6	13.7
	Urban	14.9	7.2	10.7
Hate crime	Rural	2.8	0.3	1.5
	Urban	2.2	1.1	1.6
Dealing with drugs	Rural	3.1	1.7	2.4
	Urban	5.8	2.7	4.1

Table 3:
Life-time prevalence of self-reported delinquency by region and sex (%)

The results reveal that the young people who show at least one of those indicators of negative school integration have a higher life-time prevalence of self-reported delinquency. The young people who see themselves as below-average students, in both regions and for most of the offence types, are the ones showing higher prevalence rates.

This data thus seem to reveal that juvenile delinquency cannot be taken as an isolated phenomenon; it must be analysed taking in consideration other problems and difficulties in the young people's life trajectories, including those related to their school path.

When turning a space poorly appropriated by young people (Body-Gendrot, 1995), the school, or negative school integration, may re-enforce youngsters' delinquent behaviours and practices, in a life stage where the co-ordinates for the entry into adult life are being built. This does not mean that any causal relationship is being proposed here; it is rather an issue of underlining the fact that the young boys and girls who reported having committed an offence often feel excluded at school and have low school performance (and vice versa). These will certainly constitute relevant factors in their transition to adulthood. Dubet (1991) would say

that these young people share a school history, a history of failure and exclusion, which influences their attitudes and behaviours.

Table 4:
Life-time prevalence of self-reported delinquency among young people with negative school integration by region (%)

Offence type	Region	School failure	Do not like school	School performance below average	Total
Vandalism	Rural	11.9	10.5	17.1	13.7
	Urban	22.0	27.5	25.7	18.2
Personal theft	Rural	4.8	5.7	12.0	5.9
	Urban	11.0	14.8	13.8	9.1
Shoplifting	Rural	7.1	6.7	10.5	8.3
	Urban	17.3	19.0	19.7	12.2
Bike theft	Rural	2.4	1.9	3.9	1.7
	Urban	3.1	4.2	4.6	1.9
Robbery / Extortion	Rural	2.4	3.9	9.2	3.9
	Urban	6.4	8.4	8.6	4.2
Carrying a gun	Rural	0	2.9	2.6	1.2
	Urban	2.4	2.1	2.6	1.7
Carrying another weapon	Rural	7.1	4.8	7.9	5.1
	Urban	9.0	12.7	8.6	6.6
Assault	Rural	2.4	1.0	5.2	2.2
	Urban	6.6	7.0	5.3	3.4
Group fights	Rural	28.6	12.4	18.4	13.7
	Urban	12.6	13.5	11.9	10.7
Hate crime	Rural	4.8	0	3.9	1.5
	Urban	2.4	2.1	2.0	1.6
Dealing with drugs	Rural	2.4	1.9	6.6	2.4
	Urban	4.7	3.5	7.2	4.1

Considering the distinction proposed by Kazdin (1996) between two types of behaviour, the aggressive/violent and the delinquent, an attempt was made to know better who the young people who practice violent acts are.

According to the school survey data, only a small part of the young people has frequent behaviours that may encompass violent acts. More boys than girls have this kind of behaviour.

The more prevalent potentially violent behaviour is annoying other people just for fun; in any case the prevalence rate is below 8%. However, this does not alter the seriousness of this behaviour, or the need of an adequate supervision of these young people.

Violent behaviour	Boys	Girls	Total
Fights with others	3.5	1.1	2.2
Do something forbidden to have fun	6.6	3.0	4.7
Annoy other people just for fun	8.9	6.6	7.7

Table 5:
Frequent self-reported violent behaviours by sex (%)

On the other hand, the offence types that more clearly make use of violence are: robbery and extortion, group fights, aggressions, and hate crimes.

156 of the students surveyed reported that they had committed any of these offences during the last twelve months. Among these, 46 revealed a strong persistence of these behaviours, since they reported having committed five or more violent offences during the last twelve months.

According to some scholars (e.g. Farrington, 1987, 2008), these frequent young violent offenders are a group characterised by the presence of several risk factors. The next table gives an overview of these characteristics and risk factors, comparing three sub-groups of students.

Characteristic / Risk factor	No offence (<i>n</i> = 1,375)	All offenders (<i>n</i> = 156)	Frequent violent offenders (<i>n</i> = 46)
Boy	44.0	34.6	78.3
Aged between 16–17 years old	33.3	33.6	52.2
Father unemployed or with a precarious job	10.3	11.5	17.7
Mother unemployed or with a precarious job	10.4	9.7	8.8
Mother unable to work	3.0	7.1	6.7
Father not living at home	23.3	25.0	26.1
Drug use, last 30 days	4.3	12.5	32.6
Deviant peers	68.6	89.7	89.1
Violent peers	14.8	37.8	60.9
Do not like school	21.0	24.4	32.6
School performance below average	14.2	8.6	17.4
Social disorganisation of the neighbourhood	45.1	66.5	78.3
School failure	19.5	23.2	30.2

Table 6:
Characteristics and risk factors of self-reported non-offenders, offenders, and frequent violent offenders (%)

Note: Frequent violent offenders – 5 or more offences

Differences are clear. The frequent violent offenders are more strained than the other groups. The concentration of facets among the frequent violent offenders shows that these are also victims of other forms of violence in the context where they live in: they are more affected by financial distress since their mother and/or father are more vulnerable to unemployment, job precariousness, or even by health problems that prevent them from work; they live in socially disorganised

neighbourhoods, they have deviant or violent peers, they do not like school, and see themselves as poor students and have experienced school failure.

These results on the importance of deviant or violent peers or of living in a socially disorganised neighbourhood, as risk factors, emphasize the sociological socio-cultural model of analysis of youth deviance, which presupposes the sub-cultural contextualisation of the youngsters’ behaviours, namely in terms of the adherence to the norms of groups whose social representations differ from the dominant ones (Gomes et al., 2010.)

On the other hand, the importance of characteristics identified with negative integration at school as risk factors among the self-reported young offenders underlines the assumption that the rejection of authority and social normativity, embedded in school, which dictates the process of building-up a deviant identity. Additionally, it is at school that the young boy or girl finds groups that serve him/her as a reference to deviance (Dubet, 1991; Ferreira, 1997). The rupture with school is seen as the beginning of the deviant process, but also as the “motivation” that stimulates and leads the process of search of non-conformist group associations (Gomes et al., 2010).

5.2 Youngsters as Experts

Young people have their own views on juvenile delinquency prevention, and most of them have previous experiences with prevention measures. The experience with substance abuse prevention measures is more frequent than that with preventing violence measures. The experience with substance abuse prevention measures is more prevalent among rural young people. On the other hand, the experience with violence prevention measures is referred to, particularly, by urban young people.

Table 7:
Existence of experiences with prevention measures by region (%)

Experiences with substance abuse prevention measures	Urban	79.8
	Rural	82.3
Experiences with violence prevention measures	Urban	36.2
	Rural	29.7

Although prevention experiences are more oriented to substance abuse, young people believe that school influence is more positive concerning violence than drug.

Table 8:
School’s perceived influence on drug and violence prevention by region and sex (Mean values)

School’s perceived influence on ...	Region	Boys	Girls
Drug prevention	Urban	2.88	2.93
	Rural	2.86	2.84
Violence prevention	Urban	3.15	3.13
	Rural	3.11	3.03

Note: Mean value: 1 = “no influence at all”, 2 = “some influence”, 3 = “medium influence”, 4 = “strong influence”, 5 = “very strong influence”

Repressive measures, as well as information, are in the youngsters' opinion, less positive approaches to juvenile delinquency. The general idea is that "what works" best is the improvement of the young people's prospects to get a job and to provide them a good general education. The first one requires an investment on future prospects and on the creation of opportunities for young people having their place in the adult society; the second one certainly refers to the importance of school and especially of family.

Approach	Total
Provide a good general education	3.36
Improve their prospects to get a job	3.31
Listen to their sorrows and problems	3.18
Provide good opportunities for leisure time activities	3.16
Provide counselling to their parents	3.12
Provide training for a better social behaviour	3.10
Punish them severely when caught	2.98
Give information on possible consequences	2.98

Table 9:
Students' perceived efficacy of preventive approaches to juvenile delinquency (Mean values)

Note: Mean values: 1 = "works very good", 2 = "works", 3 = "doesn't work", 4 = "is rather harmful"

Family importance is, moreover, referred by the youngsters when asked about the main actors in prevention of juvenile delinquency. Parents, followed by friends, are the most important actors in young people's perceptions.

Actor	Total
Parents	1.28
Friends	1.56
Police	2.12
Teachers	2.29
Sports coaches	2.34
Social workers	2.51

Table 10:
Students' views on the importance of actors in prevention of juvenile delinquency (Mean values)

Note: Mean values: 1 = "very important", 2 = "important", 3 = "little important", 4 = "not important"

A question in an open format asked students for their ideas on how to prevent alcohol / substance abuse if they were teachers themselves. The suggested measures were diverse and heterogeneous:

- Providing information on substances;
- Focus on clarification of consequences (in terms of health, social development);
- Deterrence by negative examples (e.g. inviting former substance abusers);

- Talking to substance abusing students; understanding underlying causes / problems and providing support;
- Drug / alcohol controls in schools and sanctions if rules are broken;
- Involving parents;
- Leisure time and sports activities offered by schools;
- Non-intervention from school;
- Inefficiency of school measures;
- Right to self-harm;
- Drug abuse prevention not being teachers' business.

The same type of question concerned their views on violence prevention. Again, the students proposed a wide range of possible measures:

- Sanctions;
- Involving parents;
- Talks with those students who were involved in violent incidents aiming at achieving a better understanding of the underlying causes and providing the necessary support;
- Improving the classroom atmosphere, by improving the trust relationship between teacher and student;
- Sports and leisure activities outside school;
- Non-intervention;
- Information;
- Consequences for both victims and aggressors;
- Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms;
- Encouraging dialogue, communication and mediation between people involved in violent acts;
- Clarifying rules and sanctions;
- Improving skills (anger control, self-defense for potential victims; workshops on dispute mediation).

6 CROSSED VIEWS

As stated before, one of the purposes of this article is to contrast students' self-reported delinquency and their views and perceptions on prevention with a brief synthesis of the results of empirical work conducted with experts.

According to the experts' opinions, in the rural region juvenile violence and delinquency are quantitatively not relevant, although its visibility is increasing due to a greater awareness on these issues among local professionals.

In the urban area opinions differ: some say that "*it is not an alarming phenomenon*" (interviewee 3, urban); other refer that "*this is a municipality where juvenile delinquency is very high even compared to other urban areas*" (interviewee 7, urban).

The deep social cleavages and the existence of "pockets of poverty" in the urban municipality are strongly associated, according to the experts interviewed: "*there are areas with great economic needs and this leads to certain behaviours among*

young people" (interviewee 2, urban); *"there is a socio-economic context that encourages delinquency"* (interviewee 1, urban).

This association between precariousness/poverty/delinquency is not clear in the interviewees' statements in the rural area. Here there is a notion that *"it is a transversal phenomenon to every social group"* (interviewee 5, rural). However, there is also awareness that the consequences are not the same to everyone: *"The cases of the most needed families end up in the probation services. In other cases, when people have money to pay the fine, these do not reach the services"* (interviewee 5, rural).

Also in the urban area a reference to this aspect is made. Families with higher incomes *"are those who can better protect themselves from the probation services intervention"* (interviewee 7, urban). On the other hand, *"vulnerable populations are more available for that intervention which is regarded as a support"* (interviewee 7, urban).

Both in the rural and in the urban regions, the relationship between young people and the family is seen as crucial.

A parental super-protection is mentioned, which in some occasions prevents the youngsters' possibility of a full emotional development: *"Not knowing how to manage things that didn't go well, not having emotional autonomy may even lead to suicide; to violence among peers"* (interviewee 1, rural).

On the other hand, some expert interviewed spoke about a lack of parental skills: lack of responsibility; lack of family dialogue; lack of supervision; lack of rules: *"these are young people who are left on their own with neither limits nor rules"* (interviewee 2, urban).

These issues, among the urban expert interviewed, are again linked to the families' economic precariousness which leads to long working hours, as well as to the existence of many lone-parent families in which the male figure is absent.

The importance of the family, the need for dialogue in the family, inclusive of young people; the need for parental supervision, and even the need for rules, are aspects underlined also by young people both in the rural and urban focus-group discussions: *"the family is the start"*, *"parents should listen to young people"*, *"there are young people who never speak with their parents"*, and, *"my parents never ask me where I'm going (they trust me) but they should want to know more"*. These are some of the young people's statements voiced.

The experts interviewed in the urban region referred to the existence of robbery, theft and bullying among young people: *"They are young people, more boys than girls, who are not adapted to school, don't have success and the acts they carry out are robbery, theft and bullying and other uncivil behaviours that are not crimes but bother people and originate a feeling of insecurity, becoming associated to juvenile delinquency"* (interviewee 3, urban).

In the rural region, acts of violence and alcohol and drugs consumption are evidenced. The increased trivialization of this consumption is a matter of concern: *"the consumptions are so trivialized that they don't reach the probation services, so trivialized that the health services also devaluate them and do not do the screening of these consumptions"* (interviewee 5, rural).

The trivialization of the problem of alcohol and drug consumption was also expressed by the young participants in the focus-group discussion in the rural

region. They were equally open about the extent of their knowledge as to the places where to get drugs as well as on frequent local private parties where the consumption of drugs and alcohol is seen as a normal behaviour and a strategy to become part of a peer group.

7 CONCLUDING REMARKS IN TIMES OF CRISIS

If it is certain that poverty and social exclusion cannot be seen, *per se*, as causes for rise of delinquency and violence; those may contribute to a lower efficacy of the social regulation mechanisms, leading to deviant behaviours (Gomes et al., 2010). In the current situation of financial, social and political crisis in Portugal, it is therefore even more crucial the importance of a structural and integrated intervention acting on the contextual factors of young people's lives, if the aim is prevention.

Equally fundamental is the need to ensure that the crisis and the ensuing budget restrictions do not jeopardise the progress achieved in the field of education, namely by policies fighting school failure and dropout, nor serve as a pretext for reducing efforts in this respect. The importance of generating knowledge regarding the true dimension and characteristics of juvenile delinquency, in terms of victims, perpetrators, contexts, offence types, among others, is key for the design and implementation of adequate policy measures, namely focusing on prevention of youth violence and delinquency.

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Prevention of Juvenile Crime and Deviance: Adolescents' and Experts' Views in an International Perspective

Thomas Görgen, Ann Evenepoel, Benjamin Kraus,
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Purpose:

This article analyses perspectives on youth crime prevention in samples of 13–17 year old students from 6 European countries and of practitioners/experts in Belgium and Germany.

Design/Methods/Approach:

Surveys were conducted among urban and rural school students (n = 10682). Expert and practitioner perspectives were taken into account using Delphi surveys, standardized surveys on the state of youth crime prevention, and semi-structured interviews with practitioners in the areas where the school surveys were conducted.

Findings:

While the majority of students have been targeted by drug abuse prevention measures, rates for violence prevention are lower. Students ascribe moderate preventive potential to school and they regard peers and parents as most influential in prevention while professional agents are viewed as less important. Punitive approaches are not rejected, but approaches focusing on individual resources and problems are given priority. Experts point at the significance of socioeconomic factors related to the problem of (youth) delinquency and hence of social policy measures. They recommend prevention starting at an early age, strengthening social skills and following multi-professional approaches.

Research Limitations/Implications:

Schools surveys excluded special schools, and response rates in expert surveys were low or moderate.

Practical Implications:

Findings point to young persons' understanding of factors influencing their behaviour and at connections between involvement in offending and accessibility for approaches to prevention. Expert surveys show needs for improvement in the field of prevention, especially in terms of funding, evaluation, and fundamental strategic approaches.

Originality/Value:

Perspectives of both actors and targets of preventive approaches are taken into account.

UDC: 343.91-053.6

Keywords: prevention, juvenile delinquency, school survey, expert survey, drug abuse, violence

Preprečevanje mladoletniške kriminalitete in deviantnosti: pogledi mladostnikov in strokovnjakov z mednarodne perspektive

Namen prispevka:

Članek na podlagi analize, ki vključuje vzorec 13–17 let starih dijakov iz šestih evropskih držav in praktikov/strokovnjakov iz Belgije in Nemčije, prikazuje poglede na preprečevanje mladoletniške kriminalitete.

Metode:

Raziskave so bile izvedene med dijaki (n = 10.682) v mestnem in podeželskem okolju. Pogledi strokovnjakov in praktikov so bili pridobljeni s študijo Delphi, standardiziranimi raziskavami o stanju preprečevanja mladoletniške kriminalitete in pol-strukturiranimi intervjuji s praktiki z območij, kjer so bile opravljene raziskave v šolah.

Ugotovitve:

Medtem ko je bila večina dijakov ciljna skupina preventivnih ukrepov o zlorabi drog, je stopnja preprečevanja nasilja nižja. Dijaki šoli pripisujejo zmeren preventivni vpliv. Svoje vrstnike in starše obravnavajo kot najbolj vplivne pri preprečevanju, medtem ko so strokovnjaki manj pomembni. Kaznovalnih pristopov ne zavračajo, vendar so v ospredju tisti, ki se osredotočajo na posamezne vire. Strokovnjaki opozarjajo na pomen družbenoekonomskih dejavnikov, povezanih s problemom (mladoletniškega) prestopništva in posledično ukrepov socialne politike. Priporočajo, da se preprečevanje začne že v zgodnjih letih s krepitvijo socialnih veščin in interdisciplinarnih pristopov.

Omejitve/uporabnost raziskave:

Ankete, opravljene v šolah, ne vključujejo šol s posebnimi programi, stopnja odziva v raziskavah, opravljenih med strokovnjaki, pa je bila nizka ali zmerna.

Praktična uporabnost:

Ugotovitve kažejo razumevanje dijakov o pomenu dejavnikov, ki vplivajo na njihovo vedenje, in povezave med udeležbo pri kršitvah in dostopnostjo do preprečevalnih ukrepov. Raziskave, opravljene med strokovnjaki, kažejo potrebe za izboljšanje na področju preprečevanja, zlasti v smislu financiranja, vrednotenja in temeljnih strateških pristopov.

Izvirnost/pomembnost prispevka:

Upoštevani so pogledi izvajalcev prevencije in ciljne skupine glede preventivnih pristopov.

UDK: 343.91-053.6

Ključne besede: preprečevanje, mladoletniška kriminaliteta, raziskava, šola, strokovnjaki, zloraba drog, nasilje

1 INTRODUCTION

The study *Youth deviance and youth violence: A European multi-agency perspective on best practices in prevention and control* (Görgen et al., 2013) collected data on prevention of youth crime and deviant behaviour, both from the perspective of adult practitioners and experts, and from adolescents (as “targets” of prevention measures). It has expanded the scope of traditional self-report studies by including young persons’ experiences and views related to prevention. As everyday lay theories, such views are important for perceptions of social situations, decision-making, and choices between alternative courses of action. Generally, preventive measures going beyond situational prevention (such as control of access to alcohol, or better lighting of streets and public spaces) depend upon active participation of the target groups, whether they are approached as potential offenders or as victims. This research offers the possibility to compare young persons’ experiences with crime prevention and their evaluations, perceptions and attitudes across a number of European countries.

2 BACKGROUND

The *YouPrev* study was carried out simultaneously in Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain in 2011 and 2012 (see Görgen et al., 2013). One central element was a set of locally focused studies on youth crime and its prevention, and in each partner country, one urban and one rural area were taken into consideration. The main goal of these studies was to analyse local and regional conditions of youth deviance and violence and its prevention and control. Data presented here are from student surveys on the one hand, and from expert interviews and surveys on the other; in addition to local samples of experts (i.e. practitioners from different fields linked to youth crime and its prevention), experts were also surveyed at a national level.

3 METHOD

School survey – local self-report studies in schools: Self-report surveys are a well-established instrument going beyond law enforcement’s data on reported crime and providing information on situational conditions, personality variables and further background factors of deviance and victimization (cf. Görgen & Rabold, 2009). The survey applied in the study was based on questionnaires used in the tradition of the International Self-Reported Delinquency Study (see Enzmann et al., 2010; Junger-Tas et al., 2010, on the second wave ISRD-2, and Junger-Tas, Marshall, & Ribeaud, 2003, on the first wave). Other instruments like the one developed by the

Criminological Research Institute of Lower Saxony (Hanover, Germany; cf. Baier, Pfeiffer, Simonson, & Rabold, 2009) were used for specific components. When adapting the instrument for the purposes of this project, a special focus was put on questions regarding young people's views on crime and violence prevention.

Local interview studies: In order to provide a coherent multi-perspective picture of (perceived) problems in the field of juvenile deviance and attempts to prevent and reduce young people's crime and violence, interviews were also conducted with relevant actors in the areas where the self-report studies were done. These interviews addressed multi-professional and multi-agency samples, including the police, judiciary, and juvenile social work. Purposive samples were selected according to the interviewee's assumed expertise and with regard to professional and institutional heterogeneity. The interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews based on an interview guideline (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002), and the specific focus was on the local situation of youth crime and prevention and on what works (or is perceived as working) and what does not work (or is perceived as not working).

National institutional and expert surveys: Each country conducted a national survey of relevant institutions and experts, which included researchers, practitioners, and policy makers as respondents. The survey was conducted primarily via an online questionnaire. It focused on the perceived state of prevention in each country, preventive approaches that are taken in the field of juvenile delinquency/deviance, and the quality and status of evaluation of the approaches taken.

Delphi survey: In another step, a future-oriented expert perspective was applied to the topic of youth problem behaviour and its prevention and control. By conducting two-wave national Delphi surveys and a third multinational round, anticipated demographic and social changes of the decade to come were taken into account. While attempts to predict future developments always run the risk of being inaccurate, planning for the future inevitably requires prognosis or prediction. Among different methods for forecasting purposes, the Delphi method as a multistep interactive survey method using panels of experts (cf. Powell, 2003; Rowe & Wright, 1999, 2001) has gained particular significance. The panels of the national Delphi surveys consisted of a multi-disciplinary group of experts, including practitioners from different relevant fields, researchers and policy makers. The survey instrument focused on future developments in the field of youth deviance and youth violence and the challenges arising for prevention and control.

4 YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS ON PREVENTION OF YOUTH CRIME AND DEVIANCE: THE SCHOOL SURVEY

4.1 Sample Description

The school survey was conducted in two regions per country, one rural and one urban; in Belgium, three regions (urban, semi-urban and rural) were chosen in order to include French as well as Dutch speaking students. In total, 10682 students participated. Table 1 displays the distribution of some key characteristics in the national samples.

Characteristics	Belgium	Spain	Germany	Portugal	Slovenia	Hungary	Total
<i>n</i>	1058	1766	2186	1577	1991	2104	10682
Mean age (in years)	15.9	15.3	14.8	15.3	14.5	15.5	15.1
Sex: Female	51.9	50.8	47.5	52.9	55.7	47.3	50.8
Region: Urban	45.1 ¹	77.5	47.2	62.4	51.4	52.3	56.0
Migr. Background (1 st and 2 nd Gen.)	38.6	19.9	25.4	32.8	22.7	5.7	22.5
Language spoken at home: Native ²	65.2	34.8	31.5	18.5	34.1	6.7	33.8
Single parent household	15.4	12.9	17.2	22.2	13.7	23.6	17.6
Both parents unemployed	10.4	6.1	2.9	9.7	3.1	4.7	5.6

Table 1:
Sample characteristics of the international school survey dataset (in per cent)

The mean age of respondents is 15.1 years ($SD = 1.186$); students in Belgium are the oldest (15.9 y.) and Slovenians are the youngest (14.5 y.). The percentages of females vary between 47.3% in Hungary and 55.7% in Slovenia. The Spanish (77.5%) and Portuguese (62.4%) samples consist mainly of students who attend school in urban areas; in both cases, this overrepresentation of urban students is due to difficulties with sampling in sparsely populated rural areas. Samples also differ regarding the ethnic origin of the participants. Only 5.7% of the Hungarian students had a migration background, in contrast to the heterogeneous population structure of especially Belgium and Portugal, where around one third of the participants had their origins in other countries. Differences can also be found regarding the migrants' language spoken at home: While 65.2% of Belgian students with foreign origins spoke their native language at home, only 6.7% of migrants in Hungary did not speak Hungarian with their parents. In Portugal (22.2%) and Hungary (23.6%), nearly one fourth of students lived in single parent households, while these rates are considerably lower in Spain (12.9%) or Slovenia (13.7%). On average across the six participating countries, 5.6% of all students lived with an unemployed mother and father. Belgium and Portugal had the highest rates of households with both unemployed mother and father (10.4% and 9.7%).

1 Belgium: 3 regions; 45% urban, 32% semi-urban, 23% rural.

2 Participants with migration background ($n = 2379$; 89 missing values) were asked for the language the participant most often speaks with the people he/she lives with: Native language ($n = 777$); Language of the Country, where the study is conducted ($n = 1520$).

4.2 Results of the Local Self-Report Surveys among Students

4.2.1 Young People's Experiences with Prevention Measures

Referring to the last twelve months, subjects were asked whether they had "been given information on alcohol, drugs, and other harmful substances" and whether they had participated "in any activities aimed at avoiding / reducing violence by young people or against young people". Table 2 presents the results.

Table 2:
12-month prevalence of provision of substance abuse information to respondents and of respondents' participation in violence prevention measures (%)

Information on substance abuse provided?	Belgium <i>n</i> = 1016	Spain <i>n</i> = 1729	Germany <i>n</i> = 2096	Portugal <i>n</i> = 1550	Slovenia <i>n</i> = 1959	Hungary <i>n</i> = 2070
Yes	61.6	78.2	70.8	80.8	55.9	80.3
Participation in violence prevention measures	Belgium <i>n</i> = 1006	Spain <i>n</i> = 1700	Germany <i>n</i> = 2042	Portugal <i>n</i> = 1523	Slovenia <i>n</i> = 1952	Hungary <i>n</i> = 2011
Yes	18.3	39.8	25.6	33.7	22.1	23.0

Measures related to substance abuse are widespread across countries, ranging from 5% in Slovenia to rates around 80% in Portugal, Hungary and Spain. Proportions of students who participated in violence prevention measures are much lower and range from 18% in Belgium to 40% in Spain.

Table 3 presents data on characteristics of receivers and non-receivers of violence prevention measures in the last 12 months. Both groups show similar profiles, with respondents from urban schools, youths with a migration background and those having violent peers slightly overrepresented among participants in violence prevention measures. In Belgium, students from highly disorganized neighbourhoods make up 18% of participants of violence prevention measures while among non-participants their share is 13%.

Table 4 presents data on groups with differential involvement in delinquency and their participation in violence prevention measures. It differentiates between students who reported five or more violent offences for the period of the last twelve months (FVO), students reporting at least one offence other than illegal downloading for the same period, and those students who reported no offence at all or no other offence than illegal downloading. With regard to the high 12-month prevalence of making illegal downloads ranging from 40.5% per cent in Germany to 84.9 per cent in Spain, youths who reported no other offence were grouped together with the non-offenders.

Characteristics	Belgium		Spain		Germany		Portugal		Slovenia		Hungary		Total	
	VP+	VP-	VP+	VP-	VP+	VP-	VP+	VP-	VP+	VP-	VP+	VP-	VP+	VP-
<i>n</i>	822	184	676	1024	522	1520	514	1009	432	1520	463	1548	2791	7443
Mean age (in years)	15.9	15.9	15.1	15.4	14.7	14.8	15.1	15.4	14.5	14.6	15.5	15.5	15.3	15.8
Sex: Female	52.2	53.6	51.9	51.0	49.8	47.7	55.9	52.0	52.3	57.3	48.4	47.0	51.7	51.2
Region: Urban	45.1	44.4	80.3	73.5	42.1	47.9	66.3	59.7	59.5	48.9	51.2	52.3	58.6	54.7
Migr. Background	44.2	36.5	19.9	18.9	24.3	24.6	34.4	30.2	28.7	21.3	7.4	5.5	24.3	21.2
High level of NSDO	18.2	13.3	16.9	20.7	4.6	4.0	20.0	18.8	11.4	11.3	12.6	13.1	13.7	12.7
Having violent peers	17.8	17.4	22.6	24.0	21.1	16.7	19.6	16.7	17.4	10.8	7.3	7.2	18.1	14.7

Table 3:
Characteristics of participants (VP+) and non-participants (VP-) in violence prevention measures in the last 12 months (in %; NSDO = neighbourhood social disorganization)

Table 4:
Participation in violence prevention measures in the last 12 months by country and level of involvement in delinquency (participants in % of the respective subsample)

	Belgium	Spain	Germany	Portugal	Slovenia	Hungary
≥ 5 violent offences (FVO)	28.9	51.7	37.7	58.6	25.9	23.7
Other offenders	18.1	39.0	26.2	33.5	21.8	22.0
Non-offenders	17.7	39.9	24.9	33.2	22.2	23.3

In Belgium, Germany, Spain and Portugal, there is a clear connection between delinquency and participation. While, for example in Germany, 38% of frequent violent offenders participated in violence prevention measures during the last twelve months, this is only true for 26% of other offenders and 25% of non-offenders. So there appears to be some selection process towards those highly involved in violent behaviour. However, in Slovenia and in Hungary, differences between the three groups are minimal or non-existent.

4.2.2 Young People's Perceptions of Prevention

Perceived preventive impact of school: Subjects were asked about the potential for prevention they ascribe to school. Questions were focussed on violence and substance use. Results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5:
Students' perceptions of school's potential influence on substance use and violence by country (5-point scale from 1 = no influence at all to 5 = very strong influence); mean values (SD)

Potential influence of school on ...	Belgium 995 ≤ n ≤ 1005	Spain 1718 ≤ n ≤ 1740	Germany 2099 ≤ n ≤ 2109	Portugal 1533 ≤ n ≤ 1525	Slovenia 1952 ≤ n ≤ 1946	Hungary 2047 ≤ n ≤ 2053
substance consumption	2.48 (1.067)	2.40 (1.052)	2.62 (1.141)	2.88 (1.133)	2.67 (1.145)	2.15 (1.009)
violent behaviour	2.65 (1.011)	2.90 (1.055)	2.94 (1.082)	3.11 (1.066)	3.03 (1.047)	2.61 (.977)

Table 5 shows that in all countries, students perceive the potential influence of school on substance use on one hand and on violence on the other as only moderate. Overall, students in Portugal and Slovenia hold the most positive views, followed by those in Germany. Respondents in Hungary and Belgium see the least potential. Across countries, respondents share the view that school's possible influence on substance use is lower than the impact it can have on violence. Hungarian students hold the most sceptical views regarding prevention in the field of substance use. This is in line with the high rate of heavy alcohol use among Hungarian youngsters. 37.1% had been severely drunk during the last month, while in the overall sample this rate is 24.2%. Thus, they feel that school does not influence their behaviour in this respect.

Table 6 breaks down youngsters' views by their level of involvement in delinquency.

Potential influence of school on ...	≥ 5 violent offences (FVO) 238 ≤ n ≤ 241	other offenders 2720 ≤ n ≤ 2741	no offence 7372 ≤ n ≤ 7410
substance consumption	2.15 (1.227)	2.33 (1.099)	2.61 (1.111)
violent behaviour	2.42 (1.098)	2.73 (1.061)	2.96 (1.044)

Table 6: Students' perceptions of school's potential influence on substance use and violence by level of involvement in delinquency (5-point scale from 1 = no influence at all to 5 = very strong influence); mean values (SD)

The three groups differentiated in Table 6 have in common the view that school may rather have some influence upon young persons' violent behaviour than on their use and abuse of alcohol and drugs. At the same time, the "optimism" that respondents place on the preventive potential of educational institutions has a clear link with their involvement in offending. Frequent violent offenders see the least potential for successful intervention by schools, whereas those without any delinquent involvement (except – in a number of cases – illegal downloads from the internet) see the strongest possible influence of teachers and schools. However, even the judgments of the non-offenders remain below the mid-point of the scale.

In sum, students perceive the influence of school on problem behaviour and delinquency as moderate, especially regarding to substance abuse. The level of influence attributed to school is negatively linked to young people's involvement in delinquent behaviour.

Perceived importance of preventive agents: As seen above, the potential of school for preventing substance abuse and violence is perceived as limited. This raises the question as to whom young people would possibly regard as influential and how they judge other persons, professions, and institutions. The question used to measure this was: "In your opinion: Who is important when trying to keep young people from doing forbidden things?" Table 7 presents results.

Agent	Belgium 1020 ≤ n ≤ 1033	Spain 1679 ≤ n ≤ 1754	Germany 2107 ≤ n ≤ 2069	Portugal 1511 ≤ n ≤ 1549	Slovenia 1955 ≤ n ≤ 1960	Hungary 2087 ≤ n ≤ 2066
parents	1.49 (.738)	1.43 (.699)	1.48 (.749)	1.28 (.567)	1.89 (.788)	1.21 (.519)
friends	1.53 (.789)	1.41 (.704)	1.37 (.698)	1.56 (.751)	1.76 (.843)	1.43 (.709)
police	2.43 (.998)	2.40 (1.014)	2.03 (.961)	2.12 (.931)	2.44 (.943)	1.88 (.937)
sports coaches	2.68 (1.005)	2.45 (.901)	2.75 (1.009)	2.34 (.949)	2.63 (.976)	2.12 (.997)
teachers	2.74 (.913)	2.67 (.879)	2.79 (.930)	2.29 (.806)	2.70 (.869)	2.35 (.885)
social workers	2.86 (.871)	2.55 (.867)	2.46 (.944)	2.51 (.863)	2.70 (.900)	2.87 (.945)

Table 7: Students' views on the importance of formal and informal preventive agents by country (4-point scale from 1 = very important to 4 = unimportant), sorted by means of the total sample; mean value (SD)

Unanimously, the largest importance is attributed to parents and peers – with a slight preponderance for the former in Belgium, Portugal and Hungary, and for the latter in Spain, Germany and Slovenia. This view goes hand in hand with criminological findings on the importance of parenting styles and parental supervision and on the significance of peers for juveniles' behaviour and the relative gain of peers over family in adolescence as compared to childhood. Deviant and violent peers are risk factors for delinquency (see e.g. Farrington, 2008). There is a high level of covariation between a young person's deviance and the behaviour of peers, even when selection effects are controlled (see Gifford-Smith, Dodge, Dishion, & McCord, 2005). New research points to the impact of social networks. Thus, Kreager & Haynie (2011) found a significant influence of friends of adolescents' romantic partners on young persons' drinking behaviour. Shakya, Christakis, & Fowler (2012) showed that excessive consumption of alcohol, smoking, and use of marihuana are linked to maternal parenting styles in the families of the respective juvenile's friends, with an authoritative style being most favourable.

The high importance attributed to parents and peers can be found across levels of involvement in delinquency. However, while for non-offenders, parents ($M = 1.42$) are slightly more important than peers ($M = 1.51$), rank orders are reversed for frequent violent offenders (parents: $M = 1.71$; peers: $M = 1.59$) and other offenders (parents: $M = 1.57$; peers: $M = 1.49$).

In all countries, the police are "next on the list". However, the gap between the importance attributed to a young person's everyday social network and different professional actors is substantial. Hungarian, German, and Portuguese youngsters have the most positive views of police, and their judgments concerning this group differ from those for other professions. Students from Spain, Belgium, and Slovenia are less optimistic regarding the impact of police on controlling deviant behaviour.

Little importance is attributed to teachers and social workers. In Spain, Germany and Slovenia, teachers are regarded as the least important professional group. Given the frequency and intensity of contact between teachers and students, this is an astonishing finding. The low level of influence attributed to teachers may be connected to their perceived role as educators, not as a controlling agency. Students may also draw upon their everyday perception of the low impact of teachers on control of students' behaviour. At the same time, they may underestimate the actual, at least indirect, influence (see Suldo, Mihalas, Powell, & French, 2008). Findings for the police have to be seen in light of their actual and perceived specialist role in "trying to keep young people from doing forbidden things".

Perceived efficacy of preventive approaches: Students were given a set of approaches which could prevent young people from engaging in forbidden acts ("like violence, stealing something, taking drugs") and were asked to express their view on the effectiveness of these approaches. Results are given in Table 8.

Approach	Belgium 1018 ≤ n ≤ 1027	Spain 1723 ≤ n ≤ 1720	Germany 2118 ≤ n ≤ 2131	Portugal 1551 ≤ n ≤ 1559	Slovenia 1962 ≤ n ≤ 1956	Hungary 2077 ≤ n ≤ 2088
Listen to their sorrows and problems.	1.94 (.710)	1.92 (.757)	1.79 (.794)	1.82 (.700)	1.76 (.736)	1.57 (.759)
Improve their prospects to get a job.	2.04 (.758)	1.84 (.753)	1.75 (.756)	1.69 (.691)	1.81 (.745)	1.72 (.828)
Give them a good general education.	2.05 (.758)	1.71 (.749)	2.02 (.827)	1.64 (.701)	2.00 (.791)	1.84 (.830)
Provide good opportunities for leisure time activities.	2.07 (.771)	2.17 (.869)	1.85 (.792)	1.84 (.733)	1.82 (.750)	1.69 (.813)
Provide training for better social behaviour.	2.10 (.734)	2.21 (.838)	1.97 (.824)	1.90 (.714)	2.03 (.793)	1.93 (.861)
Give information on possible consequences.	2.27 (.788)	2.21 (.839)	2.06 (.878)	2.02 (.777)	2.05 (.807)	1.73 (.829)
Provide counselling to their parents.	2.26 (.795)	2.26 (.845)	2.26 (.903)	2.26 (.707)	2.26 (.814)	2.26 (.870)
Punish them severely when caught.	2.23 (.882)	2.46 (.927)	2.22 (.925)	2.02 (.833)	2.35 (.877)	2.19 (.930)

Table 8: Students' views on efficacy of preventive approaches by country (4-point scale from 1 = works very well to 4 = is rather harmful); mean values (SD)

Students' answers can be considered as expressions of lay theories about effects of measures on young persons' behaviour. Such lay theories have been the topic of psychological research for decades. The importance of these everyday concepts lies in the fact that "people's perceptions are guided by their lay theories, helping them to understand, predict, control, and respond to their social world" (Levy, West, & Ramirez, 2005: 190).

Across countries, most preventive approaches are evaluated positively. However, there is a clear tendency to attribute less significance to punitive approaches on the one hand and to parent counselling on the other. Priority is given to person-centered approaches ("listen to their sorrows and problems") and to educational and labour market perspectives ("give them a good general education" and "improve their prospects to get a job"). Portuguese youngsters have the most positive stance towards prevention via deterrence ($M = 2.02$), while their Spanish neighbours most clearly reject this approach ($M = 2.46$). Crime prevention via improved job prospects receives the strongest support in Portugal ($M = 1.69$), Hungary ($M = 1.72$) and Germany ($M = 1.75$).

If groups with differential involvement in delinquent behaviour are compared, offenders generally have less positive views than non-offenders, and among the

former, frequent violent offenders deliver the most negative evaluations. However, in all three groups, addressing a person's sorrows and problems, and improving his or her job prospects are seen as the most promising approaches.

5 EXPERTS'/PRACTITIONERS' VIEWS ON PREVENTION OF YOUTH CRIME AND DEVIANCE

Doing research into the field of the prevention of youth crime requires not only a study of official documents, academic literature or policy measures, it is of essence to study perceptions and opinions of people involved in day-to-day practice. While the views of youngsters have been discussed before, we will now turn to those of the professional actors in the field. In the course of the *YouPrev* study, their views and perceptions have been included in multiple ways. First of all, a nationwide institutional questionnaire addressed the state of youth crime prevention in the six countries. Experts' opinions were collected on prevailing strategies in practice, how the prevention landscape is organised, and on the state of the art regarding policy and organizational aspects. In a next phase, Delphi surveys explored potential future developments related to the domain of youth crime and its prevention and the possibilities for anticipation. Finally, in the same regions where the school surveys were conducted, experts and practitioners were interviewed about local specificities of youth crime and how it is approached by local institutions and actors. This article will focus upon the views of Belgian and German experts, and we will elaborate on the main differences and similarities between both countries and reflect upon possible implications for the youth crime prevention field.

5.1 Significant Future Developments as Anticipated by Experts

Important developments that are considered influential in the field of juvenile delinquency are mainly seen in three dimensions: demographic change, technological developments, and social processes of change.

Several issues were raised on a macro level that are expected to be or already are of great influence on youth delinquency. Even in Germany with its comparatively good economic situation, the experts expect more social inequality, a growing polarization between social groups, shrinking income and precarious jobs, all this affecting the most vulnerable families and youngsters and depriving their future perspectives. Respondents fear a decline of government spending in social policy and education, which will stimulate even more the expected negative developments for certain groups.

If we take a look at expected trends in numbers of juvenile offenders registered by the police, we can observe contradictory views. In the eyes of German experts, this number will drop, pointing in the same direction as the official estimated decrease of the number of youngsters aged 14 to 17 which predicts a drop from 3.3 million in 2009 to 2.8 million juveniles until 2020 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2009). Although Belgian official prognoses point as well to a general decrease of the

number of 14 to 17 year olds (ADSEI – waarnemingen, 2012) the experts predict an increase of juvenile offenders. Some Belgian experts indicated that youth crime as such will not rise, but the social reaction will become more severe. In this context, the experts often referred to the use of administrative sanctions to tackle incivilities committed by youngsters. It is expected that this system will expand to include more and more types of behaviour (that is more often typical for youngsters).³

In the eyes of the experts from both countries, intergenerational and intercultural conflicts will increase, traditional family structures will further diminish, and society will become more and more individualistic. However, German respondents expressed both optimistic and pessimistic perspectives regarding these societal changes.

Finally, experts from both countries stressed the impact of technological developments creating new opportunities for crime. They assume that cyber crime will rise and cyber bullying will take an important place in the field of youth crime. The use of social media creates room for the bullying behaviour to continue after school. Youngsters can also get a false sense of security, which may have consequences for potential young victims of cyber paedophilia. In Germany, computer fraud, copyright infringements and attacks on privacy and personal data were mentioned; concerns with the latter phenomenon were also shared by the Belgian experts.

5.2 Experts' Views on and Recommendations for the Field of Prevention

Main Current Approaches of Prevention:

Dominance of Targeted Prevention

Experts were asked about the major problems and target groups that are being addressed by preventive activities. It appeared that in both countries, a focus on “classic” risk factors is prevailing. Prevention seems to be focused primarily on young male (migrant) adolescents aged 14 to 17 years. Furthermore, abuse of alcohol, illegal and legal substances, (school related) violence and truancy (particularly in Belgium) were named as the most important phenomena that are being addressed. Both Belgian and German experts mentioned living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and/or families as additional background factors for juvenile offending. The Delphi survey pointed out that the Belgian experts also think that the above-mentioned type of problems will increase the most in the upcoming years. It is not that surprising considering the fact that violence, truancy, alcohol, drug and other (legal or illegal) substances abuse are rather “classic” problems that are commonly related to deviant or criminal youngsters and addressed by preventive measures. German experts in general perceive youth crime as a relatively stable phenomenon; some of them predicted increases in these

3 It is striking that at the time of writing, the legislation on administrative sanctions in Belgium is reformed. From now on minors from the age of 14 can receive an administrative sanction (instead of 16 with the previous legislation).

everyday types of juvenile delinquency especially for disadvantaged youngsters with a low educational background.

The experts were asked to indicate which approach prevails in preventive work directed at youth. Both German and Belgian experts consider primary prevention models less influential than secondary and tertiary approaches in the current practice of youth crime prevention; prevention of youth crime is described as focusing on young people that are at risk of becoming an offender/victim or are already. However, the results of the local interviews show that the majority of experts are in favour of primary approaches and perceive this as an important challenge and potential improvement of preventing and reducing youth delinquency. Furthermore, from the analysis of the Belgian local case study, it seems that secondary (targeted) prevention is more present in the urban/semi-urban area than in the rural area. This may suggest that rural areas have more resources or tools available to invest in general preventive measures (youth associations, leisure time activities, etc.) without a predefined focus on security and safety, which are often important topics on urban policy agendas. Nevertheless, this observation could not be made in the German study.

In both countries, police, social work and schools are perceived as the most important actors in the field. However in Belgium the prevention services are seen as the key players.⁴ Both German and Belgian experts consider psychological and physical health professions as the least important. This may point to the fact that the respondents do not immediately relate causes of problems or problematic behaviour with the general health and wellbeing of children and youngsters.

Recommendations Regarding Preventive Strategies

Summarizing results from the different kinds of expert surveys that were conducted in the course of the study, the most important recommendations for general strategies in the field of youth crime prevention were the following:

- In the written surveys as well as in interviews, experts highlighted the significance of **interagency cooperation/multi-professional approaches**. In their eyes, youth crime prevention cannot be the task of only one institution. The most relevant professional agents are social work, police, and schools, and in case of juveniles that have already become delinquent, also the judicial system. Lots of experts also stress that parents should be involved in preventive programmes whenever possible. German experts were relatively optimistic about the current state of multi-professional cooperation in prevention. Local experts described positive cooperation between relevant actors, and in the nationwide survey the state of cooperation was rated rather positively (but still less than would be ideal). In Belgium, views were divided in the different selected regions. Only in the urban region was it clear that experts saw a lack of communication and information exchange due to the diverse (fragmented) policies in the city.

⁴ *This comes as no surprise if we take a look at the Belgian security and prevention policy. Local governments can establish strategic security and prevention plans with (and financed by) the federal government. Within these kinds of 'contracts', local prevention officers and services were created.*

- According to the experts, prevention has the best chances to have positive effects when it aims at **reducing risk factors** and **strengthening juveniles' positive social skills**.
- Respondents stressed the benefits of tailoring preventive measures to **individual needs of juveniles and of particular target groups**. For instance, the small group of repeat offenders that commits a large share of the registered offences might need different approaches than the majority of juveniles whose delinquency is much more temporary.
- The majority of experts were rather sceptical about punitive/repressive approaches and instead pointed out the benefits of educational measures, the need for participation, and the importance of "trustful" relationships in working with youngsters. In case of the German experts, celerity is an exception; that means reducing the time passing between an offence and the succeeding judicial sanctions.
- Respondents pointed out that prevention – at best – should **start at early ages** when "criminal careers" have not yet begun and the chances to intervene and have positive influences on the life course of a youngster are better.
- Anticipated developments in society remain an underlying perspective of experts' views on preventive efforts. A number of recommended approaches for prevention of juvenile problem behaviour refer to social policy and the need of investment in social and educational work. If phenomena of disintegration are core problems in the upcoming years, social policy measures should try to create more inclusive social and educational conditions, and to support the participation of disadvantaged groups and reduce social inequality.

As the most important tangible needs for improvement in the field of prevention, the following aspects were raised:

- In Belgium as well as in Germany, **funding** in the field of prevention is rated as neither sufficient nor stable in the national surveys. Practitioners who were interviewed in the selected regions, especially in Belgium, also describe the lack of funding for preventive programmes. In the areas where the German local studies were conducted, the funding situation was described as relatively good compared to other regions in Germany.
- The expert survey results show the need for a more **systematic and coherent strategy/policy** in dealing with juvenile delinquency. In Belgium as well as in Germany, the majority of experts think that there is only a partially developed political strategy in this field. Interviews in Belgium show that mainly in the selected urban area fragmented policies are seen as a problem.⁵
- The status of **evaluation** in the field of crime prevention was rated as quite poor in Belgium and Germany. More and better scientific evaluation of preventive measures/programmes is needed to be able to assess the actual outcomes and effects of preventive efforts and to use resources wisely.

⁵ In the Belgian local study Brussels was selected as the urban region. The fact that in this city several governments have competing and/or complementary competences in the domain of youth thwarts possibilities to cooperate and makes it very difficult to have a clear overview of what is organised by which institution.

6 DISCUSSION

This study has explored young persons' and experts' perspectives on prevention of juvenile delinquency in six European countries. The major findings can be summarized as follows:

- In each of the participating countries, the majority of students had been reached by substance abuse prevention measures during the last year. Rates of participation in violence prevention measures during this period vary between 18% and 40%. Except for Slovenia and Hungary, students classified as frequent violent offenders show a higher rate of inclusion in violence prevention measures than non-offenders or those offending at a lower level.
- Across countries, young people regard the potential influence of school on substance abuse as very limited. With regard to violence prevention, views are slightly more positive.
- Students see parents and peers as the most important sources of preventive influence on a young person's behaviour. Compared to these everyday social network partners, the perceived potential influence of institutions and professions is limited. While the police gain relatively positive ratings, youngsters view social workers, sports coaches, and especially teachers as little influential. Again, this is similar across countries.
- Students show clear tendencies to ascribe preventive potential to measures and approaches strengthening social integration, especially integration in the labour market, and addressing individual strains and problems. Punitive approaches are not rejected summarily but are seen as less influential. Again, this general finding is consistent across countries. Within this common frame, country specifics, such as the high value attached to education as a resource for prevention in Spain and Portugal, are visible.
- The stronger a young person's involvement in delinquency, the more negative will be his or her views on preventive actors and approaches. However, the differences between frequent violent offenders, other offenders and non-offenders are relatively small and the rank orders of actors and approaches are very similar across groups.
- To some extent, young persons' views on prevention mirror findings from criminological research. This holds true with regard to the importance of delinquent peers and parental supervision, but also to the limited value of punitive approaches to control juvenile delinquent behaviour.
- The experts perceive current preventive efforts in Belgium and Germany to be mainly targeted at "classic" risk factors and target groups, using secondary and tertiary approaches. As an important supplement to these approaches, they see a high potential in primary prevention and stress the importance of social policy measures. This corresponds with the "customers' views" of students who, as mentioned above, also stress the significance of measures that focus on social integration and perspectives.
- Experts particularly recommend preventive measures that intervene at an early age, aim at reducing risk factors and strengthening social skills, and follow a multi-professional approach.

- Needs for improvement in the field of prevention are especially seen in more stable and sufficient funding, a more systematic and coherent policy in dealing with juvenile delinquency, and in more and better scientific evaluation of preventive measures and programmes.
- In the eyes of experts, future developments in the field of youth crime will be affected by demographic, technological and social processes of change. However, the results of the expert surveys also showed that youth crime will retain its basic characteristics as a ubiquitous mass phenomenon and a behaviour that is mainly episodic and in most cases of low severity.
- This international study has expanded the scope of well-established self-report surveys to include experiences with crime prevention and views of preventive approaches and actors. Given its cross-sectional character, it cannot establish causal connections between self-reported delinquency on the one hand, and experiences with and views on prevention measures on the other. Students' views on prevention are (of course) not "objective data" on what controls their behaviour. They are lay theories about who and what can influence behaviour – and as such they are involved in interpreting everyday situations and experiences and choosing between different possible courses of action.

Limitations to the study can be found in different regards. In all participating countries, the school survey did not include special schools and did not reach those students who were absent, refused to participate or did not provide parental consent forms. Furthermore, sample composition and characteristics of regions chosen differed to some extent between countries.

The expert surveys faced several pitfalls at the level of methodology that can only permit a descriptive analysis of the findings since they cover merely individual perceptions and views. The most important issues can be located at three levels. First, expert samples in Germany and Belgium differ with regard to participants' professional background. In Germany in particular, the two expert survey samples are characterized by strong police participation, whereas in Belgium almost no police officers took part.⁶ This sample is built largely out of social workers and people employed at prevention services (who were a minority in the German samples). Secondly, the regions selected for the local interview study did not exhibit the same characteristics. The local study in Germany (and the other participating countries) was conducted in an urban area and a rural one, whereas in Belgium three areas were selected. Because of the Belgian bilingual context an urban, rural and semi-rural/urban region was chosen. These three areas were not equally represented in the sample, again due to a low response rate especially in the rural area. Finally, response rates were quite low. In case of the national institutional and expert surveys, only 20.9% participated in Germany, an even more problematic rate can be observed in Belgium where only 11% took part. Also the Delphi survey could not reach a high amount of experts. Although the performed analysis is rather limited, we will briefly reflect upon some interesting findings with the purpose of contributing to the discussion on youth crime and its prevention.

⁶ Except from the local interview study, where seven Belgian police officers took part.

First of all, the comparative analysis pointed out that both German and Belgian experts are in favour of closer cooperation between the relevant actors in the field. It appeared that the main professions involved in preventing youth crime were police, social work and schools. The question can be asked whether a close cooperation between actors that are welfare oriented and actors who are occupied with security matters will not entail a risk, not only for the “trustful” relationship between social workers and youngsters (seen as important by the experts) but also a risk of becoming more easily “punished” or sanctioned. In Belgium for example, the prevention services become more and more responsible for administrative sanctions for incivilities, at the same time these services were exactly in this country perceived as the key player in the youth prevention landscape.

Asking the experts what they perceive as challenges for the prevention of youth crime resulted in a broad consensus on investment in more primary prevention strategies. Along the same lines, they identified developments at a societal macro level that are of significant influence for youth delinquency, like poverty, social inequality, and precarious job perspectives. Therefore the respondents stressed more investment in education and social policy. The experts clearly relate negative socioeconomic factors to the problem of (youth) delinquency. If we take into account the current risk focused and targeted character of the prevention field in Belgium and Germany, the question can be asked as whether the most vulnerable of our society do not become the most targeted ones. The same goes for the experts’ advocacy for early intervention strategies. At first sight, it seems logic to try to restore as soon as possible what seems to head in the wrong direction. Nonetheless, this approach entails the danger of again discriminating disadvantaged children and families, stigmatizing them and entailing far-reaching net-widening effects. Under the guise of “it’s better to prevent than to cure”, the most vulnerable risk becoming targets of state intervention without any actual infraction of the law. This does not imply that socioeconomic factors need to be put aside in thinking about prevention of youth crime. Continuous investment in social policy is necessary but it should not become an instrument to defend the idea of “les classes laborieuses, les classes dangereuses” (Chevalier, 1958).

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