



## CRIME PREVENTION AND THE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: THE EFFECTS OF A MULTIMEDIA CAMPAIGN

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### ABSTRACT

*This study concerns the effects of a multimedia campaign regarding residential burglary and violence on the streets in The Netherlands that can be characterised as a tell-the-truth campaign. The mass media component of the campaign consists of editorials in the regional dailies, local weeklies, and items on the regional radio station. The audience was given the opportunity to personally contact an information officer (via information meetings, "Crime Prevention Van," or stands). The campaign led to a more positive attitude towards the criminal justice system among the general public. There was no effect on knowledge of burglary and violence, the image of local crime, risk assessment, fear of crime, outcome expectation, self-efficacy expectation, preventive behaviour, and the attitude towards crime reporting.*  
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### INTRODUCTION

The criminal justice system only functions adequately when the general public supports it. This support consists of, among other things, providing information to police officers and other representatives of the criminal justice system (victim and witness reports). Due to fear of crime and unrealistic expectations concerning the functioning of the criminal justice system (Skogan, 1990, 1994a), people seem to be less

willing to provide the police with the information needed to fight crime efficiently (Rosenbaum, 1988).

Many attempts have been made to influence the fear of crime and increase the public's willingness to report crimes. From a psychological point of view, attention has been paid to influencing determinants of the fear of crime (Henig and Maxfield, 1978). One strategy was to improve confidence in the police (Bennett, 1991; Cordner, 1986; Pate et al., 1986; Van den

Bogaard and Wiegman, 1991, 1992), another to educate the general public about crime and its prevention (O'Keefe et al., 1996). A so-called tell-the-truth information campaign seemed to be a promising strategy for influencing the fear of crime (Lavrakas, Rosenbaum, and Kaminski, 1983; Maxfield, 1987). Sacco and Silverman (1982) formulated guidelines for mass media crime prevention campaigns. This article evaluates the effect of such a tell-the-truth campaign on the fear of crime, crime prevention behaviour, and the understanding of the criminal justice system when implemented by the police forces in Twente, The Netherlands. Fear of crime refers, here, to the emotional response of anxiety of a crime threat (Ferraro, 1995; Ferraro and LaGrange, 1987) where an individual perceives himself unable to cope adequately (Bandura, 1982, 1986).

The first objective of the campaign was to bring the *fear of crime* more into line with the true risks involved. The quintessence of the campaign was to influence the fear of crime indirectly, by increasing knowledge of crime. This was based on a model adapted from Garofalo (1981): information → increased knowledge of local crime → alteration in the image of local crime → alteration in risk assessment → alteration in the fear of crime. The model assumes that the fear of crime is based on an image of local crime threats and one's ability to cope with these threats. In cases where this image is incorrect,<sup>1</sup> the fear of crime is not in line with the true risks involved. By providing objective (statistical) information concerning the magnitude and nature of local crime and effective preventive behaviour (Lavrakas, 1986; Lavrakas, Rosenbaum, and Kaminski, 1983), misconceptions can be corrected and the knowledge of local crime increased. This gives the individual a better image of local crime and enables her to make a more realistic assessment of her own situation, that is the risks of being victimised (likelihood of victimisation, seriousness of consequences), and her ability to cope with these risks (ability to prevent victimisation, ability to deal with a potential offender). A change in risk assessment could then bring about a change in the fear of crime.<sup>2</sup>

Only Lavrakas, Rosenbaum, and Kaminski

(1983) and Lavrakas (1986) have studied the effects of transmitting information about local crime: a newsletter issued by the police was the medium. The results were not consistent. In the first study it appeared that the newsletter did influence the image of local crime but, not the fear of crime. The second study, however, showed the newsletter to neither influence the image of crime nor the fear of crime. The discrepancy could possibly have been the result of the mode of disseminating the newsletter: delivery by personal hand-out versus sending by mail (40 to 50 percent of the subjects said they never actually saw the information mailed to them). Another problem with this second study is that the information was only transmitted to a sample of the residents of particular neighbourhoods. The police neglected to make use of personal communication networks, an important element of real-life campaigns aimed at all residents.

The second objective of The Netherlands campaign was to increase *the implementation of effective preventive behaviour*. This was based on a model adapted from Bandura (1986, 1991): information → increased knowledge of effective preventive behaviour → increase in self-efficacy expectation and/or outcome expectation → increase in the implementation of preventive behaviour. The model assumes that the dissemination of information concerning effective preventive behaviour increases knowledge of its feasibility and outcome. This would lead to an increase in self-efficacy expectation and outcome expectation, which in turn would encourage the implementation of the relevant preventive measures. Little is known about these effects (O'Keefe, 1986; Sacco and Trotman, 1990), mainly because the research designs often did not permit causal inferences (O'Keefe, 1986; Rosenbaum, 1988). In the study by Lavrakas, Rosenbaum, and Kaminski (1983), a higher incidence of crime prevention behaviour was observed among subjects who received the newsletter than among those who didn't. The study by Lavrakas (1986), however, showed that though the newsletters increased knowledge of crime prevention among those exposed, they had no effect on self-efficacy expectation and crime prevention behaviour.

The third objective of the campaign was to improve *the understanding of the criminal justice system*. There is growing criticism concerning the functioning of the criminal justice system, especially the police departments, which partly stems from unrealistic expectations (see also: Skogan, 1990, 1994a). The model used in this study is as follows: information → increased knowledge → more realistic expectations → improved understanding of the criminal justice system. The model assumes that providing information about reporting procedures, investigation strategies, and the prosecution process increases knowledge thereof. This would lead to more realistic expectations concerning the functioning of the criminal justice system and in turn result in a more positive attitude towards the criminal justice system and crime reporting.

### THE CAMPAIGN

The multimedia campaign dealt with residential burglary and violence on the streets. It was carried out in Twente (population: 500,000), a province in The Netherlands, and lasted nine weeks. It required the police to dedicate a considerable amount of time and money to it. In order to enable the individual to make a realistic assessment of the relevant risks and ways of adequately coping with them, information was provided about the magnitude and nature of local crime, effective preventive behaviour, and victim support. This information about the criminal justice system afforded the individual a better understanding of the relevant procedures. The campaign consisted of both mass media and personal contact components.

The objective of the mass media component was to raise interest in crime and crime prevention and to disseminate nonspecific information that applied to many individuals (Rogers and Storey, 1987). Use was made of local door-to-door weeklies and two regional dailies, which covered all of Twente and adapted to smaller communities by inserting a page on local events. The specificity of the information transmitted through a particular channel depended on the magnitude of its audience: the smaller the audi-

ence, the more specific the information. Editorials were thought to be more influential than advertisements. To ensure coverage, an agreement was made with journalists—a unique situation. Journalists committed themselves a priori, with due observance of the freedom of the press and journalistic responsibility, to pay attention to residential burglary and violence on the streets during the campaign period. In each daily, editorials were published: in total seven large ones on burglary and violence, six medium-sized ones on the campaign itself, and seven short ones mainly announcing campaign activities. In some weeklies the six press releases were published unabridged, in others they were turned into one editorial (Postma and Eertman-Nijland, 1989). The regional radio station aired two interviews (ten and three minutes respectively).<sup>3</sup>

The personal component consisted of activities which enabled personal contact with information officers. They enabled residents to acquire information which applied to their specific situation (O'Keefe, 1986; Rogers and Storey, 1987). These activities were attended by 13,000 individuals (2.3 percent of the target population). The Crime Prevention Van was stationed forty-two times (7,300 visitors), stands were installed at sixteen highly frequented events (5,000 visitors), and thirty-three information meetings were organised (760 visitors).

A number of activities were organised, moreover, to give publicity to the campaign: announcements at police cars, advertisements, posters, press releases, and the promotion of the activities on the regional radio station's "Musical Agenda."

### METHOD

#### *Design*

A quasi-experimental field test was performed.<sup>4</sup> Residents of the campaign area (the experimental region) were compared to those of an unaddressed area (the control region). The experiment design required that measurements be taken on the same individuals, directly before and after the campaign, both in the experimental and control regions (untreated control

group design with pretest and posttest). Results of this design generally are interpretable (Cook and Campbell, 1979). In order to determine whether pretesting influenced the findings, half of the two samples were subject to only posttest measurements.

### *The Experimental and Control Regions*

The campaign region, Twente, was a coherent area consisting of four cities, six rural villages, nine urbanized rural towns, and two rural towns. Enschede was core (population: 144,000). The control region consisted of a similar coherent area, with Arnhem as core (population: 128,000). The number of municipalities (twenty-five) was about the same as in the experimental region (twenty-one). The number of residents was also very similar (control region 582,708; experimental region 567,250). There was no significant difference in the degree of urbanisation either ( $\chi^2 = 4.78$ ,  $df = 5$ ,  $p = .44$ ). Both regions compared with respect to socio-economic factors and crime rates. The control region was outside the reach of the mass media, personal contact activities, and publicity in the experimental region.

### *Procedure and Subjects*

From the files of the Dutch Post Offices a random sample of 2,010 addresses was drawn: 1,430 in the experimental and 680 in the control region. Randomly, the male or female main resident was addressed. Six-hundred and seventy-six individuals participated (34 percent). Data were gathered by means of mailed questionnaires and short oral interviews (greater than 95 percent response rate). There were no significant differences between the experimental and control region with regard to participation ( $\chi^2 = .39$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > .05$ ); the number of gathered questionnaires ( $\chi^2 = 2.81$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > .05$ ); interviews ( $\chi^2 = 2.07$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > .05$ ); and mortality ( $\chi^2 = 1.60$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Slightly more than half of the subjects (52 percent) were female; and half were forty-five years of age or younger. Eighty percent were married, 78 percent had children, and 81 percent lived in a one-family dwelling.

### *Operationalisation*

Campaign exposure was measured in the oral interview. The other variables were measured in the questionnaire (twenty pages, size A5).<sup>5</sup> The internal consistency and test-retest reliability over a two-month period were satisfactory (Table 1).

*Campaign exposure.* The subjects were asked if they perceived a campaign on burglary and violence, the Crime Prevention Van, information meetings, editorials about burglary and violence in the regional dailies and door-to-door weeklies, reports on the regional radio station, the announcement of campaign activities in the Musical Agenda on the regional radio station, and advertisements. They were also asked whether they actually read the campaign messages, visited the Crime Prevention Van, or attended information meetings, respectively.

*Knowledge of burglary and violence.* The first step in all models was an increase in knowledge. The questions referred to local crime statistics, crime prevention, victim support, and criminal justice procedures (twenty-six items, correct/incorrect rating).

*Fear of crime model.* The image of local crime was measured by one variable, perceived local crime problems (ten items, four-point rating scale). Four elements of risk assessment were measured: perceived likelihood of victimization (four items, five-point rating scale); perceived seriousness of the consequences (four items, five-point rating scale); perceived ability to prevent victimization (four items, five-point rating scale); and perceived ability to deal with a potential offender (four items, five-point rating scale). The fear of crime was measured by three variables: fear of victimization (four items, five-point rating scale); fear of a relative's victimization (six items, five-point rating scale); and fear on the streets (four items, two-point rating scale).

*Crime prevention model.* Four variables were measured: outcome expectation (nineteen items, five-point rating scale); self-efficacy expecta-

TABLE 1  
INTERNAL CONSISTENCY AND TEST-RETEST RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENTS

	<i>Internal Consistency</i>	<i>Test-Retest Reliability</i> <sup>a</sup>
Knowledge of crime		
Knowledge of burglary and violence	.59	.65
Crime image, risk assessment, fear		
Perceived local crime problems	.64	.76
Perceived likelihood of victimization	.76	.54
Perceived seriousness of consequences	.78	.61
Perceived ability to prevent victimization	.72	.57
Perceived ability to deal with an offender	.68	.62
Fear of victimization	.85	.63
Fear of a relative's victimization	.88	.67
Fear on the streets	.62	.77
Crime prevention		
Outcome expectation	.73	.60
Self-efficacy expectation	.73	.76
Preventive behaviour	.67	.79
Understanding the criminal justice system		
Attitude toward the criminal justice system	.76	.85
Attitude toward crime reporting	.72	.72

<sup>a</sup>The correlation between the pretest and the posttest for the subjects in the control region.

tion (nineteen items, five-point rating scale); preventive behaviour (seventeen items, five-point rating scale); and the marking of valuable belongings (two items, two-point rating scale).

*Understanding the criminal justice system model.* Two variables were measured: the attitude towards the criminal justice system (eleven items, five-point rating scale) and the attitude towards crime reporting (seven items, five-point rating scale).

*Personal characteristics.* Each subject was questioned regarding his age, sex, marital status, children, grandchildren, household members, children living at home, type of dwelling, residence, religion, political attitude, education, daily habits, work situation of himself and his partner.

## RESULTS

### *The Campaign Audience*

In The Netherlands crime prevention campaigns are conducted regularly. At any given time, part of the general public may be of the opinion that a campaign is being conducted, whether or not this is so, as was the case in the

control region. The true audience to the campaign is thus by and large the difference between the measured audience in the experimental and control regions.

The overall *awareness* of the campaign was limited (Table 2). In the experimental region a significantly higher percentage (30 percent) was aware of a campaign concerning burglary and violence than in the control region (20 percent). There was, however, no significant difference in noticing of editorials on burglary and violence in the dailies (experimental region: 40 percent, control region: 35 percent). Editorials in the weeklies were distinguished by a significantly smaller portion of the population in the experimental (29 percent) than in the control region (40 percent). Editorials in the local and regional papers, which were written as an element of the campaign, were not recognized as such.<sup>6</sup> With respect to the personal contact activities, a significantly larger part of the general public in the experimental region knew of the presence of the Crime Prevention Van (27 versus 6 percent) and the information meetings (14 versus 9 percent). The difference with respect to the crime prevention stands, however, was not significant (2 versus 0 percent). The publicity related primarily to the Crime Prevention Van and information meetings. In the experimental region publicity was significantly more often observed

TABLE 2  
AUDIENCE TO THE CAMPAIGN IN THE EXPERIMENTAL ( $n = 403$ ) AND CONTROL REGION ( $n = 206$ )

	Experimental Region (%)	Control Region (%)	Significance $\chi^2$ (two-tailed)
Perception of campaign activities			
Campaign on burglary and violence	31	18	$p < .001$
Editorials in regional dailies	40	35	$p = .25$
Editorials in door-to-door weeklies	29	40	$p = .01$
Crime Prevention Van in the neighbourhood	27	6	$p < .001$
Information meetings in the neighbourhood	14	9	$p = .10$
Crime prevention stands in the neighbourhood <sup>a</sup>	2	0	$p = .30$
Perception of publicity			
Advertisements	16	7	$p = .005$
Radio program "Musical Agenda"	4	0	$p = .01$
Announcements at police cars <sup>a</sup>	10	0	$p < .001$
Use of campaign activities			
Read editorials in regional dailies	33	30	$p = .55$
Read editorials in door-to-door weeklies	21	34	$p < .001$
Visited Crime Prevention Van	3	<1	$p = .10$
Visited information meetings	<1	1	$p = .85$

<sup>a</sup>Mentioned spontaneously.

than in the control region (advertisements: 16 versus 7 percent; Musical Agenda: 4 versus 0 percent; announcements at police cars: 10 versus 0 percent). Absolutely speaking, however, the audience to the publicity was restricted.

Campaign activities were not *made use of* more often in the experimental region than in the control region. In the experimental region, 33 percent read editorials in the dailies, and in the control region, 30 percent. Editorials in the weeklies were read by 21 and 34 percent respectively. There was no significant difference in visiting the Crime Prevention Van (3 versus .5 percent) and attending information meetings (1 percent equally).

### The Campaign Effects

Analyses of covariance were performed on the post-test scores, using experimental versus control region as the factor and pretest scores as the covariate (Edwards, 1979). Porter's correction for measurement error in the pretest scores was applied (Huitema, 1980; Porter, 1967; Reichardt, 1979):  $\hat{\rho}_{xx} = .80$  and  $\hat{\rho}_{xx} = .70$  are plausible reliability estimates.

These analyses showed that the campaign was only significant for the attitude towards the criminal justice system (Table 3). In the case where the reliability was estimated to be  $\hat{\rho}_{xx} = .80$  the level of significance of the factor indicating the campaign's impact was  $p = .02$ ; in

the case where the reliability was estimated to be  $\hat{\rho}_{xx} = .70$  the level of significance was  $p = .002$ . The effect was in the hypothesized direction (effect size approximately .20). This indicates that the campaign exerted a small positive influence on attitudes towards the criminal justice system among the general public (Hedrick, Bickman, and Rog, 1993).

Just as with many other campaigns not all members of the target group were reached. As a consequence an effect on all exposed members of the target group might not have been detected (Hormuth, Fitzgerald, and Cook, 1985). This problem was solved by performing the analyses again, for the exposed public.<sup>7</sup> The campaign only significantly affected the attitude towards the criminal justice system (where  $\hat{\rho}_{xx} = .80$ ,  $p = .06$ ; where  $\hat{\rho}_{xx} = .70$ ,  $p = .02$ ). The effect was in the hypothesized direction (effect size approximately .20). This indicates that the campaign exerted a small positive influence on attitudes toward the criminal justice system among the exposed public (Hedrick, Bickman, and Rog, 1993). The fact that only part of the target group was exposed, therefore, does not explain the limited empirical support for the production of effects.

### The Validity of the Design

*Statistical conclusion validity.* Considering the number of variables in the study the ob-

TABLE 3  
EFFECTS OF THE CAMPAIGN: RESULTS OF THE ANALYSES OF COVARIANCE USING  $\hat{\rho}_{xx} = .80$   
AND  $\hat{\rho}_{xx} = .70$  AS ESTIMATES OF THE RELIABILITY<sup>a</sup>

	<i>General Public</i>				<i>Exposed Public</i>			
	$\hat{\rho}_{xx} = .80$		$\hat{\rho}_{xx} = .70$		$\hat{\rho}_{xx} = .80$		$\hat{\rho}_{xx} = .70$	
	F	p	F	p	F	p	F	p
Knowledge of crime								
Knowledge of burglary and violence	.45	.50	1.10	.29	.19	.67	.36	.55
Crime image, risk assessment, fear								
Perceived local crime problems	.27	.60	.65	.42	1.52	.22	1.77	.19
Perceived likelihood of victimization	.01	.94	.02	.88	.00	.96	.00	.97
Perceived seriousness of consequences	1.20	.27	1.56	.21	1.46	.23	2.04	.16
Perceived ability to prevent victimization	.61	.44	.36	.55	.57	.45	.44	.51
Perceived ability to deal with offender	.00	.99	.04	.84	2.00	.16	2.80	.10
Fear of victimization	1.20	.27	1.66	.20	1.62	.21	2.79	.10
Fear of a relative's victimization	1.17	.28	1.78	.18	.24	.62	.77	.38
Fear on the streets	.53	.47	.84	.36	1.30	.26	2.31	.13
Crime prevention								
Outcome expectation	.00	.97	.02	.89	.79	.38	1.20	.27
Self-efficacy expectation	2.12	.15	3.59	.06	1.45	.23	2.44	.12
Preventive behaviour	.13	.72	.50	.48	.27	.60	.49	.48
Marking of valuable goods	.25	.62	.46	.48	2.27	.13	2.59	.11
Understanding the criminal justice system								
Attitude toward the criminal justice system	5.76	.02	9.95	.002	3.69	.06	5.82	.02
Attitude toward crime reporting	1.12	.29	1.49	.22	.06	.81	.00	.96

<sup>a</sup>The coefficients pertain to the factor "campaign." The degrees of freedom are approximately 1,280 for the general public and 1,170 for the exposed public.

served effect on attitudes toward the criminal justice system could be viewed as the result of chance. The effect, however, was also observed among the subjects who did not participate in the pretest ( $F_{1602} = 4.45$ ,  $p = .03$ ). During the campaign, attitudes toward the criminal justice system became somewhat more positive in the experimental region compared to the control region. These findings support the results from the analyses of covariance.

*Internal validity.* Of all potential threats to internal validity, for our investigation the interaction between selection and external events was of most concern (Cook and Campbell, 1979). Supplementary research was performed into the potentially harmful influence of three such factors: mass media crime reporting, crime rate, and a particular crime performed in the control region. These factors proved to have no affect on the internal validity of the study.

*External validity.* The fact that we studied the effects of a real-life campaign increased the

external validity. There were no indications that the results could be attributed to pretest measurement, nor to the combined effect of campaign exposure and pretest measurement. Though the drawn samples were virtually representative, nonresponse may have caused a bias—for those who participated, crime seemed to be more of the issue than for those who did not. The limited support for the production of effects, however, does not seem to be attributable hereto, because individuals who were even more involved, proved to be influenced (Kuttschreuter and Wiegman, 1997).

## DISCUSSION

The principle finding was that the campaign exerted a small positive influence on attitudes toward the criminal justice system, for the exposed as well as the general public. This agrees with the effects of a Dutch community policing program that combined the education of residents regarding local crime rates and the utilisa-

tion of area police teams (De Graaf, 1981). The question was whether this effect depended upon the content of the information provided or the appreciation of the community policing strategy—citizens like such programs (Moore, 1994). The question could apply to this campaign as well. The appreciation for the fact that the police, by means of an information campaign, took efforts to help citizens reduce their chance of victimization may have led to a more positive attitude towards the criminal justice system. Improved assessments of police performance, an aspect of the attitude towards the criminal justice system, were also observed in community policing programs which did not contain an educational component (Lurigio and Rosenbaum, 1994; Sadd and Grinc, 1994; Skogan 1994b). Changes in attitudes toward the criminal justice system, therefore, can be brought about in other ways than by increasing knowledge of the criminal justice system.

There was no effect on the variables in the fear-of-crime and crime-prevention models. Null findings in the program evaluation may be due to methodological inadequacies, incorrect effect models, or improper implementation (Bickman, 1987). Methodological inadequacies apply to the sensitivity of the research instruments used in detecting program effects. This seems an unlikely explanation:  $n$  was large and the small effect on attitudes toward the criminal justice system (effect size approximately .20) was found to be significant.

This leaves incorrect models and improper implementation as possible reasons for the null findings. The interpretation of null findings depends on the adequacy of the implementation. In cases where the program is implemented correctly, null findings have implications for the theoretical models underlying the program. In cases where implementation may be criticized, null findings may be the result of improper implementation, incorrect models, or both (Bickman, 1987).

In this case, the implementation was not infallible. The null findings, therefore, do not constitute a reason to discard the theoretical models. There is, on the contrary, evidence in support of the models. With respect to the *fear-of-crime model*, in a separate study of the ef-

fects of the information meetings (Kuttschreuter and Wiegman, 1997), a large and significant difference in knowledge about burglary was found between subjects who received information concerning burglary and its prevention, and subjects who did not ( $F_{1,126} = 17.10, p < .001$ )—on an eleven-point scale there was a difference of 1.7 points (effect size .76).<sup>8</sup> In their field experiment, Lavrakas, Rosenbaum, and Kaminski (1983) found that presenting information about local crime influenced the image of local crime.<sup>9</sup> In the present study, additionally, support was found for some of the steps in the putative chain of effects. The change in the perception of local crime problems, for instance, was significantly positively related to the change in the perceived likelihood of victimization ( $r = .22, p < .05$ ). The increase in the fear of victimization, moreover, related significantly to an increase in the perceived likelihood of victimization ( $r = .20, p < .05$ ); an increase in the perceived seriousness of the consequences ( $r = .31, p < .05$ ); and a decrease in the perceived ability to prevent victimization ( $r = -.17, p < .05$ ).<sup>10</sup>

With regard to the *crime prevention model*, this study of the information meetings (Kuttschreuter and Wiegman, 1997) showed significant moderate effects on self-efficacy expectation ( $F_{1,132} = 6.23, p = .01$ , effect size .48); outcome expectation ( $F_{1,131} = 8.17, p = .005$ , effect size .52); and the intention to implement preventive behaviour (Mann-Whitney U-test,  $z = 3.55, p < .001$ ). Other research also showed effects on the knowledge of crime (O'Keefe, 1986; Lavrakas, 1986); outcome expectation (O'Keefe, 1986), and the intention to implement preventive behaviour (Eijken and Van Oosterzee, 1992; O'Keefe, 1986; Lavrakas, Rosenbaum, and Kaminski, 1983). There is thus ample support substantiating the effect models.

Next is the implementation of the campaign. To bring about effects, the exposure to the campaign message among the target group must be sufficiently extensive (Rogers and Storey, 1987; Sacco and Silverman, 1982; Sacco and Trotman, 1990). In the experimental region, however, only 31 percent perceived the campaign compared to 18 percent in the control region. Though significant, this difference is minor. The exposure to the main campaign



activities in the experimental region was not significantly more extensive than in the control region (dailies: 33 versus 30 percent; weeklies: 21 versus 34 percent).

For a campaign message to reach a large audience among the target group a number of criteria must be fulfilled. Three items relate directly to the audience, while a fourth one relates to the message content. The first requirement, access to the channels used to distribute the message, was met: 86 percent of the target group read a regional daily, 95 percent received weeklies, and 40 percent listened to the regional radio station. The second requirement, perception of the campaign, was satisfied to a much lesser degree: in the experimental region 58 percent perceived editorials on burglary and violence compared to 56 percent in the control region. The third requirement, use of campaign materials, was fulfilled: the editorials were read by 80 percent of those who saw them.

The restricted attention given to the campaign message in the regional mass media may explain why the message was insufficiently perceived. This also occurred in a number of other mass media campaigns (e.g., Sacco and Silverman, 1981). In each daily, ten editorials were published that related to the campaign, but during the same period, 426 and 376 editorials about crime were issued that were unconnected with it. Some of the weeklies published the press releases, others didn't. The regional radio station dedicated thirteen minutes to the campaign. Despite the a priori agreement with journalists, the attention in the mass media was restricted.<sup>11</sup>

The limited number of media broadcasts does not explain the null findings among those who perceived the campaign. For this group the content of the media broadcasts was the crucial factor.<sup>12</sup> The editorials did not convey the entire message. In addition, the number of repetitions was small. The dailies and weeklies disseminated specific information only once. The general public was therefore exposed to specific information three times at the most: once in their daily and once in each of their two weeklies. Compared to other campaigns this number is small (Eijken and Van Oosterzee, 1992; Lavrakas, 1986).

There were two main reasons for the improper implementation of the campaign. Journalists were trusted to provide the necessary mass media attention but little attempt was made to acquire mass media attention by organising special events (O'Keefe et al., 1996). Plans were not put into operation. Certain mass media techniques were never applied by the police. For example, a planned door-to-door bulletin was renounced because on closer scrutiny it was found to be too costly. The second reason for this inadequacy was that the actual implementation of the campaign activities was not supervised by the planning committee but left to local police officers. This was in accordance with the management structure within the police forces. The effect was that some planned activities were not executed or modified extensively. Implementation problems in community policing programs have been observed before (Moore, 1994; Skogan 1994b): for example, when patrol officers were reluctant to adopt changes in operation style (Roberg, 1994; Sudd and Grinc, 1994). Attempts of the planning committee to prevent this reluctance eventually led to a lack of supervision during the implementation of the campaign.

The question is which strategy a tell-the-truth campaign should employ to efficiently affect its target audience. It is vital to approach segments of the general public in the target area by means of an intensive multimedia campaign in an appropriate manner (Eijken and Van Oosterzee, 1992; O'Keefe, 1986; O'Keefe et al., 1996; Rice and Atkin, 1989; Rogers and Storey, 1987; Sacco and Silverman, 1982; Sacco and Trotman, 1990). The target audience should be drastically confined and the message, between as well as within the media, repeated regularly. Besides mass media attention, activities should be organised that enable personal contact with an information officer. Information meetings, Crime Prevention Vans, crime prevention stands, and the like are suitable, complementary strategies. In order to implement the campaign strategy and to guarantee its continuity, the campaign should be organised by a small number of experts who assist and advise other (police) officers in the actual execution of the campaign activities.

The campaign should not primarily take place by means of editorials in the local and regional mass media. In this manner, police officers can only distribute information when journalists cooperate. Preservation of press freedoms demands the voluntary participation of journalists who do not necessarily view informing the public about crime risks as their highest priority. Interests of police officers and journalists conflict here. To increase knowledge of local crime through editorials in the regional mass media, substantially more editorials are needed than is feasible.

Police officers can shape a mass media campaign by organising activities that are newsworthy and therefore cannot be bypassed in the daily reports of the local mass media. Journalists can be engaged by informing them beforehand. The consequent information flow gives the message a larger audience, observing everyone's responsibilities. Police officers, moreover, can employ their own mass media techniques to disseminate the campaign message. As yet, the door-to-door distribution of bulletins appears to be one of the few effective strategies available (Lavrakas, Rosenbaum, and Kaminski, 1983). Public service announcements on the regional television station may also create awareness and stimulate interest (O'Keefe et al., 1996).

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#### NOTES

1. One possible cause may be the distortion of crime news in the mass media (Ditton and Duffy, 1983; Graber, 1980; Liska and Baccaglioni, 1990; Roshier, 1981; Smith, 1984; Van Dijk, 1982; Williams and Dickinson, 1993).

2. The dissemination of objective information would have a differentiated effect. Among individuals holding a relatively pessimistic image of local crime risks, the information would lead to a more optimistic image of the situation and, consequently, to a decrease in risk assessment and the fear of crime. Among individuals holding a relatively optimistic image, however, the information would lead to a more pessimistic image of the situation and, consequently, to an increase in risk assessment and the fear of crime. An undifferentiated effect is also possible, namely that the ma-

majority of the population holds the same (too optimistic or too pessimistic) image of crime. In a homogeneous population an undifferentiated effect is expected, in a heterogeneous population, a differentiated effect.

3. At the time there was no regional television station yet.

4. The campaign made use of regional dailies, so subjects could not be randomly assigned to an experimental or control condition.

5. The questionnaires are available upon request. A5 refers to the size of the pages in the questionnaire.

6. Perhaps the general public in the control region read editorials about local crime in the door-to-door weeklies more frequently because the regional dailies in this area paid less attention to local crime than those in the experimental region.

7. These subjects knew of the Crime Prevention Van or an information meeting in the neighbourhood ( $n = 75$ ).

8. These results were obtained from a sample of individuals who attended the meetings and, possibly, were more susceptible than the general public. Risk assessment and the fear of crime were not affected, possibly because of the crudeness of the measuring instruments.

9. The Lavrakas (1986) study showed no such effect.

10. Other research into the effects on risk perception and the fear of crime focused on information concerning crime prevention. The effects on the perceived likelihood of victimization were inconsistent (O'Keefe, 1986, Sacco and Silverman, 1981). The fear of crime was not affected (De Graaf, 1981; O'Keefe, 1986; Lavrakas, 1986; Lavrakas, Rosenbaum, and Kaminski, 1983).

11. If it were possible to have incorporated regional television broadcasts, awareness of the campaign would have likely been larger (Perloff, 1993).

12. One could argue that the exposed public had already acquired so much knowledge about crime that the saturation point had been reached. First, however, the editorials about crime in the newspapers were read by 80 percent of those who saw them. Second, the campaign message did not repeat information published elsewhere, but, on the contrary, contained new elements. Third, processing the information was also possible (Kutttschreuter and Wiegman, 1997).

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