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Foreword

The hybrid street violence on which this study is focused often occurs outside the view of adults. Shame and fear prevent young people from coming forward quickly and adults often have no access to young people's online world. However, the seriousness of the violent incidents we encountered during our study raises the urgent question of how young people can be protected against this violence. We hope that this study will help answer this question.

In our exploration of the phenomenon we came across numerous professionals who are committed to combating youth violence. At the same time, we noted that professionals and parents alike needed both an understanding of hybrid street violence and the tools to deal with it. Our thanks are due to all the people who participated in the study and who were willing to share their knowledge and experiences with us. We are particularly grateful to the parents and young people who were willing to discuss these issues with us.

We would also like to thank Police Science and Research for giving us the opportunity to explore and investigate this phenomenon. Finally, we would like to thank the members of the advisory committee: Janine Janssen, Casimir Blokland, Hans Moors, Seran de Leede, Floor Jansen, Nicole Lieve and Maarten Bollen. Your incisive and valuable comments on the draft versions have resulted in the report that lies before you now.

The study team,
November 2024

Summary

Introduction

This study is an empirical exploration of hybrid street violence among young people. By this we mean physical violence in public spaces, with online violence also taking place before, during or after it. The aim of the study is to understand the nature of violence among young people and to offer possible courses of action enabling community police and other partners in the chain to combat it. The findings are mainly based on 62 interviews with youth workers, school staff, police professionals and parents and young people, among others. An expert session was also organised focusing on possible improvements in the approach. The study took place in the period from May 2023 to April 2024.

Nature of hybrid street violence

Hybrid street violence involves a track of connected violent incidents at multiple times and comprises both online and offline components. These tracks vary in terms of their duration, the frequency and location of offences, severity and the perpetrators and victims involved. Perpetratorhood and victimhood can alternate within a track. Perpetratorhood and victimhood can also be transferred, so the same people are not always involved. The online part of a track often takes place in closed environments of various social media platforms and is not visible to everyone.

The study identified various manifestations and noted that violence among young people is also sensitive to trends and liable to change continuously. The empirical findings show that humiliation and/or abuse are often filmed, after which the images are distributed. Victims are often required to apologise to the perpetrator(s), although there is not always a known reason for the apology. Another variant is blackmailing victims by threatening to distribute images of filmed humiliation or abuse. Filmed abuse can also be the result of failure to pay a 'fine' imposed on the victim by other young people. Filming and sharing also plays an important role in violence between rival groups.

Involvement of young people

The empirical findings indicate that both girls and boys are involved in serious violent incidents, with boys being mentioned and seen more often. Girls also figure among the perpetrators of violence when they act as decoys to lure male victims to a location where they are then abused. Sexual images of girls are also distributed to punish a brother or cousin from a rival 'group'.

Professionals with knowledge and experience of this phenomenon characterise many of the

young people involved in the violence as vulnerable, for example because they grow up in poverty, struggle with problems at home and are susceptible to peer pressure. Many, but not all, of the cases identified involve young people who fit this profile.

Youth culture

Various aspects play a role in hybrid street violence, such as the need for status and scoring 'credits' in the online and offline community in which the perpetrators operate. The taboo on 'snitching' and the fear of being exposed as a snitch on social media are also widespread among young people. At the same time, online images of violence can lead to feelings of insecurity among young people, making them feel the need to protect and arm themselves.

Opportunities in the approach

The severity and impact of hybrid street violence demands greater attention both within and outside the police. Victims of hybrid street violence often do not report incidents, so many go unreported to the police. It is therefore important that the police continue to invest in both offline and online contact with young people and build good relationships with professionals who are closer to young people, such as youth workers.

The nature of the phenomenon as a track rather than an isolated incident requires more contextual work and a clear picture of violent and other conflicts among young people. This requires close cooperation within the police between community and youth support officers and more specialist digital personnel with knowledge of online surveillance and covert viewing in closed online environments.

An integrated approach is essential for both the information position and the use of interventions. Close cooperation at local level with the police, municipality, schools and youth work organisations, among others, will ensure that signals of hybrid street violence are identified more quickly and that joint intervention can take place. This does not always have to involve the use of criminal law. In our study we came across promising examples of restorative dialogue between perpetrators and victims.

Finally, central government plays an important role when it comes to developing and funding national tools, guidelines and legal frameworks for chain partners and parents/guardians.

1. Introduction

'The ultimate points are awarded when you kill someone. It's crazy: there's a reward of online points on the heads of young people.'
(Lawyer Vito Shukrula)[1]

1.1 Background to this study

As part of a study for the community policing portfolio into digital projects within the police[2], in 2022 we saw footage in the Rotterdam Police Unit of children (10, 11 years old) being forced to undress on the street, being beaten and then having to ask for forgiveness. The images were then used to earn points online or to blackmail the children into doing illegal jobs. Enquiries about this phenomenon among other police professionals who also dealt with cyber and/or youth crime revealed that much remained unknown about filmed street violence among young people.

We do know from previous research, however, that serious violence among young people increasingly has an online component (Van den Broek & Roks, 2023). Social media, such as Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok, are used to make threats and offline violence is filmed and posted on social media. Social media posts play a role in threats, abuse and blackmailing of and by young people. An example concerns young people who have to pay fines to stop a video clip being shared on social media. Cases may also involve young people being filmed while being threatened or abused, with the perpetrators collecting so-called 'online points' (Weerman, Roks, Broek & Willink, 2022).

Conversations as part of our aforementioned study of digital projects in community policing showed that this type of violent incident often escapes the attention of the police and that the staff of the core teams have too little knowledge to report this type of crime themselves. The recording of reports also often suffers from a lack of familiarity and competence. For example, respondents from the aforementioned community policing study stated that young people were sometimes seen as unwilling to report an incident, whereas the victim remained silent out of fear of online repercussions rather than unwillingness. This is borne out by research by Van den Broek and Roks (2023), who found that professionals had difficulty identifying problematic group behaviour online at an early stage. Although the police recognise the importance of digital developments and there are numerous digital initiatives, there is still much progress to be made in this area in practice, particularly with regard to

1 Bahara & Stoker (2020, 23 August).
2 Broekhuizen, Mehlbaum & Van den Akker (2022).

the knowledge and skills of community police officers.

With the underlying exploratory study we aim to gain more insight into victimhood and perpetratorhood among young people in street violence with an offline and an online component (we call this 'hybrid street violence'). The aim is then to translate this insight into a possible course of action for the police, specifically for community police, and chain partners. Below we explore the topic in more detail and discuss relevant literature.

1.2 Violence with an online component

The type of violence on which this study focuses is characterised by the combination of an offline and an online component. In the literature, reference is made to digitalised crime (Van der Laan, Beerthuizen & Boot, 2021) or cyber-enabled crime (Spithoven, 2020) to characterise crimes in which ICT is a means but not the objective.[3] Spithoven (2020) distinguishes 'violence' as a key category of cyber-enabled crime. This includes the subcategories of extortion/blackmail, cyberbullying, insults, stalking, discrimination, threats (violence), distributing images, distributing text and slander. Spithoven (2020) thus aligns with other working definitions of violence, which include not only physical violence but also psychological violence or threats of violence.

Leukfeldt, Domenie, Jansen, Wilsem & Stol (2013) distinguish between three main forms of digital crime: hacking, financial crimes and personal crimes. This latter category best fits the phenomenon that is central to this study. It concerns digital crimes that affect personal privacy, such as the digital variants of stalking and threats. In the literature, the term technology-facilitated (sexual) violence is used to describe violence against women and girls using ICT, such as cyberstalking, online harassment and exposure of intimate images (Henry & Powell, 2018; Chikwe, Eney & Akpoukwe, 2024).

Research shows that there is (increasingly) an online-offline interconnection, with known offline behaviours now manifesting themselves online (Schram, De Jong & Esyink Smeets, 2020; Janssen, 2021; Moors & Verweij, 2022; Janssen, Dreissen & Juncker, 2022). In the case of youth violence, Van den Broek & Roks (2023) call this a hybridisation of street culture, with online and offline problems overlapping and continuously influencing each other.

1.3 Scope

In general, it is found that victims of crime with an online component in their personal life are much less likely to report it than victims of other digital crimes (Leukfeldt et al., 2013). Much uncertainty remains about the extent to which young people are involved in crime with an online component. Figures based on police and judicial records do not provide a reliable picture of the extent of young people's involvement (Van der Laan, Tollenaar, Beijers & Kessels, 2024). Previous research has shown that the current figures, according

3 This is in contrast to cybercrime or cyber offences – in the narrow sense – in which ICT is both the means and the objective of the criminal conduct.

to which less than 1% of all juvenile offenders are involved in a cybercrime or other crime with an online component, are a considerable underestimation (Van der Laan & Goudriaan, 2016; Van der Laan & Beerthuizen, 2018; Boekhoorn, 2019).
According to self-reporting research, 20% of young people aged 12 to 18 committed cyber and/or digitalised offences in 2020, with 11.1% saying they had committed a digitalised offence in the past 12 months (Van der Laan et al., 2021). This mostly involves cyberbullying, followed by 'distributing sexual images of another underage person'. Of children aged 10 to 12 years, 1.6% say they have committed a digital crime, mainly cyberbullying. In the young adult age category of 19 to 24 years, this figure is almost 7%.
When it comes to victimhood, in 2022, 9.8% of 12- to 25-year-old internet users indicate that they have been threatened or intimidated online in the previous 12 months; in 2019 this figure was still 5.3% (CBS, 2018; CBS, 2023). Girls still experienced this more often than boys in 2022, but the gap is narrower than in the 2019 figures presented here, namely 11.5% versus 8.2%. Over 43% of all victims experienced negative emotional consequences after the incident.

1.4 Young people, violence and social media

Social media play an important part in young people's lives. In 2023, 87% of young people in secondary education were active almost daily on a social media platform (Rombouts et al., 2024). In general, social media have led to various changes in the lives of young people. These are changes in time use and activity patterns, but also in showing identity, building and showing relationships, and sharing events and a person's location (Weerman, 2017). Positive aspects of social media for young people are that they help develop their own identity and can have a positive effect on self-confidence (Valkenburg, 2014).
However, the use of social media also has a negative side and can have far-reaching consequences (Van Wilsem, 2010; Moors & Verweij, 2022). Social media can be a catalyst for youth violence, in that they provide a safe haven and extensive reach (Irwin-Rogers & Pinkney, 2017). The Youth Health Monitor 2023 (RIVM, 2023) shows an increase in the number of young people experiencing problems due to the use of social media.
Youth violence is increasingly taking place online, with cyberbullying being the most prevalent (Patton, Hong, Ranney, Patel, Kelley, Eschmann, & Washington, 2014).[4] Violence on social media is seen as an important catalyst for offline violence (Abassi, Irum & Khoso 2020). Social media platforms may unintentionally facilitate the emergence of conflicts due to the visibility and connectivity of the platforms. Patton, Eschmann & Butler (2013) have described this as 'internet banging', where threats on social media escalate into the offline world because of online conversations (Vasquez Reyes, Elsaesser, Smith Lee, Santiago Nazario & Stevens, 2023). Internet banging involves mutual involvement in a conflict, with both parties using aggressive communication towards each other. In order to understand conflicts on the street, it is therefore important to understand how these conflicts started and were maintained in the online world (Elsaesser, Patoon, Weinstein, Santiago, Clarke & Eschmann, 2020). Social media also provide a place where young people learn

4 Including threats, shaming and exposure.

about violence, as well as other criminal phenomena (Abassi et al., 2020).
Recent research by Weerman et al. (2022) focusing specifically on gun violence in Rotterdam shows that social media influence the dynamics of violence among Dutch youth. Conflicts on social media can lead to violence among young people in the offline world and problematic youth groups have increasingly appeared online (Van der Laan, Pleysier & Weerman, 2020). Social media enable threats to be made online, while online anonymity can prompt people to do things they would not normally do (Van 't Hoff-de Goede & Janssen, 2024).[5] Within the online world, something small can quickly turn into something much bigger. This is due to the quantifiable and publicly available features of the platforms, which can increase pressure on young people to commit violence. This pressure is experienced not only by the young people involved but also by peers who speak out about the situation (Elsaesser et al., 2020). Young people's susceptibility to social media in relation to violence is associated with the developmental stage of adolescents during puberty. During this stage, problems with self-control after provocation may arise due to susceptibility to provocation by peers (Elsaesser et al., 2021).
International literature research indicates that exposure to violence in mass media (i.e. not social media) has an effect on aggressive behaviour in consumers of the media (Anderson, Berkowitz, Donnerstein, Huesmann, Johnson, Linz, Malamuth & Wartella, 2003; Greer & Reinder, 2012). The extent to which exposure to violence affects aggressive behaviour depends on the presence of other (individual, social and environmental) risks and protective factors. Research by Mengü & Mengü (2015) indicates that young people who have been in contact with violent online content on social media are more likely to commit physical violence. Little is known, however, about the relationship between media use and the development of violence at an individual level (Moors, Rovers & Bouman, 2019).
Nor is much known about the longer-term effects of exposure to violence on social media. Research by Moors et al. (2019) shows that perpetrators of so-called high-impact crimes[6] frequently consume crime-related content, particularly on social media. This study also shows that the longer their criminal record, the more crime-related media messages young people consume, and, as far as social media are concerned, those messages more often come from people in their own circle.

1.5 Hybridisation of violence

In recent years, the media have increasingly reported on street violence among young people with both an online and offline component. As stated above, we use the term hybrid street violence to describe this. An initial exploration of open sources yields several examples. Many forms of violence with an online component fall under the heading of exposure. Exposure is when users share images to 'put people on display' to people in their own circle (Moors & Verweij, 2022). It often involves explicit sexual images. Sexual extortion (or sextortion) and revenge porn are forms of exposure with a sexual component. We find anecdotal evidence in the media of non-sexual extortion with an online component.

5 The so-called disinhibition effect (Suler, 2004; Van 't Hoff-de Goede & Jansen, 2024).
6 This includes violence, but also street robberies, burglaries and mugging.

In addition to the aforementioned example of the Rotterdam police, we find several other examples in the media, such as the case of 16-year-old Rivaldo, a boy from Amsterdam who was seen in videos being beaten up. His mother said in an interview with the *AD*:

> *'Snapchat contained images of the threats and abuse. Initially he made sure the chats disappeared, but videos and screenshots eventually surfaced. It was terrible. Those children have lost touch with reality. They live in such an unreal, parallel world. Because it happens at school, on the street and online, it just never stops.' (Vugts, 3 September 2022)*

In Tiel, a community police officer raises the alarm in the media due to concerns about young people challenging and threatening each other on Snapchat (*De Gelderlander*, 16 October 2022). The police officer says that the lack of a formal report makes it difficult for the police to do anything about it.

The increasing number of (recorded) stabbing incidents also appears to be related to social media. In March 2020, the Netherlands Police announced that the number of recorded stabbing incidents had increased from 160 in 2017 to 380 in 2019. Young people aged 12 to 22 in particular have been increasingly involved in serious and fatal stabbing incidents since 2017 (Police, 21 January 2022). A confidential analysis by the Rotterdam police shows that use of social media plays a role in 38% of recorded stabbing incidents. According to the police analysis, the role of social media varies and includes messages posted online to convey a tough or dangerous image, feuds that start online and threats that are spread online before and after stabbing incidents (DRIO, 2020: 14, in: Roks & Van den Broek, 2020; Van den Broek & Roks, 2023). It should be noted that this is an analysis of recorded incidents and that not all incidents are reported to the police (the so-called dark number).
Weerman et al. (2022) conclude that the young people who are most likely to use a knife also often move in social media circles where knives are displayed. Posing with a weapon or money on social media can also confer status and shows that a young person is part of a particular subculture (Moors et al., 2019). Although the findings of the aforementioned study do show that young people make a trade-off between increased status and an increased chance of being caught (as a result of a social media post), they consider it very important to affirm or raise their street credibility on social media (Moors et al., 2019). Idolising violence on online media can lead to young people behaving on the street according to the image they have conveyed of themselves to avoid losing face (Van der Wiele, 18 July 2022).
This is consistent with the development of hybridisation of street culture among young people observed by Van den Broek & Roks (2023). Recent literature research into the carrying, possession and use of knives by young people shows that young people appear to own knives because they feel unsafe and because they find knives 'nice and beautiful' (Wolsink & Ferwerda, 2024), although more research is needed to confirm or refute this.

In recent years, there have been several (sometimes fatal) stabbings that could be related to

'drill rap' and in which social media played an important role. A characteristic feature seems to be that rival groups threaten and physically attack each other online and offline in order to 'score points' on social media. Flemish youth lawyer Chantal van der Bosch explains this in an interview as follows:

> *'The drill rappers use a points system: you earn points for every criminal act and lose points if you're arrested by the police. Those points are shared on social media. It often involves intimidation, assault and injury, putting pressure on each other to undress, for example, and then filming it and putting it online.''(Demeyere, 22 December 2022)*

A background article in *de Volkskrant* (23 August 2020) describes social media as a catalyst for violence between opponents ('opps') of rival groups. In short live streams, such as on YouTube, Snapchat and Instagram, rappers challenge each other and are encouraged by fans to score points. Here is an example:

> *'At the end of May, a drill rapper (20) was set upon by a gang of youths in Amsterdam-Zuidoost, one of whom attacked him with a machete. Soon after the attack, images of his bleeding head that had circulated online were included in a rap video, and "fans" awarded points to the alleged perpetrators.' (Bahara & Stoker, 23 August 2020)*

The newspaper found numerous social media accounts in the drill rap scene showing images of drill rappers and their followers fighting each other, in some cases with knives, or 'dashing' each other.[7] Images of this can earn more points. Whereas initially there were local outbreaks of violence between youths from different neighbourhoods or postcode areas, Amsterdam police unit chief Frank Paauw said in an article in *de Volkskrant* (23 August 2020) that the police were now seeing conflicts crossing city borders. He said these involved young people who felt they had no prospects and that their lives were worthless anyway. 'The drill rap and the videos make them feel seen.'

There are different views on the relationship between drill rap and incidents of physical violence. Although lawyers and the police see a relationship based on media posts, this is not borne out by previous scientific research. Roks & Van de Broek (2020) conclude in their research in Rotterdam that violence and its portrayal are important elements of drill rap, but that physical violence rarely ensues. The researchers also examined the relationship between the increased armed violence observed by police among young people and the drill rap scene. They concluded that there was only a relationship with drill rap in a few cases. Online rivalry can take various forms, but in most cases it does not lead to violence (De Jong, 2023).

Young people may seek to join a drill rap group (or another locally organised group) out of a desire for security and shared experiences (Van den Maagdenberg, 2021). Underlying factors or mechanisms, such as socioeconomic factors, may play a more important role. In the examples mentioned, representatives of the police and the Public Prosecution Service stated, on the basis of their practical experience, that the young people involved often had

7 Dashing is the act of publicly humiliating an opponent by chasing him.

a vulnerable background.

It is clear from the above that offline and online violence can manifest itself in different ways within an incident. There often appears to be a chain of successive manifestations that may differ in nature. For example, online extortion can lead to repercussions in the form of physical violence. Filming physical abuse can be followed by online extortion using the images. The online component of the violence does not appear to be subordinate to the offline component and can have just as much, or even more, impact.

We previously referred to the hybridisation of street culture (Van den Broek & Roks, 2023). The same hybridisation can be seen (or extends to) street violence among young people, with a combination of offline and online forms. This hybrid character means that offline and online components can occur in different variations in the chain of the offence. To characterise offline and online violence in dependent relationships, Van 't Hoff-de Goede & Janssen (2024) distinguish four quadrants, two of which have a hybrid form:

1. contact, violence and threats of violence are entirely online;
2. contact originates offline and violence takes place online, with or without offline violence;
3. contact originates online and violence takes place offline, with or without online violence;
4. contact, violence and threats of violence occur entirely offline; The type of violence on which this study focuses falls within the second and third quadrants.

1.6 Background to violence among young people

It was already stated in the background to the study that relatively little is known about hybrid street violence among young people. When it comes to youth crime in a broad sense, the 2022 Youth Crime Monitor (Kessels, 2023) shows that 73% of the underage people involved in recorded crime (not specifically violence) are boys. In addition, 56% of underage suspects have a Dutch background and 1.5% are early school leavers. The monitor also shows that most suspects come from families with lower household income and the number of young adult suspects is highest in the lowest income group. Of the underage suspects in 2022, 53% are children living at home in a two-parent family and 38% are children living at home in a single-parent family. Finally, almost 20% live in one of the four largest municipalities in the Netherlands (Kessels, 2023).
Previous literature research has shown that there are various risk factors for youth violence in general (Beerthuizen, Van Leijsen & Van der Laan, 2019). Table 1.1 summarises these factors. These factors largely correspond to risk factors for young people becoming involved in drug crime (Peeck, Witteveen & Sikkens-Dokter, 2021; Servaas, Weerman & Fischer, 2021; De Boer, Ferwerda & Kuppens, 2022).

Table 1.1 Risk factors for youth violence[8]

Individual context	Family context	Wider context
Antisocial behaviour at a young age	Young mother	Truancy
Birth complications	Antisocial or criminal behaviour of parents	Low school motivation
Aggression or behavioural problems	Weak bond with parents	Poor performance at school
Positive attitude towards criminal behaviour	Inadequate parenting styles	Antisocial or delinquent friends
Psychopathic traits	Experiencing abuse	Friends' substance use
Substance abuse	Family poverty	Being a member of a gang at a young age
		Living in a deprived neighbourhood

(Based on Beerthuizen et al., 2019)

1.7 Current police approach

It is not easy for the police to recognise the various manifestations of hybrid violence among young people. This is true not only of the police, but also of other important actual or potential 'signallers', such as parents, youth work organisations, schools or sports clubs. Below we will discuss the police's current approach in more detail.

1.7.1 *From national to local*

Identifying and detecting cybercrime and traditional crime with an online component is not yet common practice within the police. It was already noted in the early 1990s that the police lacked the knowledge to deal properly with the growing digitalisation of society (Van Amersfoort, Smit & Rietveld, 2002). This led to the establishment of the Digital Expertise Bureaus (BDEs). At the beginning of 2000, digital investigation was organised on the basis of four knowledge layers:

1. NFI, KLPD, National Police Selection and Training Institute;
2. BDEs;
3. online investigation key task holders;
4. executive/line management.

The most specialised knowledge was in layer 1 and the least specialised knowledge in layer 4 (Van Amersfoort et al., 2002).

Even in 2022, the police's approach to cybercrime and crime with an online component is mainly the responsibility of specialised teams. For example, the police have special teams to combat bank fraud, child pornography and high-tech crime (politie.nl, n.d.). These are complicated forms of cybercrime that require advanced specialist knowledge. Regionally there are cybercrime teams, which include digital investigators.

8 The consulted research concerns so-called high-impact crimes. This includes violence, but also street robberies, burglaries and mugging.

OSINT specialists and data analysts work on cases involving hacking, DDoS attacks, phishing and WhatsApp fraud (Kombijdepolitie.nl, n.d.).
Many crimes are initially dealt with by the core teams, but the approach to cybercrime and crime with an online component is hindered by unfamiliarity, local priorities and capacity problems (Kort & Spithoven, 2021). Kort & Spithoven (2021: 14) conclude as follows, as previously did Terpstra, Fyfe en Salet (2019):

> *'The average officer on the street and the core teams they belong to usually have their hands full with emergency assistance and offline crime. An accumulation of spending cuts combined with an increase in duties has already led to regular police work becoming chronically overloaded'' (Kort & Spithoven, 2021: 14).*

Boekhoorn (2019) notes that the advent of cybercrime teams in the units marked a substantial advance in the combating of cybercrime including at regional level, but that the dissemination of knowledge and expertise within the various levels of the police is an issue. A study by Jansen, Van Valkengoed, Veenstra & Stol (2020) shows that the police officers surveyed had little knowledge of information gathering on the internet. However, it is important that professionals have knowledge of street culture, including online, in order to connect with the target group (Van den Broek & Roks, 2023).

1.7.2 *Role of community policing*

In the Netherlands, community policing is seen as 'the foundation of the police organisation' (Terpstra, Salet, Van Duijneveldt & Havinga, 2021: 15). The need for community policing to catch up in terms of digital knowledge and skills is recognised at the top of the police force and is reflected in various policy documents and numerous projects, programmes and initiatives. For example, in the document entitled 'Platform for good police work. Community Policing Development Agenda (2018)', the police refer to the theme of 'Working in the neighbourhood and on the web'. This document discusses among other things the importance of the police also monitoring social media and the need to increase police officers' digital expertise. Digitalisation is also mentioned several times in the police Budget and Management Plan 2022-2026. The document states that in community policing there is an 'increasing need for eyes and ears on the web' (p. 18) and refers to the objective of strengthening digital investigation in the domain of public decency (p. 27), which concerns offences such as revenge porn, covert filming and grooming. There is no mention of violence or street violence.
There are now numerous initiatives aimed at stimulating and improving the digital competence and digital skills of community police officers (Boelens & Landman, 2021; Broekhuizen et al., 2022; Schiks, Van 't Hoff-de Goede & Leukfeldt 2022). Many of the current initiatives focus on property crimes with an online component, such as WhatsApp fraud, identity fraud or system hacking. Digital crime with a morality component, such as sextortion and revenge porn, also receives attention. Much less attention is paid to the phenomenon that we focus on in this study: young people involved as victims and perpetrators of hybrid street violence. Examples of this can nevertheless be found. In our

study of digital projects in community policing (Broekhuizen et al., 2022), we spoke to police officers from the digi-room in Capelle aan den IJssel who pay close attention to crime with an online component involving young people. They do so using online detection and surveillance techniques, but also by asking the right questions (and adopting the right attitude) when recording a formal report. This means they are better equipped to identify and combat this type of victimhood and perpetratorhood. However, experience shows that this rarely happens and despite the steps taken in the 'digital transition' many police officers still do not know enough about this type of offence.

Despite ambitions to improve digital skills and knowledge, change is slow to materialise in practice. Terpstra et al. (2021) conclude that 'a significant proportion' of staff in core teams keep their distance from digitalisation and do not have much to do with it. The core teams studied by Terpstra et al. (2021) lacked digitalisation strategies and largely used the same working methods as those used to tackle analogue problems. In the report the researchers conclude:

> *'The initiatives in the core teams are often still in their infancy and sometimes give an unprofessional impression. In many cases the necessary expertise is lacking. Moreover, the approach and initiatives often depend on rather random circumstances, such as the more or less coincidental presence of an individual employee who is interested.' (Terpstra et al., 2021: 160)*

Kort & Spithoven (2021) conclude that major adjustments are needed at the local police level to respond to the digitalisation of society. They argue that a continuous focus on it is required in training, both for new and existing employees, as well as in recruitment and policy.

However, there does seem to be a willingness among police officers, as well as their superiors, to improve their digital skills. We saw this in the first 'GGP Digi-vakdag' event organised by the community policing portfolio on 7 November 2022. On this day devoted to community police officers, more than 800 participants from 167 core teams and 44 district investigation teams took part (evaluation of GGP Digi-vakdag '22). Both the research we conducted for the community policing portfolio and the workshops we gave on that day showed that many teams were still looking for ways to work digitally at a local level and for means to increase their knowledge and skills.

1.8 Objective

It can be seen from the above that young people encounter various manifestations of hybrid street violence, either as perpetrators or as victims. At the same time, there is still little scientific knowledge of the various manifestations and the focus is more on sexual violence with an online component. The police, but also parents, schools, community social teams and other chain partners, have little visibility on the phenomenon. Furthermore, this type of violent crime often falls outside the domain of district and regional investigation teams and ends up with the core teams. It is here that, according to previous research, many employees do not know how to deal properly with crimes having an online component.

The aim of this study is to gain more insight into hybrid street violence and to offer a possible course of action for community police and other chain partners to combat it. We want to investigate what the findings mean for community policing and what this requires in terms of facilitation or policy at national level. We will also look at the possible contribution that parents, schools and other chain partners can make and provide guidelines for a more integrated approach to this phenomenon.

1.9 Research questions

The central research question is:

> *What is the nature of hybrid street violence among young people and what possible courses of action do the police and chain partners have to combat it?*

We have formulated the following sub-questions. The first set of sub-questions relates to the phenomenon:

1. What are the manifestations and 'tracks' of hybrid street violence among young people?
2. How can the perpetrators and victims be characterised?
3. What is the impact of the violence?
4. Which criminogenic factors play a role?

The second set of sub-questions focuses on developing a possible course of action for the police and chain partners.

5. What is the current approach within the police to non-sexual hybrid street violence?
6. What are chain partners doing to combat hybrid street violence?
7. What are the main barriers to a successful approach?
8. What options do the police have to improve their approach?
9. What options do chain partners (including parents/guardians) have to combat hybrid street violence?
10. How can the police and chain partners improve their overall cooperation?

1.9.1 *Explanation of key terms*

The most important terms in the research question are explained below.

Young people
The focus of the research is on perpetratorhood and victimhood among young people. We consider young people to be persons aged between zero and 24 years. This is in line with the definition used by Statistics Netherlands (CBS). Young people can also be perpetrators or victims of violence against or by adults. Where the empirical findings show that this is part of hybrid street violence, this fact has been stated.

Hybrid street violence
By this we mean physical violence in public spaces, with online violence also taking place before, during or after the physical violence. By *physical violence* we mean both the use of force on people as well as offline threats, extortion, stalking or harassment.[9] For *online violence*, we in principle use Spithoven's (2020) taxonomy of violence, with ICT being used as a means. The following forms are distinguished: extortion/blackmail, cyberbullying, insults, stalking, discrimination, threats (violence), distributing images, distributing text and slander. Criminal exploitation and labour exploitation fall outside the scope of the study.

Community policing
Community policing in the Netherlands is organised on the basis of core teams in the regional units. In this study, we therefore take community policing to mean the efforts of the officers in the core teams of the regional units and all work processes and departments that fall under them.[10]

Criminogenic factors
By criminogenic factors we mean characteristics and circumstances that contribute to the commission of hybrid street violence (in line with Vogelvang, Van Burik, Van der Knaap & Wartna, 2003).

1.10 Reading guide

In Chapter 2 below we explain the research methodology used. Chapters 3 to 5 then focus on the phenomenon of hybrid street violence based on the empirical findings. Chapter 3 describes the manifestations observed, Chapter 4 examines the backgrounds of the perpetrators and victims of violence with an online component and Chapter 5 discusses the identified criminogenic factors.
Chapters 6 and 7 discuss the empirical findings with regard to the approach. Chapter 6

9 This is in line with the definition of violence in the Official Instructions for the police, the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee and other law enforcement officers.
10 When formulating possible courses of action in our study, we pay heed to the observation made by the police that conflicts among young people often cross city boundaries (*de Volkskrant*, 23 August 2020).

discusses the identification of hybrid street violence. Chapter 7 focuses on follow-up. In these two chapters we focus on the role of both the police and relevant chain partners. The study ends with the main conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 8.
We illustrate the study by means of the cases we identified, sometimes referring to them in several chapters. The cases are as follows:

- Case A: victim of forced apology;
- Case B: violent gangs of young people;
- Case C: stabbed 15-year-old;
- Case D: repeat victimhood;
- Case E: 13-year-old wants to take revenge with a knife;
- Case F: repeat victim of forced apology.

With the exception of this chapter, the quotations at the beginning of the chapters are from media reports and are for illustration purposes.

2. Research method

2.1 Research design

The present research is empirical, exploratory and qualitative in nature. It consists of two main phases, followed by an analysis and reporting phase. Phase 1 focused on understanding the phenomenon and phase 2 concentrated on formulating a possible course of action.

2.2 Phase 1: Exploration of the phenomenon

Phase 1 is the exploration of the phenomenon. This phase consists of in-depth interviews and online observations.

2.2.1 *Semi-structured interviews*

Most of the first research phase consists of semi-structured interviews. 62 interviews were conducted with different types of respondents. Table 2.1 presents an overview of the respondents. Some of these respondents were interviewed several times to verify findings from other interviews or to obtain additional information. In addition to these 62 respondents, numerous shorter interviews took place with people who were interested in the study but had insufficient knowledge and/or experience to be questioned in an in-depth interview. These respondents include, for example, school staff or community police officers who were aware of hybrid street violence but had no insight into the backgrounds of those involved or specific incidents.

Table 2.1 Overview of respondents

Category	Type of respondent	Number
Youth professionals outside the police	Youth workers	14
	School staff (VIOS (Safety In and Around Schools), teachers, pedagogical caretaker, youth coach)	5
	Prevention officers Youth prevention team	2
	Street outreach worker	1
	Drill producer, rapper	2
	Local authority advisers/employees	3
Other	Journalist	1

	Lawyer	1
	Youth public prosecutor	1
Police	Community police officers	6
	Digital community police officers	2
	Youth support officers	4
	Other police (social media coordinator, OE in youth community policing, digihaven coordinator, OSA)	4
Parents and young people	Mothers[12]	3
	Young people	12

Selection

Since the phenomenon central to this study is still relatively new, there was no clear picture at the outset of who could provide good and reliable information on it. It was therefore decided to question respondents on the theme from different perspectives, such as police officers, professionals working with young people and parents and young people.

Respondents were sought through various channels, including the researchers' own professional and private networks, and through desk research to approach professionals with possible knowledge of the phenomenon. People familiar with this field were also sought on LinkedIn. Each interviewed respondent was also asked to identify new relevant respondents for the study.

The selection of respondents can therefore be characterised in part as a snowball sample (Mortelmans, 2018). As noted earlier, this method resulted in not every discussion leading to an interview, but in many cases it led to an actual or potential new respondent.

During the study, additional effort was made to find parents and young people, including by approaching respondents already engaged with midway through the study to obtain an update and asking whether they could put us in touch with parents and/or young people on this subject. It was decided to reward the young people for their participation with a gift voucher. The additional effort resulted in the participation of new parents and young people. A parent or other adult was present during the interviews with underage respondents.

Saturation criteria were applied when searching for respondents. When the researchers ceased to gather any new information from respondents, the fieldwork was concluded. To assess this saturation, the interim findings were presented to 15 professionals and, in part, to seven young people in an expert session. This showed that the research had indeed reached a point of saturation and the fieldwork was subsequently concluded.

The respondents come from different parts of the Netherlands, including urban, outer urban and more rural areas. This is often mentioned in the report to give the reader an idea of the distribution of the problem. It was also decided to recruit the majority of respondents outside the police, in order to gather as much information as possible that was not yet known to the police. The interviews themselves were conducted online or face to face, depending on the respondent's preference. A list of topics was used as guidance for each interview. A

12 The snowball method was used to find fathers for the interviews.

record was made of each interview for analysis. These records were coded in Atlas.TI, using a coding scheme based on the research questions, with new codes being added on the basis of the interviews.

2.2.2 *Online observations on social media*

Prior to the research, the idea was to also gain more insight into various manifestations of violence through online observations. A researcher from the team underwent OSINT training[13] for this purpose. However, during the training it became apparent that it was focused mainly on investigating individual persons and not so much on phenomena. After an online exploration using different search terms on different platforms, the online observations were focused on indications of drill rap-related violence in public videos on YouTube. This is because these groups and their associated scoreboards are publicly visible. The online observations mainly took place on the YouTube platform, as no account, subscription or friendship/connection is required to view posted videos.
An analysis scheme was used for these online observations. Several characteristics were recorded, such as the manifestation involved, the severity, the type of people involved and the type of social media used. Searches were conducted on YouTube on various dates between 1 May 2021 and 21 June 2023. The names of well-known drill rap groups were used, along with the names of well-known rappers and terms such as score, scoreboard, beef, drill and duchdrill. The researcher then used the results to find other videos.
To complement these observations of publicly accessible images, various non-public videos of youth street violence were viewed on respondents' phones. These images were shared with them through platforms such as WhatsApp, Snapchat and Telegram and were used to observe different manifestations. An anonymised report was made of the image observations (including the type of violence and the number of people involved). The researchers were thus able to observe the various forms of violence themselves and descriptions of these were used in the report. The researchers only viewed this footage on the respondents' devices and no personal or account information was shared.

2.3 Phase 2: Lessons and possible courses of action

Contrary to the previous intention in the research proposal, phase 1 also focused partly on formulating lessons and a possible course of action. In order to make the most of the respondents' experience and knowledge, attention was already devoted to possible improvements to the approach in the interviews. Many respondents also started discussing this themselves. In addition, we looked for good practices in respondents' experiences that could be translated into lessons. Much information was therefore already gathered in phase 1 to formulate a possible course of action.
To conclude the data collection, an expert session was organised with professionals from within and outside the police. The purpose of this session was twofold. The first part of the session was spent feeding back some key findings to be reviewed and supplemented by the

13 OSINT stands for Open Source Intelligence and the training was aimed at improving online research skills.

participants. The second part of the session was devoted to formulating options for tackling violence with an online component among young people. The participants in the session were mostly selected from the respondents in phase 1, the aim being to find respondents who had experience of the approach. The emphasis here was on police staff. In addition, participants were sought in the police's digital community policing portfolio who could make a meaningful contribution. A call was put out on LinkedIn to fill the final two places. The session took place at an external location in the centre of the Netherlands, lasted 2.5 hours and involved fifteen participants (see Table 2.2). The participants came from different parts of the Netherlands, including both large and smaller cities.

Table 2.2 Overview of expert session participants

Position	Number of participants	Organisation
Community police officer	1	Police
Digital community police officer	2	Police
Youth support officer	1	Police
IT coach	3	Police
Digital coordinator	1	Police
Operations Specialist	1	Police
Online street culture adviser	1	Municipality
Prevention officer	1	Youth prevention team
Early school leaving project leader	1	Municipality
Safety in and around Schools coordinator	2	SASS
Artist[14]	1	Police Science & Research

A record was made of the entire session, including the results of the second part, as input for the data analysis and coding in Atlas.TI. At the participants' request, the results of the session were also fed back to the participants in a concise report.
In addition to experiential experts who had themselves experienced violence with an online component, the researchers needed to test a number of findings among young people. For this purpose, a number of schools were approached that were known to have a student panel. One school was interested and a student panel was organised at this school, during which a group discussion took place with five young people. This session was deliberately held after the expert session so that some of the results of the expert session could be presented to the young people in the group discussion. A record of this discussion was also produced to provide input for the analysis.

2.4 Phase 3: Analysis and reporting

The information from the interviews and the expert session was coded in Atlas.TI. This

14 This artist was engaged by Police Science & Research to help valorise the research projects of the Call to which our study related and was invited upon request.

involved a combination of a deductive and an inductive approach. Based on the research questions, a number of themes were formulated in advance, but during the coding process new themes and subthemes were added based on the data obtained from the study. The findings were then analysed for each code and subcode when preparing the report. The information from the literature study was combined thematically in the problem analysis in Chapter 1. The results of the online observations have been used for illustrative purposes. The records and photographs of these observations were thematically coded for the reporting.

2.5 Scope and limitations

The search for respondents included a specific search for people who had experience with the issues. It therefore comprised selective sample of respondents. It was decided to gather as much information as possible about the phenomenon. In the conversations with youth professionals, questions were asked about young people involved in hybrid street violence. The picture we paint in this study is therefore not a general picture of young people and on the basis of the findings we cannot make any statements about the extent or proportion of young people involved.
By looking for different types of respondents from different geographic regions of the Netherlands, the researchers did nevertheless attempt to achieve variation among the respondents. The fieldwork continued until a content saturation point was reached.
The study was confined to (predominantly non-sexual) hybrid street violence among young people. During the study, limited data were also obtained on sexual violence, as this is part of the chain of hybrid street violence. Information was also obtained on the online recruitment of young people for criminal acts. This has been mentioned where relevant in relation to our research topic, but it has not been further investigated because it falls outside the scope of the study. In addition to the public images on social media, which only provided a limited picture of the problems examined, various non-public videos of street violence among young people were viewed on the respondents' phones. The researchers were thus able to observe the various forms of violence themselves and descriptions of these were used in the report.[15]
With regard to the current police approach, it should be noted that this study is not an evaluation of all efforts made by the police in relation to young people. It examined the empirical findings regarding the approach to hybrid street violence among young people, from identification to follow-up. To supplement the information from respondents with local expertise, conversations took place with several key police figures who had a more comprehensive, national picture.

Finally, we would point out that young people live in a world of continuous change. For example, at the start of the study many young people were imitating drill rap behaviour

15 We would point out that we have not processed any personal data of the persons concerned, nor have we been given access to such data by the respondents. Furthermore, no footage of the incidents was in the possession of the researchers.

(respondents refer to it as the ‘drill hype’), but we are currently finding that the ‘Sorry, boss’ phenomenon (filmed apology) is very popular. In this sense, the manifestations of hybrid street violence are a snapshot, with the chapters on perpetrators and victims and criminogenic factors presenting a more static picture.

3. Manifestations of hybrid street violence

'It goes something like this: they pick one person from a group. He has to say sorry, express remorse or do something else, such as make a fool of himself. If he doesn't, he gets a beating.' (Tiel community police officer, in: Van Essen, 16 October 2022)

This chapter focuses on the different manifestations of hybrid street violence among young people. The findings are mainly based on the interviews and open sources. The findings from the online observations were used in the descriptions of violence by rival groups presenting themselves as drill rap groups. Although the manifestations are discussed individually below, they do not necessarily occur in isolation and multiple manifestations can occur in a track or chain of related events.

3.1 Filmed apologies and humiliations

In conversations with professionals, parents and young people across the country, we come across many examples of young people being forced to make an apology while being filmed. Sometimes there is a genuine reason for the apology, but this is not always the case. A reason could be, for example, an online insult, but also the mere fact that the victim looked at the perpetrator(s) 'in the wrong way'.

We see and hear about various incidents following more or less the same 'script': a young person (or child) is forced to kneel down and apologise by one or more other young people. This often occurs in combination with abuse, with the victim being beaten by one or more others. Sometimes the victim has to undress and then kneel down. We have also come across examples where the victim is forced to kiss the shoes of the perpetrator(s) and/or is robbed of money or a phone. For the apologies themselves, we encounter a lot of the same terminology. Here too young people follow a 'script'. Commonly used expressions are 'Sorry, king' or 'Sorry, boss'. In one case, involving an apology to a young person who is a member of a known criminal family, the victim has to say the words 'Sorry, boss'. The entire incident is filmed and shared online. This can be done by means of stories (with Snapchat often mentioned as a platform, and TikTok to a lesser extent) or direct messages. The examples we see occur both during the day and in the evening.

Case A: victim of forced apology

We speak to young person X at home in the presence of his mother. X is 15 years old, wears a tracksuit and lives in a newly built neighbourhood with mainly owner-occupied homes. Sitting with his mother, he says he has been threatened by his peers several times. The first time he was forced to apologise was because he was a so-called snitch, a traitor. A friend of his was attacked by a group of boys who threw her bicycle into the water. His friend called the police and X told the officer exactly where the bicycle was. According to the perpetrators, that made him a snitch.

A few days later he was threatened by them, but also by a number of other boys who demanded that he apologise. X did so, the apology was filmed and the images were distributed. He did not say anything at home, but the youth prevention team and the community police officer heard about the incident when they were working on another case and then contacted his parents.

A few months later, X faced problems again. He was on his way home with a friend at the end of the afternoon. At one point his friend went into a shop near the station, leaving X alone at the station. There, someone approached him whom he vaguely recognised from the neighbourhood and whom he believed to be one of the boys who had threatened him earlier. This boy was a little older than X. It turned out that the boy had previously sent him a photo of a gun on Snapchat. X thought this boy had a weapon again this time, so when the boy told him to come with him, he did so. X had to get down on his knees and say sorry. The boy filmed this with his phone and posted it as a story on Snapchat. Afterwards, X thought he had been set up by his friend who made a phone call saying that X was at the station. This so-called friend was nowhere to be found after that.

When he went to school the next day, it turned out that the whole school had seen the video. 'Get on your knees,' someone shouted at him. X was getting tired of it. 'They shouted at me across the hall, then I went over to the person and grabbed him by the throat and pushed him against the lockers.'

Although the vast majority of victims do not talk to adults, such as parents or the police, about what they experienced, some young people do. The examples we see or hear about usually became known to professionals because other young people told them about them or forwarded information to them. Youth workers or pedagogical workers at school are often approached in this way. In many cases, these young people's motivation is that they are concerned about the victim, but sometimes they forward the images because they find them funny. Youth or community police officers see the images through network partners and sometimes through good contacts with young people.

From the conversations we had, it was evident that the background or reason for the apology is not always clear to the victim. The victim does not always know why he is being punished or what he should apologise for. In some cases there may have been a previous conflict, possibly online. Sometimes a young person is labelled a snitch online, which means he can be punished by others. These may also be people unknown to the young person.

3.2 Abuse or group abuse without apology

In addition to online apologies, which are often accompanied by group violence, many respondents know of examples of group abuse without any required apology. This type of violence also involves one person being selected and then being attacked by peers while being filmed. A youth worker says:

> *'Take the example of a boy beaten up by five boys. This is filmed and distributed at school. The whole school laughs at him and the boy wants to get his revenge.' (Youth worker)*

Another youth worker says:

> *'Another concrete example is a dispute that occurred mainly online. A girl who was weaker than the rest was bullied at school. [...] So they agreed that she would be beaten up. By another group of girls. That was agreed in advance, as was the fact that it would be filmed. You hear that very often and those images then circulate on social media. That is the case with all fights these days and the bullying goes on 24/7.' (Youth worker)*

Another example we came across concerned a group of girls punishing a girl for hanging out with a certain boy. The girl was beaten up by the group and the images were distributed. Although most examples involve multiple perpetrators, there may also be a single perpetrator who commits the physical violence in combination with someone else filming it.

Here too, young people in different parts of the Netherlands seem to use the same script. As one youth worker puts it: 'entrapping, attacking and filming'. According to professionals, young people participate in this kind of abuse because they do not want to become victims themselves; they do not want to end up at the bottom of the 'food chain'. Moreover, this is a way to gain status because the images are shared online among peers. A respondent says: 'Abuse and videos of it are sent around like trophies.' This is also a factor in young people's motivation to participate in cases of abuse with forced apologies.

Case B: violent gangs of young people

Young people between the ages of approximately 13 and 16 move around in fluid groups between different adjacent towns on fat bikes and e-bikes. These are mixed groups with both boys and girls who can see where others are on Snapchat. The young people seek each other out to fight, but sometimes also target ordinary residents they encounter. An operations specialist says:

'Since violence is increasing, parents go to the police, so the police are becoming aware of the group violence. But the problem on the street is that nobody dares to talk to us, because then they would be a snitch. This already happens here at a very young age, from 11 to 12 years old.'

The core team works with a case officer to see how they can get evidence of these kinds of cases. They also discuss cases with parents and send letters to inform parents that their child is in a problem area and that they are concerned. The parents are invited to join the discussion. However, many parents are angered by this and say their child does not exhibit such behaviour. The police also contact schools and Halt to provide information. The municipalities involved enter into a covenant with each other to tackle the problem jointly on an individual and group basis.

The group abuse seems to be largely geographically defined; perpetrators and victims attend the same school or live in the same town. In some cases, municipal boundaries are crossed, as in the case described here. Fat bikes and e-bikes make young people more mobile, so they do not have to confine themselves to their own neighbourhood or village.[16]
Here too, the reason can vary. The reason for the abuse may be a latent or previous online conflict. However, the conversations show that someone can also 'simply' become a victim because a young person is seen as an easy (weak) victim or because his or her behaviour triggers something in the group. A youth worker says:

> *'It's when young people think someone's acting superior. They know each other a little, but they think someone is acting too cool, for example by walking around the neighbourhood with Gucci bags. Then they hit the person and film it. They want to raise their own status and at the same time lower other people's status.' (Youth worker)*

A youth coach at a school talks about a girl whose teacher was concerned because she had not been at school for some time. The youth coach got in touch and it turned out that she was being beaten up every day by two girls who were doing so on behalf of someone else.

3.3 Fines and extortion

A filmed apology or group abuse may be the result of an outstanding fine imposed by other young people. Youth workers, again from different parts of the Netherlands, say that extortion is common among young people these days; it is a popular revenue model. A fine may be imposed because a young person actually has an outstanding debt; something has been borrowed and has to be returned with interest. But a young person may also receive a fine for no real reason according to the victim. A youth professional from the Randstad area says that in this way 'innocent children' are being 'drawn in', by which he means into the criminal world. Two youth workers from the east of the Netherlands say they encounter a lot of extortion:

> *'When a dominant group sees a victim, they just scare him and say: your safety costs money. So if you don't want to get hit or whatever, there are things you need to do. The*

16 Section 3.5 focuses on conflicts between rival groups, in which territories play a major role.

onus was on him then. He had to go and get €50 or they would get him.' (Youth worker)

If the fine was not paid, it could result in group abuse or an apology that would be filmed and shared. Young people also have to pay protection money in other parts of the Netherlands. An operations specialist from the North Holland police says:

'There are schools where an individual has to pay protection money to a group. You see them issuing threats with videos of someone being beaten up and the video also reveals where the person lives, with a photo and front door, and where they go to school. If the victim does not pay, they'll wait for him and carry out their threat. That's because of Snapchat, as it lets them know where someone lives and goes to school.' (Operations specialist)

Although Snapchat has the option to turn off location sharing, it appears from the conversations that many young people do not do so. Respondents also know of examples of young people who are pressured not to switch off their location, so they are afraid to do so.

Fines are imposed by young people who are at different stages of the criminal spectrum. These may be young people who are not (yet) criminally active but are already blackmailing their peers. Also, or perhaps particularly, it may involve fines being handed out to people who are already at a more advanced stage in their criminal career. A youth professional from the Randstad area says:

'There were some [criminal] boys from this area. Some boys hit someone with bottles, leaving him blooded and scarred. These boys were then fined for that [by the "real" boys]. The [real] boys asked on Snapchat who did it [hit him with a bottle] and where he lived. The next day there was a report in the newspaper that his house had been shot at and his mother had been hit; he was not at home. Warning. And the fine still had to be paid. So that boy had to pay money. Fines all the time, that's how this scene works.' (Youth professional)

It should be noted that the fine is often not online, but involves paying cash, handing over property or doing a job to pay off the debt. That job is often illegal; for example, it may involve a burglary or blackmailing someone else. The fine can also be imposed on family or other relatives. Various respondents report that a characteristic of these fines is that they go on indefinitely. Even though the victims sometimes think it is time-limited, the fine may stay in force and be collected by others.

Social media are used to pressure the victims. Again, Snapchat is mentioned in this context because it lets users see where others are on a map, at any rate when users have this feature turned on. A youth worker from the south of the Netherlands explains how Snapchat is used to keep an eye on young people:

'Snapchat is used to trade products, deal drugs, extort money and threaten others.

Accounts are also used to keep an eye on family members. On Snapchat there's a map where they can keep an eye on each other. If you have a higher crime ranking, you can always scan people's location. Keeping an eye on people and applying pressure is a recurring theme. It has the effect of keeping young people away from positive groups of friends and family members. They can't stay away from their phone, because they have to use it and are then always traceable. There are so many accounts that can monitor them. People can also keep an eye on other family members; "I know who your sister is and where she is, if you don't do this for me, I'll pay your sister a visit." The same happens in the case of parents. It's very extensive. And they take pictures of a location where family members are send them around.' (Youth worker)

Other respondents also say how easy it is to see where someone is on Snapchat and how difficult it is for young people to avoid this. Although it is technically possible to turn off live location sharing and it is also possible to share locations only with a selection of 'friends', peer pressure and in some cases coercion are reasons why young people leave it on.

3.4 Relationship with sexual exposure

In this study we focus primarily on non-sexual violence. However, we do come across relationships in which a series of events involves both sexual 'exposure' and non-sexual violence. We distinguish two variants here. In the first variant, exposing girls is used as a weapon in a conflict between individuals or groups. They punish the brothers, friends or other male relatives with whom there is a conflict by exposing girls (such as a sister or girlfriend). The girls themselves are actually irrelevant to the perpetrators in this conflict and can be characterised as 'collateral damage' in the humiliation of a rival. In response, violent repercussions may follow against the group or person responsible for the exposure. Various respondents, particularly from the Randstad area, encounter this regularly.

A second variant we encounter is the punishment of someone who has shared sexual images of another person online. Here too, humiliation of the brother or cousin plays a role. This brother or cousin feels humiliated by the images that have been made and shared, and then punishes the perpetrator (and possibly the victim as well). For example, two pedagogical workers mention the case of two students who had a relationship with each other and explicit images of the girl were shared online. In response, both were punished by her brother. The sister was given a black eye and her boyfriend was forced to his knees to apologise and say he would never share images of her again. The apology was recorded, with the threat that the video would be shared if he ever did it again.

3.5 Violence between rival groups

In the conversations, open sources and online observations, we come across several examples of violence with an online component related to conflicts between rival gangs of

young people.[17] This may involve rival gangs presenting themselves as drill rap groups, but it does not have to. Violence between rival groups, involving territory and mutual humiliation and challenges, is a part of street culture (see box below) that extends more widely than just the behaviour of drill rap groups. Punishment also plays a role here; in response to the action of someone in one group, the other group (or someone in it) takes revenge.

What is street culture?
The term street culture is now widely used by professionals and policymakers, often in relation to young people who are vulnerable to crime. In criminology, it is a relatively new term and De Jong defines street culture as follows:

'Street culture refers to all shared experiences, knowledge, meanings and symbols that are relevant in the daily activities of street boys who spend their free time together in the public areas of their (possibly deprived) neighbourhood.' (De Jong, 2007:149-150).

Core elements of street culture are that it is a subculture with its own moral views and shared street values that arise within the group. These street values may differ locally and are not static. While the definition of street culture in 2007 focused specifically on public spaces, an online dimension has now been added as an extension of the street (Roks & Van den Broek, 2017). Finally, street culture is often associated with poverty and can provide young people with social identity, respect, recognition, safety and entertainment in contrast to their experiences in mainstream society (De Jong, 2007, El Hadioui, 2010).

3.5.1 *Violence between drill rap groups*

First of all, it should be noted that drill rap does not necessarily lead to violent incidents.[18] Many rappers and drill rap listeners do not engage in physical violence and have no intention of doing so. There are also young people who see producing drill rap as an alternative and positive career path instead of a criminal career.
In practice, however, parents, youth workers, police and lawyers do see the negative influence of drill rap, as the interviews show. This is borne out by our online observations. At the same time, previous research shows that the relationship between rap, drill rap, street culture and crime is complex (Ilan, 2020; Lynes, Kelly & Kelly, 2020). In: Hoeben, 2023). The box below provides a brief explanation of what drill rap is, after which we will discuss the empirical findings.

Drill rap in short
Drill rap originated in the United States and became popular in the Netherlands via the

17 It should be noted that young people can move fluidly between different groups (offline and online), or can present themselves online as a group or member of a group without any visible activity in the offline world. In this chapter we describe the findings of empirical research, with the groups mentioned above presenting themselves as a group both online and offline.
18 See also Roks & Van den Broek, 2020.

United Kingdom. Drill rap is characterised by a focus on violence and rivalry (Van den Broek, De Jong & Moussaid, 2022). Drill rappers explicitly insult other drill rap groups (the so-called 'opps': opponents). Many of the lyrics are about violence and threats. There are also raps that call on people to riot or rob or attack people (Hoeben, 2023).

The findings show that the influence of drill rap manifests itself in two ways. First, there are individuals who identify as drill rappers and commit violence as part of territorial conflicts with other drill rap groups or opponents. In recent years, there have been various examples of conflicts between drill rap groups leading to serious and sometimes fatal acts of violence. In June 2022, for example, a 17-year-old boy was shot in the face in Zoetermeer as a result of a feud between rival drill rap groups. Earlier, in August 2020, 19-year-old Cennethson Janga died on the pier in Scheveningen from stab wounds as a result of a conflict between two rival drill rap groups from Amsterdam and Rotterdam (*Het Parool*, 16 November 2022). In August 2021, then 19-year-old Darryl E. was chased and shot in the knee and lower back by his assailants. According to the court, the attack was the result of a conflict between two drill rap groups from Amsterdam-Zuidoost (*Het Parool*, 1 September 2022; *Het Parool*, 26 March 2023).
Drill rappers gain status, respect and fame through acts of violence or 'bullying' against drill rappers from other groups. This may involve serious violence, such as stabbing or killing someone, but also less serious fights where knives are used but only result in minor injuries. There are also minor, so-called 'disses', such as stealing a bag, chasing someone away or preventing someone from going somewhere (for example onto a bus or tram). Then there are non-physical 'disses', such as negative rapping about each other or threatening or negative social media messages about or to each other, sometimes also insulting family members (a mother or sister, for example).

Taking action against rival groups garners respect, and the status of a so-called 'beef' (a dispute between individuals or groups) is sometimes recorded on a scoreboard. This displays the points of rival groups.
Figure 3.1 shows the opening image of a YouTube video from 29 April 2021 showing the scores of KSB and FOG (drill rap groups from Amsterdam). The following texts appear in this video: 'VL stabs Y.RS. Points: 1' and 'RS killed by Wouter 22. Points: 3.'

Figure 3.1 Example of a scoreboard

In this case, YouTube is used as a platform to show what kind of achievements have been made in the beef: for example, has someone been hunted down, or have they been in the area (for example the neighbourhood) of a rival group? Social media are also sometimes used to display the current standings in a beef between rival drill rap groups and who has scored points. Where possible, the various actions and points are supported with video footage, for example of a 'dash' (chasing someone away or pushing them around) or a fight and/or stabbing. There are also videos showing media reports of the violent incident, such as a (possibly fatal) stabbing.
Videos showing so-called 'scoreboards' are publicly available on YouTube. The statistics show that they are also viewed frequently. Some videos have tens of thousands of views and hundreds of likes and comments. Such comments fall into three main categories:

1. comments on the correctness of the points awarded;
2. appreciation of the group;
3. rejection of the group.

Figure 3.2 is a screenshot of some of the comments on the previously described video of the FOG vs KSB scoreboard.

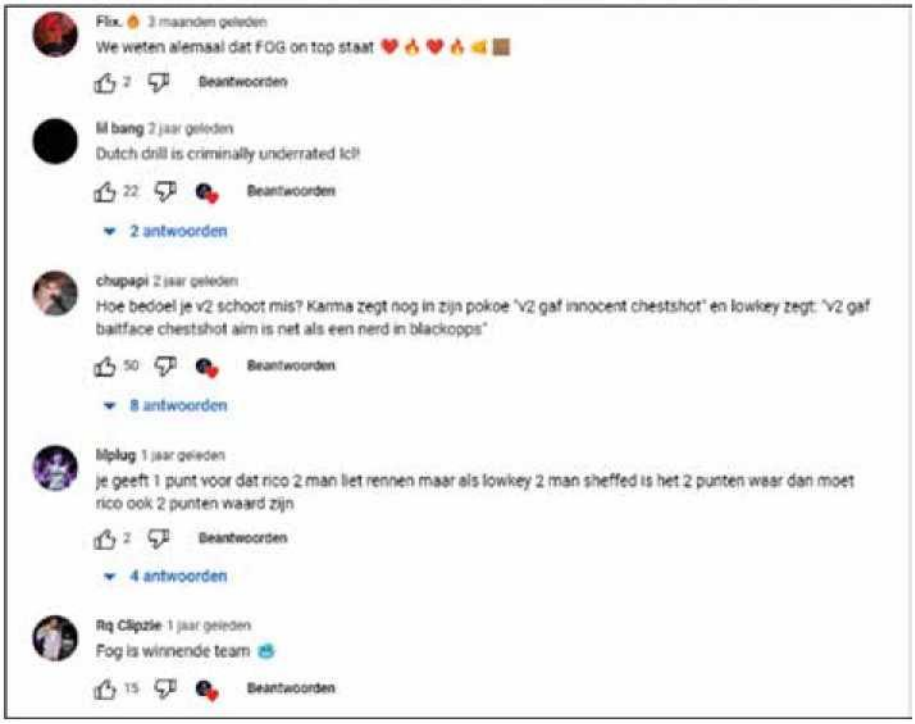

Figure 3.2 Comments on a scoreboard

Social media are the platform on which members of the drill scene can gain status and prestige for the acts of violence and disses they commit. Social media can help clarify the status of a beef between rival groups, and scores can be substantiated by means of video footage and media articles. Social media have extended the reach (and hence the prestige) beyond just the rappers' own neighbourhood.

During the study we saw fewer and fewer examples on public social media of scoreboards and displays of violence by drill rap groups. Respondents from different parts of the Netherlands acknowledge this, but do not have the same view of the extent to which this is still occurring. Some respondents see or suspect that the drill rap hype among young people is now over. Another group of respondents believes that violence among drill rap groups is continuing,[19] but that it is now being recorded less formally and visibly than on a public online scoreboard. A youth worker, also a rapper, from the south of the Netherlands sees a clear interconnection with the broader street and macho culture and territorial violence among young people. It is still important to beat the others in the 'ranking', but this does not have to be according to a formal system. He explains:

19 Several respondents also make the connection between drill rap groups and other forms of crime in which they engage, such as hustling, drug dealing or robbery.

'There's a points system, but it's unwritten. There's just a general perception that you're going up the ranking. For example, drillers refer to a hat-trick, which means you stabbed three people. And young people call it that too.' (Youth worker)

A mother of a boy from the Randstad area recognises the picture of recruitment by drill rap groups. Her son experienced it when boys approached him at school. Initially he was happy with his new friends, but when he refused to perform criminal acts for the group he became a repeat victim of gang assaults, which were then shared online.
During the expert session, one participant (local authority adviser and scientific researcher) said when discussing this topic that it is not drill rap that leads to violence but the influence of street culture. According to this participant, violently fighting out territorial conflicts, challenging each other and carrying weapons can be attributed to street culture rather than to the drill rap music movement.[20] However, participants from the police in the Randstad area have a different experience, based on several drill rap groups in their operating area that confront each other violently and use it to rise up their online ranking.

3.5.2 *Imitative behaviour*

A second way in which drill rap exerts or can exert influence is when young people who are not drill rappers begin to imitate images they have seen online. Listening to the music, wearing balaclavas and carrying knives or machetes is seen by respondents as a sign that young people have been influenced by drill rap. A young person we spoke to (17 years old) from the Randstad area listens to a lot of drill rap and believes the fact that many young people now carry weapons is down to drill rap:

'Drill has also changed youth and street culture. It's true that people were carrying weapons before that hype, but I'm sure it's happening even more now. A lot of young people hang around outside chilling. In many other cultures too, Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean. There's just a lot of violence. And the physical fights are now being fought with weapons. Tasers and machetes, for example.' (Young person)

Talking about the influence of drill rap on young people, a mother of a victim (and later perpetrator) of violence says:

'They start wielding knives very early and practise shooting at targets in the Amsterdam Forest. That's where the videos are recorded. And it's just like anti-smoking campaigns: seeing smoking makes you smoke. You see that with weapons: it starts with kitchen knives and moves on to very large weapons.'

Young people sometimes also form a group and present themselves online with a drill name without being active as rappers. A pedagogical worker from the east of the Netherlands tells

20 A finding in line with previous research by Roks and Den Broek (2020) into drill rap and violent incidents among young people in Rotterdam.

us about a feud between two groups of young people. One of the groups is known to call itself a drill group and to distribute images online of its members wearing balaclavas and carrying knives. This group came to the attention of professionals due to the following apology:

> *'Last year [...] we saw that video of a boy who was first beaten up and then had to get on his knees and bark, and if he didn't the group would beat him up again. It later turned out that the boy was a member of another gang.' (School safety coordinator)*

Various respondents come across examples of 'drill rap-like assignments' in their work. A police operations specialist tells us about a boy who had been given the task of 'catching some people and scoring videos'. He says:

> *'But again they got the idea because they had seen another video of a drill rapper. They had seen it on Snapchat, where the same thing was done. They thought: that's a good idea, we have a conflict too, let's resolve it in the same way, he deserves it.' (Operations specialist)*

3.5.3 *Rival gangs of young people*

Experts and professionals also see similar elements among young people who do not present themselves as drill rap groups, but who can be characterised as 'regular' gangs, for example with strong ties to the neighbourhood, violent behaviour and carrying weapons. An expert from the Randstad area explains:

> *'Both using weapons to attack someone and posing with weapons are things that happen online. This often originates between rival groups. But such situations do not necessarily involve one group attacking the other; it can also happen when tension arises as two individuals meet on the street and they know that the other comes from a certain group. Nowadays we live in a time when young people assume that the other person will have a weapon in their pocket. Then they start carrying a weapon themselves. The assumption is: if you don't pull out a weapon now, then I will, so I have to pull it out first. Things can then escalate quickly. I see that happening time and again.' (Local authority online street culture adviser)*

In practice, experts also see planned confrontations between rival gangs ('hood fights'), where the conflict is fuelled online. A youth professional says:

> *'You just start fighting to get some kind of credits, it's tough. You film it and that's all there is to it.' (Youth professional)*

According to this professional, this is more of an organised street fight where there are no real victims because everyone participates voluntarily. When it comes to inciting or encouraging conflict online, it is not only the members of the gangs themselves who do this

to each other, but also ‘bystanders’ who are not part of the gangs.

A recurring element in the conversations is the feeling of insecurity that young people experience. That is what prompts them to go out on the street with a knife or other weapon. We also heard several examples of young people who felt they had no choice but to attack someone from a rival group when they encountered them on the street. This was because both parties knew they belonged to the other group. Based on a case study by the city of Amsterdam, the researchers conclude that young people believe there is a ‘duty of retaliation’ between rivals.[21]

3.6 Escalating online conflict

In addition to conflicts between rival groups, conflicts between individuals, whether or not due to peer pressure, can also escalate into violence. The conversations show that fuelling the conflict on social media and inciting a physical fight online can play an important role. This was the case of the 15-year-old boy who was stabbed to death by one of his peers in 2021 (see box).

Case C: stabbed 15-year-old

In Rotterdam, 15-year-old Joshua was stabbed to death on Thursday, 29 July 2021 (NOS, 29 July 2021). Attempts were made to resuscitate him, but he succumbed to his injuries before he could be taken to hospital. The verdict shows that the perpetrator stabbed the victim ten times, including in the chest and abdomen (Court of Rotterdam, 1 February 2022). The fatal stabbing took place in a park in Rotterdam (NOS, 29 July 2021). On Friday, 30 July 2021, a contemporary of the victim was arrested on suspicion of involvement in the stabbing (NOS, 30 July 2021). He handed himself in to the police (NOS, 30 July 2021).

The reason for the fatal stabbing was a row between two boys: the victim and the perpetrator. On that day, they had agreed (on Snapchat) to fight out a conflict and had brought knives with them (NOS, 2 August 2021). Interviews with people involved in the case revealed that insults were traded between the perpetrator and the victim in at least one online group on Snapchat. Weeks before the incident, other participants in the chat group had been urging the two boys to settle the conflict physically. Although the perpetrator had previously refused, he felt the peer pressure. Others in the group said he would be a jerk and a wimp if he refused to fight. The victim had previously shared images of himself with a knife, so the perpetrator also took a kitchen knife with him ‘just to be sure’. A machete was later found on the victim.

On 1 February 2022, the Court of Rotterdam handed down its judgement and the suspect was convicted of manslaughter. The court sentenced him to ten months of juvenile detention and conditional placement in a youth institution.[22] The court also ordered the suspect to pay

21 See: [anonymised] Timeline ‘chat on the net’ (https://amsterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/docu- ment/11937649/1/).

22 The youth institution placement is a means of treating young people suffering from a developmental disorder or mental illness.

damages (almost €80,000).

Many conflicts among young people start online, whether they know each other already or are strangers. A boy (17 years old) from the Randstad area says:

> *'Most of the arguments arise online. For example, someone is insulted during a game at a Playstation party, which then gets completely out of hand. You either find someone on social media or you know where someone goes to school. Or they come to your school.' (Young person)*

Although such conflicts can escalate into physical violence and sometimes even fatalities, as the case in the box shows, that is not always the case. A young person (19, from the centre of the Netherlands) says that he regularly receives threats online, but when he encounters the person making the threats in real life, nothing comes of it.
Another type of incident is where pictures of a young person are posted online (which is also a form of exposure), with a call to beat him up if anyone comes across him. We also encountered several examples of this. A youth worker explains:

> *'A boy posts or distributes a photo of the other boy in a Telegram group with a call for the boy to be beaten up. Sometimes the young person is then indeed beaten up and the images are shared as proof.' (Youth worker)*

A violent incident as described here will then confer status, ranking or points. We also hear examples of a young person being exposed as a snitch with a photo on social media, meaning that anyone who came across the boy was allowed to beat him up. The mother of a boy who experienced this says it became impossible for her son to go to school.

3.7 Evidence of criminal behaviour

An example was already mentioned in section 3.2.1 of young adolescents (13, 14 years old) who were recruited by a drill rap group for criminal acts such as drug running. In our conversations we come across several such examples where young people have to or want to prove themselves to older criminals. Filming the assignment or job they have been given is an important part of this, as it proves that they actually completed it. A youth professional in the Randstad area, also active in the rap scene, says:

> *'I know many young people who want to prove themselves to other, bigger criminals. For example, a young person is told to shoot at someone's house and film it. So if they have the courage to do something like that, they can grow.' (Youth professional)*

Although safety professionals sometimes wonder why anyone would film themselves committing a crime, these young people need to prove that they carried out the assignment. A youth worker, also from the Randstad area, says that young people actively look for jobs to raise their status on the street. He says:

'Those young people also go looking for jobs. Take the specific example of sticking a grenade or Cobra 6 on a door. They'll do this, so to speak, for a new pair of sneakers.' (Youth worker)

The actual reward for a completed task, such as money or new shoes, may be less important to young people than the online credits or status they gain from it.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has described various manifestations of hybrid street violence. The topics discussed include filmed apologies, abuse or group abuse, fines and extortion, and violence between rival groups. Within a hybrid street violence track, multiple manifestations can occur at different times when offences are committed. There is also variation in severity, from threats to fatal violent incidents.

On the one hand, the online images are used to humiliate the victim and on the other hand they provide more status for the perpetrator. The online community plays a role by encouraging conflict online or by pushing online for a physical conflict to be fought out. At the same time, online images of violence create feelings of insecurity among young people. The findings also reveal relationships with other forms of crime, such as sextortion or evidence of criminal acts.

4. Perpetrators and victims

'Some of the children involved are as young as eleven or twelve. Violence and the distribution of images of violence on social media give them status in the neighbourhood. After Van Suijdam's death[23], some of them have again been involved in cases involving serious violence.' (Het Parool, 23 June 2023)

Who are the perpetrators and victims of hybrid street violence? In this chapter, we look at the backgrounds of the young people involved. We then discuss diffuse perpetratorhood and victimhood, the role of gender and the resigned attitude that seems to characterise victims. In this chapter we also discuss the motives that play a role in the violence. The findings are based on interviews with professionals, such as youth workers, police and school staff, and parents and young people themselves. Some cases have been detailed by way of illustration.

4.1 Perpetrators

Respondents who can provide background information on those involved in hybrid street violence largely offer the same characterisation of the young people who are most involved in incidents of hybrid street violence.[24] They say that it often concerns young people, especially boys, from a disadvantaged background. Respondents often use the term 'vulnerable young person' for this. In many cases, they find that it involves children who grow up in poverty and who have to deal with all kinds of problems at home, such as (possibly acrimonious) divorces, poverty and/or an unpleasant home situation. Because of these problems, they characterise the young people who are most involved as vulnerable. A youth worker says of these young people:

'In combination [this concerns parents who do not speak Dutch] with a poor financial position, this makes young people vulnerable. Especially if, and this is often the case, the parents consume excessive alcohol and/or drugs or if the young people grow up in broken families. I know plenty of examples of young people who were neglected as

23 17-year-old Roffinho van Suijdam was shot dead in December 2022 by a then 16-year-old neighbour. The shooting is seen as the result of an escalating feud between two gangs of young people in Amsterdam-Zuidoost (*Het Parool*, 23 June 2023).

24 According to respondents, this vulnerability is not limited to violent incidents. These young people are also vulnerable to other issues, such as being recruited for criminal acts.

children.' (Youth worker)

A mother of a victim says that in a sense the perpetrators can also be seen as victims. She say of perpetrators:

'These young people are looking for security and are possibly not being seen or heard by the government.' (Mother of victim)

A teacher at a vocational school says of a perpetrator of a violent incident at his school:

'A child who has only experienced misery simply behaves without knowing the consequences. That is just the way he behaves.' (Vocational school teacher)

Experts often mention 'socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods' or 'vulnerable neighbourhoods' as places where street culture is dominant and influences how young people behave. We hear this from respondents from Rotterdam and Amsterdam-Zuidoost, but also from other cities in Gelderland, Zeeland and North Holland. Street culture appears to be widespread and influences the behaviour of (some) young people.
In addition to vulnerability due to the circumstances and environment in which young people grow up, respondents also find that all kinds of behavioural problems often play a role, as does – presumably – having a mild intellectual disability (MID). This also played a role in the previously discussed case, in which 15-year-old Joshua died after being stabbed (see box in Chapter 3) by one of his peers (see the next case).

Case C: stabbed 15-year-old
In the case of Joshua's stabbing (see Chapter 3), the court's verdict shows that the perpetrator suffered from an autism spectrum disorder, making him very susceptible to peer pressure, among other things. It was also established that the young person was very egocentric and had a severe developmental disorder. The young person was given a conditional PIJ order. PIJ stands for 'placement in an institution for young people' (also known as juvenile detention) and consists of juvenile detention with intensive supervision.

At the same time, it is clear that the young people involved did not always grow up in poor socioeconomic circumstances. To a lesser extent, we also come across examples of young people who come from 'better-off neighbourhoods' and 'good families' and (at first glance) do not face social or economic disadvantages. These young people also commit violence with an online component, for example to settle territorial conflicts. The phenomenon of public apologies also appears to be widespread among young people. Respondents who recognise this in their work mention various causes for this. A police professional says of this type of young person in his area:

'We call these people "compensation youth". They get money instead of attention [from parents] and they are not subject to any limits. They think they can do anything.' (Police operations expert)

A youth worker believes these young people are also looking for adrenaline and are pushing or crossing boundaries. They may also be attracted to crime and violence and have an inclination to prove themselves. Street culture is also not limited to disadvantaged or vulnerable neighbourhoods; young people from different backgrounds come into contact with each other in school or sports clubs, and online images have no geographical boundaries. Street culture therefore influences more young people than just those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The taboo on snitching now seems to have become a general norm among young people.

4.2 Victims

Some young people become victims because they are seen as easy prey. These are the young people mentioned in Chapter 3 as more or less coincidental victims, in cases where violence is not part of an existing conflict between individuals or groups. Young people who are seen as weak, and who are often somewhat younger than the perpetrators, are a target. Several respondents say that young people on the street have to choose whether they want to be a perpetrator or a victim, often using the terms 'hunter' or 'prey'. Some respondents speak of young people behaving like 'wild hyenas' on the street and looking for a 'sheep'.
An important reason for seeking a smaller or younger target appears to be that the perpetrator can then be certain who will emerge as the winner and runs no risk of losing face (including online). Young people who appear vulnerable in a certain way are at greater risk of becoming victims. A teacher at a school in the centre of the Netherlands says that perpetrators look for fights with 'children who are actually very weak'. He talks about a case of filmed abuse in his school:

> *'She was an autistic girl in the third year. She used to stay on her own at school, didn't hurt a fly and yet got beaten up by a very popular girl who tormented her. Clearly the sense of honour was also gone; just kicking someone when they're down. But the status that such a girl wants to achieve won't be earned by picking on someone of equal standing, because then she could lose and that would be on the internet.' (Vocational school teacher)*

However, joining a specific group can also make someone a victim of the rival group. This could be called victimhood by association. The victims of gang violence (as in the quotation at the start of this chapter) are examples of this. These young people end up in a spiral of violence that is difficult to escape from if they want to remain part of the group and not lose their status. Young people see that as protection against violence. There is a paradox here: the same mechanism that can protect young people from victimhood can also increase their risk of victimhood.
A youth worker from a southern province tells of a rapper who was stabbed and was pressured to take revenge after he himself became a victim:

> *'He raps about guns and shooting, but he's an entertainer. If you're a gangster rapper and it is in the news that you've been stabbed, the people around you have an*

expectation: are you going to do what you rap about or are you all talk? That creates extra pressure.' (Youth worker and rapper)

Although the background to the stabbing incident in this example is unclear (the victim did not report it to the police), the respondent who told us about it thinks he was an unintentional victim, because of his status and the things he raps about. The expectation 'on the street' in such a case is that the person will retaliate. In this case, the victim also received offers from others to 'solve it', so that the 'solver' himself can rise in prestige or ranking and the victim can raise his status again.

Refusing to participate in the (possibly criminal) activities of a group can also make you a victim, as in the case in the box below. In this case, the violence and its online distribution is intended as punishment. As we saw in Chapter 3, violence with an online component is sometimes committed as part of a punishment to be meted out.

Case D: repeat victimhood

X was 13 when he first became a victim of violence with an online component. We speak to his mother. She would rather X were not involved because things are finally going well for him and she does not want to dredge up his past. When the violence started, the situation at home was not ideal. His parents have relationship problems and there are financial consequences as a result of the childcare benefits scandal. X himself takes medication for ADHD and receives psychological support for behavioural problems. When he passes his basic preparatory vocational (VMBO) exam, his parents see it as a success and his mother enrols him in a smaller vocational school. There, X becomes a victim of violence for the first time.

'It was there that the social media fights started. He was beaten up or had things stolen. We thought it was innocent. I had many conversations with the management and they all tried.'

The violence and the stealing of X's belongings (his bag and his phone) did not stop and they decided to move X to another school. His mother says they saw no option other than to change schools.

'The school turned a blind eye. Just like the police, they had no clear idea of what they were supposed to do, coming up against privacy, laws and all kinds of things. If the police decide there are not enough grounds ... You have to rely on other parties.'

Before he went to his new school, X had been at home for three months because the school, police and parents saw no other solutions. At first, things seemed to be going well in his new class. But it soon became apparent that something was wrong. He made new friends and stayed out on the streets later and later.

'I noticed that my son's behaviour changed; he was more withdrawn and stayed more in his room. I saw the drill music, his clothes changed: a black hoodie, mask, gloves.'

His mother looked at his phone and saw photos showing X with groups of boys with 'gang-like signs and guns'. X's new friends proved not to be good company. They wanted him to rob someone and sell drugs. This was going too far for X and he refused. From then on he became a target of his former friends.

'He wanted to be friends, but not to join in with their behaviour. But that means you can't be friends with them. You have to join in; you're either with them or against them.'

X's name was added to a list of names of boys in the neighbourhood who could be targets for extortion: anyone on the list would be robbed or forced to rob other children. This made him a target among young people. His mother found images of abuse and threats on Snapchat and X saved videos and screenshots on his phone. These videos showed X being beaten up. Ultimately, the parents, in consultation with the police and the school, saw no solution other than to move X to yet another school. (Source: interview with mother, media reports)

4.3 Intertwining of perpetratorhood and victimhood

In violence with an online component, perpetratorhood and victimhood can be closely intertwined. Many professionals see victims and perpetrators coming from the same 'pool' of young people. That means they are at risk of becoming both victims and perpetrators. Victimhood can lead to a young person becoming a perpetrator of violence with an online component because he wants to take revenge. The fear of becoming a victim can also cause young people to commit violence themselves or join a group of perpetrators. For a young person, being a perpetrator can be a way to avoid becoming a victim. Some respondents feel that in some situations young people have almost no choice; they have to participate. A youth worker from the east of the Netherlands says:

> *'It's almost the survival of the fittest. Just as in prehistoric times, you have to decide whether you're going to be dominant and bully someone or fight them or whatever, or whether you're going to be a victim. There's no longer really a target group or anything in between. It's one or the other. Hunter or prey.' (Youth worker)*

A youth coach from the Randstad area explains that status can afford protection against violence, even for a person alone on the street. Young people can gain status by committing violence themselves and sharing it online. Likewise, a perpetrator of violence may subsequently become a victim (for example of a rival group). Various respondents' experience is that this happens frequently: An operations specialist from the Randstad area says:

> *'I know so many examples of victims who become perpetrators. It's dog eat dog, and young people want to feel safe.' (Police operations specialist)*

The case of the previously discussed stabbing incident in which 15-year-old Joshua lost his

life involved a conflict between two young people who decided to fight and one of them lost his life. With this type of fighting, it is quite possibly uncertain at the outset who will turn out to be the perpetrator or the victim; both may end up as victims in such violent incidents.

The fact that status plays an important role for some young people increases the risk of revenge. Since there is loss of face when a violent incident is filmed and distributed, the victim may feel under pressure to get back at their attacker(s). An online youth expert says:

> *'Victims often become perpetrators, particularly online, because there's a low barrier. You can defend yourself online, but in the physical world I think it's harder. [...] So there's an interplay between defining your position in the group and showing how tough you are or who you are. Beating someone up for status, making sure it's filmed and putting it online can be a smart way of raising your status.' (Online youth expert)*

The following case is an example of a young person seeking revenge after being the victim of a filmed apology and abuse. In this case, the victim took a knife with him to use against his attacker(s).

Case E: 13-year-old victim wants to take revenge with a knife

Two youth workers from a medium-sized town in the east of the Netherlands speak about a case in their neighbourhood in which a 13-year-old boy became the victim of a group of older boys (around 16 years old):

'He was knocked down, kicked, pushed around and hit. He was hit on the head and at the end it's like: say sorry.'

The video of the abuse and apology was circulated in the neighbourhood and youth workers also saw it. The youth workers heard about the background to the abuse. Apparently the victim had talked about the main perpetrator and the boys thought he should apologise. The victim was known for his big mouth on the street and failed to see the consequences. The main perpetrator was angry about what the boy said and wanted to defend his status.

'He just wanted to make clear that he was in charge and show how things had to be done. I don't accept that, so you're going to get beaten up in front of the camera and say sorry.'

But the victim did not want to leave it at that and vowed to take revenge on the perpetrators. A youth worker saw him walking in an agitated state through the neighbourhood and asked him what was going on. The boy had a knife on him and was looking for the perpetrators who had set on him. The youth worker was able to de-escalate the situation and discussed it with the victim's mother. The boy did not take revenge and (at the time of writing) has not had any more trouble from the boys who made him apologise.

4.4 Gender

Conversations and case studies mostly concern boys, but respondents note that girls too are increasingly involved in hybrid street violence. For example, we hear and see various examples of girls demonstrating violent behaviour, every bit as much as boys. Professionals who work with young people have the impression that bullying among girls is more persistent and vicious than among boys.[25] And that can lead to violence, as can also be seen from the examples in Chapter 3.
Although some respondents mainly encounter girls as victims of exposure and sextortion, others find that girls are increasingly committing violence.[26] A safety coordinator at a secondary school says:

> *'There's a phenomenon with those videos whereby if you look at physical conflicts you see that girls are currently more strongly represented than boys. We have quite a few fights around girls. [...] We see that everything is filmed and shared, that girls are quick to grab a mobile phone to record and distribute everything. Boys do that too, but I think girls have caught up. Girls are certainly no less active in this than boys at the moment. That is noticeable.' (Secondary school safety coordinator)*

Although most of the cases we hear about involve girl-on-girl incidents (i.e. being both perpetrator(s) and victim(s)), the violence is not necessarily gender-based. For example, we see a video of a 14-year-old girl being violently beaten and kicked in the metro by a group of six or seven boys. The girl is punched in the face and kicked hard in the stomach. We also hear about examples of mixed groups of young people committing violence, and of gangs of girls abusing a boy.
In many cases of hybrid street violence, there does not seem to be much difference between boys and girls in the way it manifests itself. There are, however, a number of manifestations in which gender does play a role. Mention was already made in Chapter 3 of the fact that the sharing of sexually explicit images of girls is instrumentalised in conflicts between rival youths or individuals to humiliate a brother or other family member. Although this has an incredible impact on the girls involved, causing such suffering is not the perpetrators' main aim. A youth worker says:

> *'They do this mainly because the girl has family ties with rival groups. And the images are then used as clip shoots for blackmail, or to expose the images or incorporate them in the music lyrics.' (Youth worker)*

Girls can also be the reason for violence among boys. For example, a 19-year-old boy says

25 Previous research shows that girls use social media more than boys (Kloosterman & Van Beuningen, 2015; Peilstationsonderzoek Scholieren, 2023).
26 In our study, girls' role as perpetrators of sexual exposure and sextortion was also discussed in the interviews. There too, girls can play an active role as perpetrators, for example by sharing images and videos on platforms, spreading gossip about the existence of sexual images of someone or actively recruiting girls to make sexual images for subsequent exposure or blackmail. The latter is also seen among girls who have themselves been victims of exposure and/or sextortion in the past.

he regularly sees boys being judged negatively online because they like a girl. He says:

> *'I quite often see boys liking a girl and then being completely pilloried for it. Just because of that. It mainly happens on Snapchat; they take a screenshot of it and turn it into a story. I've experienced it too; I was following a girl, didn't make any advances and immediately got four people saying: leave her alone or we'll beat you up.' (Young person)*

Two other young people we spoke to said that girls are sometimes the cause of conflicts between boys or deliberately provoke them. We also heard of an example in which a girl lured a boy to a remote place, where he was then abused and filmed by other boys.

4.5 Impact on victims

The various examples discussed so far make it clear that violence with an online component can have a major impact on the victims. Earlier in this report, examples were discussed of violence with serious physical, sometimes fatal, consequences. In this section we will discuss other forms of impact due to violence with an online component.
Parents of young people who have been victims initially notice a change in behaviour. Their children are more shy and withdrawn. In conversations with parents and young people who have been victims themselves, we notice that young people often show a degree of resignation about the fact that they have become victims of violence. A mother whose son was beaten up and threatened several times says:

> *'I think that's also the reason [for his victimisation], and he also said the reason was that he was outside a lot. He said: "Things happen on the street, mum, it's not unusual."' (Mother of victim)*

Despite the external resignation (towards adults), professionals do note that young people often feel unsafe, both those who experience violence (including online) and those who only see others committing violence online. The fact that many more people learn about victimisation through the online component makes the impact even greater, according to respondents. We saw this earlier in case A in Chapter 3 concerning the young person who came to school the day after the filmed apology to be confronted with the knowledge that everyone had seen the footage of his humiliation. The incident also had an impact on this young person's family; they have installed cameras at their home and are still afraid of it happening again.

Not all professionals we speak to are absolutely certain that there is more violence among young people than before the digital age. However, they do believe the online component increases the impact. The online component increases the impact because more contemporaries see it and young people are confronted with it not only online but also at school and in the neighbourhood. In addition, online images are permanent, so young people are confronted with them for longer periods or over and over again. This creates the

possibility of repeat victimhood.[27] An expert in the field of parenting and digital developments explains:

> *'That is also the essential difference compared to the past. Previously, before everything was filmed, you could still make a mistake and it did didn't follow you around all the time. Now that is more likely to happen. Now there are images and if they're on the internet, that's just the way it is.' (Expert in parenting and digital developments).*

Young people and children are often unaware of the impact of sharing images online or of the online world in general. Youth workers notice that children sometimes use tough language online without realising that it can lead to actual physical repercussions from others who do not appreciate it. For example, we hear the example of a 12-year-old boy who said on TikTok that he was ready to fight and was not afraid of anyone. He also gave out his address, but was totally surprised when someone actually came round to beat him up.

In addition, the online component can make young people more likely to be a target for others because they are aware of their previous victimhood. This makes it more difficult for young people to find a safe environment. As previously discussed, this can actually be a motivation to become a perpetrator. This is the case of X, discussed earlier in this chapter, who became a target after he refused to perform criminal acts for his 'friends':

Case D (continued): repeat victimhood

After X is moved to a new school due to the incessant abuse and bullying, things quickly go wrong again. Although this school is in a different, neighbouring municipality, a boy at the school soon discovers that the newcomer is on a list of boys who can be beaten up and blackmailed. The boy attacks X in the playground and says it is okay for X to be beaten up. X wants to prevent things from going wrong again, so when some boys come up to him after the playground incident to take revenge, he agrees.

The boy who beat X up is lured to a secluded spot in the park, where the other boys encourage X to beat him up. X abuses the boy and this incident is also filmed and shared. However, a teacher hears about the abuse and the victim eventually reports it. X is arrested and convicted for the violence he committed. However, the judge takes the circumstances into account and X's previous victimisation and gives him a relatively mild sentence.

His mother decides to move again to another area and again places X in a new school, this time even further away from his old neighbourhood. When we spoke to her, X was doing well. He felt at home in his new school and was no longer getting into trouble.

It can also happen that young people will withdraw from the group or from violent crime because they see or experience a violent incident. One respondent knew young people who 'learnt' from a violent incident and no longer wanted to be involved.

27 Jolien and Lievens (2016) concluded this earlier in relation to the sharing of sexual images.

4.6 Summary

This chapter examines the backgrounds of perpetrators and victims in more detail. Although the online world is not limited to vulnerable young people, professionals do note that they are at greater risk of becoming victims or perpetrators. Young people can become victims because they are an easy target, are involved in a conflict or belong to a particular group.

Victimhood and perpetratorhood are closely linked in this type of crime. Young people may use violence to avoid being victimised themselves and are sometimes blackmailed after an incident of abuse is filmed. Young people can also become perpetrators by taking revenge on the people who previously acted violently towards them. Committing violence themselves and sharing it online raises young people's status, which in itself can afford protection against victimisation, but it can also provoke violence, which in turn can trigger victimisation.

Although most examples and conversations concern boys who are perpetrators and/or victims, professionals also see girls who commit violence and share images of it. They are concerned about the increase in these incidents, in terms of both perceived scale and severity. In addition, girls can play a catalytic or provocative role in violence with an online component.

The impacts are twofold, on young people's behaviour and on their sense of security. Indeed, feelings of insecurity can sometimes motivate them to commit violence themselves. The online component results in additional impact because more peers (and others, of course) become aware of the violent incident and may therefore confront the victim with it.

5. Criminogenic factors

'You also encounter the snitching culture. Snitching is betrayal and it's never allowed. If you go to the police or talk about the threats at school, your photo gets posted on social media. Then you're seen as a "traitor" and the threats increase. Filing a report is often not an option because in many cases it cannot be done anonymously. Perpetrators can see who filed it and where the victim lives.' (Two mothers of victims from Amsterdam on De Nieuws BV, NPOradio1.nl, 2 November 2018)

In this chapter we discuss criminogenic factors that contribute to hybrid street violence among young people. These are factors that influence the young people and the manifestations discussed. Identifying criminogenic factors provides a basis for formulating interventions, although it should be noted that not all criminogenic factors are easy to influence.[28] The findings are based on all sources we consulted for this study.

5.1 Environmental and family factors

The study reveals a number of environmental and family factors. In part, these are factors that are known to have a general influence on crime and recidivism. In addition to these factors, the study revealed a number of other environmental factors that we discuss in this section.

5.1.1 *Family factors*

In the previous chapter we already noted the observation made by professionals that many of the young people involved in hybrid street violence grow up in poverty and often have to contend with problems in their home situation. Examples they mention include growing up in broken families or parents having addiction problems. One of the interviewed mothers (case D, diffuse perpetratorhood and victimhood) mentions that when the problems started with her son, there were relationship tensions, 'fighting against the childcare benefits scandal' and financial difficulties.

A respondent from the Public Prosecution Service who is often involved in drill rap-related investigations finds that suspects often have powerless parents, parents with personality disorders and parents suffering from a mild intellectual disability.

28 A distinction is often drawn between static and dynamic factors. Static factors are hard or impossible to influence.

However, empirical studies also show examples in which these types of family factors appear to play a less significant role, as in case A, where only victimhood was involved. For example, one respondent said of the young people on fat bikes in case B (perpetratorhood) that they also included young people from 'well-to-do families', and that we learned little about other family characteristics of the young people in this case.

5.1.2 *Influence of street culture*

Street culture has also been discussed several times in this report. Several respondents mention street culture as a factor contributing to hybrid street violence. Street culture is often associated with neighbourhoods dominated by poverty, but young people from other types of neighbourhoods can easily learn about it online.
Although street values may differ locally and are dynamic, they often involve values such as displaying masculine (macho) behaviour, making money fast, aggression, violence and standing up for yourself. These are things that give you status on the street. We see these values reflected in the various manifestations of hybrid street violence, especially when it comes to showing aggression or violence and standing up for yourself when someone does something to you. Street values also play a role in territorial conflicts between groups: if someone hits you on your territory, you get back at them. A lawyer from the Randstad area who has handled several cases of (sometimes serious) violent incidents among young people says:

> *'These boys learn on the street to be loud and to stand up for themselves, to measure themselves against those around them.' (Lawyer)*

Social media make it much easier and quicker to see what someone has done or what has been done to them. In addition, social media posts confer status to a greater or less extent on the young people involved. A youth worker who is also a rapper from the Randstad area explains how this works:

> *'If you're exposed, for example by losing a fight, you have to retaliate, for example by stabbing someone. Then everyone will know you did it. You will have regained your honour. You have to retaliate. Especially if you portray yourself as a gangster. You have to show, for example in online images, that you have hit someone. That shows you're in charge.' (Youth worker)*

A youth worker qualifies this by explaining that street values are not necessarily negative and that some young people from disadvantaged backgrounds benefit from learning to stand up for themselves. As described in the box in section 3.5, street culture offers young people things that they would otherwise have difficulty obtaining or that they need, such as belonging (social identity), respect (status) and safety. A youth worker describes the appeal of the street:

> *'The home situation plays a role and the street is the first place you come to. The street*

is there for you 24/7.' (Youth worker)

Nevertheless, many professionals working with young people see street values as major negative factors contributing to hybrid street violence.

5.1.3 *Existence of anti-snitching culture*

The influence of street values is no longer confined to large cities or disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Digitalisation (as well as globalisation) means that street values and posts about it can quickly reach a large number of young people. A good example of the wider spread of street values is young people's fear of snitching. Snitching involves betraying or informing on someone. A respondent who used to belong to a criminal network in the Randstad area and now works with young people explains that 'in the past' snitching only applied to criminals, but that nowadays any form of saying or reporting something among young people is seen as snitching.
The fear of being identified ('exposed') as a snitch means that many young people do not talk about what has been done to them or what they have witnessed as a bystander, making it relatively safe for perpetrators to commit violence. Respondents encounter this to a large extent in practice. A teacher at a vocational school in the centre of the Netherlands cites an example of students who were blackmailed and filmed:

> *'[...] the boys who got those assignments were actually children in special education. They didn't want to say who did it, because then they would feel like a snitch.' (Vocational school teacher).*

A VIOS (Safety In and Around Schools) safety coordinator says: 'The snitching culture is prevalent, it's everywhere, in every school.' For the police, the taboo on snitching is a major obstacle. An operations expert dealing with youth gang violence in his area explains:

> *'We see that problem on the street: nobody dares to talk to us, because that would make them a snitch. This already happens here at a very young age, 11 to 12 years old. So they don't dare to talk to parents or the police. Because then they'd be a snitch.' (Police respondent)*

The fear of snitching is understandable from the young people's point of view. We hear various examples of young people who are 'exposed' as snitches and suffer the consequences, as in the example in the box below of X, the previously discussed young person who, after being a victim several times, ultimately became a perpetrator.

Case D (continued): repeat victimhood
When X's mother sees her son's Snapchat account on his phone and discovers that he is being blackmailed to hand over his belongings, she discusses it with X. He admits that this has happened and says the perpetrators go to the same school as him. His mother says:

I went to the school about it, the school called the police and then we had a discussion in the school. They would talk to the boys.' (Mother).

The community police or youth support officer who was involved in the discussion at the school did indeed speak sternly to the students involved. But for X this only made the situation worse. His mother says:

'They spoke to them and at one point the boys challenged my son about it and beat him up. The school only ever had conversations with those boys. They assaulted him and called him a snitch. I didn't see that video right away, but it went round' (Mother)

A video was made of X in which he was called a snitch and abused. This video quickly spread among other students and young people in the neighbourhood and X was abused several times – sometimes by unknown young people – because he was known as a snitch. As previously mentioned, he was eventually moved to another school.

Although we often hear about the taboo on snitching, there are also examples of young people who are not deterred when it happens to someone else. We will return to this in Chapter 6.

5.1.4 *Existence of rival drill rap groups*

Chapter 3 discussed the influence of drill rap in the context of rival groups. It also discussed the fact that respondents' opinions differ on the influence that drill rap has on violence *per se*, or the influence of street values that may include drill rap. To some extent, the values associated with drill rap appear to overlap with street values. This can be seen in territorial conflicts:

> *'Fighting out conflicts about postcodes and living areas. Like South versus North. And one person is not allowed or able to visit the other person's home or neighbourhood. If they do come, there'll be trouble. It's that simple, and that's an example of street culture.' (Youth worker).*

As we saw in Chapter 3, feuds with rival drill rap groups are a key part of drill rap, and the more damage you inflict on the opponents the higher you rise up the ranking. Physically injuring or killing someone will confer the most status, ranking or 'online points'. In the Netherlands, there are several known cases of (sometimes fatal) violent incidents whose origins probably lie in conflicts between drill rap groups. Respondents talk about the influence of drill rap groups on younger children. These include a community police officer from the Randstad area, where several drill rap groups operate:

> *'We definitely have drill rap in the neighbourhood too. But there are only about four young people who are really active in it. They call themselves [...]. And that music includes calls to violence. And they flaunt money and weapons, expensive cars. You can see that they have authority in the neighbourhood. That authority means they can get*

other young people to work for them, persuading other boys to run drugs, for example. And they recruit those young people in the schools. Then you find that those young people more or less stop coming home, and they no longer get good grades. We're talking about younger people aged 12 or 13 who then commit their first robbery at the age of 14, with a firearm.' (Community police officer)

We spoke to a mother from the Randstad area whose son came into the sights of boys at his secondary school who tried to recruit him for a drill rap group and told him to prove himself by performing criminal acts (Case F). When he refused, he became a target for the group. Although this type of violence is not confined to drill rap groups, respondents are aware of many examples of it and are concerned about the negative impact it has on vulnerable young people.

Two young people we spoke to who listen to a lot of drill rap themselves (one is more involved in criminal activities than the other) said drill has had an impact on street values in their city. They see more conflicts being fought out now and more people carrying weapons. In their view, this is due to the negative influence of drill on street values.
From this perspective, drill rap values have become part of a much wider street culture, which is still part of drill rap but not confined to it. Furthermore, not all rival groups identify as drill rap groups that fight out conflicts offline and online with the same violent consequences. A participant in the expert session therefore fears that the government is focusing too much on drill rap groups in its approach and is missing other violent groups.

5.1.5 *Online community encouraging violence*

The conversations show that videos of violence are popular among young people. In a discussion with a number of young people at secondary school, one student talks about sharing a video of filmed abuse:

'They like it, they get a kick out of it. If people know that two people are having a feud, the news spreads far and wide. Friends then say: what are you going to do? I want to beat her up. It's all about getting a thrill.' (Young person)

It is questionable whether online bystanders realise that inciting and fuelling online conflicts can have serious consequences. Many respondents believe a lot of young people do not really think about it; they do it 'for fun' and for the thrill. If we look at rival groups' online scoreboards from this perspective, it is conceivable that these groups' motivation is to finish as high on the scoreboard as possible.

5.2 Individual factors

In addition to the factors mentioned, the study also revealed more individual factors that have an influence.

5.2.1 *Behavioural problems and MID*

As discussed in the previous chapter, many respondents mention that the young people involved often have behavioural problems. Respondents also suspect that mild intellectual disability has an impact on perpetrators because it stops them foreseeing the consequences of their actions and means they are easily influenced.

5.2.2 *Susceptibility to peer pressure*

In general, wanting to belong to a group and the fear of being left out is something that many young people experience. For many young people, what their peers think of them is more important in secondary school than what their parents or teachers think, making them more susceptible to peer pressure. An expert in parenting and growing up says:

> *'Peer pressure and group behaviour have always had a major influence on how children behave. Children are not likely to say anything about bullying unless they know there are five children behind them. The same applies to betrayal.' (Expert in parenting and online developments)*

In this regard, it is not surprising that the conversations reveal that peer pressure also plays a major role in violent incidents with an online component.

Peer pressure can occur online and/or offline and some young people are more susceptible to it than others. Furthermore, 'online bystanders' can play a major role in inciting a person and fuelling a conflict, which can escalate into physical confrontations. We have come across various examples showing that the perpetrator has difficulty dealing with this peer pressure and feels the need to prove himself to the group. When we ask a youth professional, who is also a music producer, what has the greatest influence on the development of violence with an online component, the answer is:

> *'They [the young people] talk more about peer pressure. That's what it's all about. Peer pressure is the biggest problem and I hear that over and over again.' (Youth professional and music producer)*

It is difficult for (some) young people to escape the peer pressure that is exerted on them offline, and particularly online, not to let themselves be walked over or to take revenge. We saw this earlier in Case C concerning 15-year-old Joshua, who was stabbed in a fight with one of his peers after a conflict that had been going on online for a long time. A lawyer involved in the case says of the perpetrator:

> *'He felt forced by peer pressure to fight out the feud because otherwise he would be a jerk or a wimp. This was constantly reported online, particularly because he had previously refused a confrontation.' (Lawyer involved in the case)*

Various respondents point out that young people who are susceptible to peer pressure are

also at greater risk of becoming involved in a violent incident (with an online component) because they are more easily influenced by what others say to them.[29] This is also evident from the verdict on the young person who stabbed 15-year-old Joshua in the case discussed. It was established that he was highly susceptible to peer pressure (Court of Rotterdam, 2022). Some respondents point out that young people with a difficult home situation are particularly susceptible to peer pressure, but in general professionals find that almost every young person is susceptible to a desire to belong to the group.

5.3 Need for status

In addition to sensitivity to peer pressure, pursuit of higher status appears to be an important driver. Respondents, both from the major cities in the Randstad area and from smaller cities elsewhere in the country, see that having status is very important for many young people they work with. Status is important in various areas where young people live their lives: online, on the street and at school. In general, you gain status by showing that you stand up for yourself and are not afraid. The more you can show this, the more status you will have. Experts say that someone who has status is less likely to become a victim, even if he is alone. Having status protects young people from victimisation, which can motivate them to become part of the perpetrating group.
Today's online platforms enable videos of (possibly violent) 'performances' to be distributed quickly and generate a wide reach. This is also why young people consider it important that the violence they commit is filmed. An expert explains:

> *'Almost every violent incident is filmed. I spoke to young people who said: if you haven't filmed it, you can't show it off.' (Online street culture expert)*

Other respondents recognise this and also see this as the main motivation for filming everything. This has to do with status both on the street and online, and we note that for young people this is part of the same living environment in which they and their peers operate.
On the one hand, given the ability to gain status through likes, views or points, the online world sometimes seems more important than the offline world. On the other hand, the value of physical confrontations and fights seems greater than online threats, insults and intimidation.
We have previously seen cases of online bystanders pressuring rival groups or individuals in a conflict to fight it out physically. This shows that more value is attached to a physical fight. The incitement seems to be aimed at producing a physical confrontation. The ranking of drill rap groups also shows that the more physically violent the act is, the higher the ranking, credits or points will be. Online violence alone does not confer as much status as physical violence.

29 Although this is not central to our study, respondents' experience is that these young people are also more susceptible to being recruited for criminal acts; they are easier to persuade, want to prove themselves and are keen to belong to a group.

In explaining the major importance attached to status, some respondents point out that for these young people it is sometimes the only way to achieve status because of their economic and social disadvantage. They are confronted with this disadvantage even more through social media, with images of expensive cars, clothes and holidays that are out of reach for most of them. A teacher explains that for young people who feel unhappy at home and whose daily lives are far removed from those of the influencers they see online, gaining status is attractive:

> *'You see children actually starting to present themselves in a different way. That gives them a kind of status. I have a boy in first year, actually a very nice boy, but his sister also went to this school and she had pretty lousy boyfriend. So he actually got in with that [lousy boyfriend's] group. Even though he didn't want to be like that, he changed and started doing all kinds of bad things. He started acting badly towards children, because he knew they would back him anyway. He also started giving children assignments to do mischief. Just to raise his status.' (Secondary school teacher)*

Chapter 4 already discussed the fact that respondents find that many of the young people involved in violence with an online component are socioeconomically disadvantaged, often facing problems in their home situation. Respondents find that these young people are often – but not always – vulnerable and susceptible to influence to gain status (including through violence). One reason for this may be that they have few other things to rely on or that offer protection.

5.3.1 *Experiencing feelings of insecurity*

Feelings of insecurity among young people have already been discussed implicitly in several places in this chapter, as well as in the previous chapters. Young people may become perpetrators out of feelings of insecurity to prevent (possibly repeat) victimisation, and status can afford protection against victimisation.
But young people may also fear becoming a victim without actually being a victim because of things they see online. Various respondents told us about the impact on young people of seeing online images of their peers carrying weapons, for example. An expert explains:

> *'I believe very strongly in the reinforcing effect: if young people hear from each other that they have a knife in their pocket or hear that on the news, they will carry a knife too because they feel unsafe. [...] This creates feelings of insecurity among young people. The same applies to neighbourhoods. A negative report about a neighbourhood affects the image that young people have of it. That has an effect on young people. They may feel unsafe.' (Online street culture expert)*

Two youth workers tell of an upper primary school boy they encountered on the street with a knife, because on the basis of images he had seen online he thought everyone on the street carried a knife and that he therefore needed to protect himself. In this context, a police social media expert mentions the social media algorithms that draw in young people:

'So at some point everyone thinks, "shit, if they have a knife like that, then I need to have one too. Because I need to be able to defend myself, of course." And if they react quickly, it will all be down to that filter bubble again. Those kids only see those kinds of videos. So, as they see it, everyone is walking around with a drill rap knife.' (Police social media expert)

The fear of victimisation, fuelled by online images and conflicts, can make young people feel unsafe on the streets. Professionals find that young people are more likely to carry knives to protect themselves, increasing the likelihood of an actual stabbing incident.[30]

5.4 Potential and use of online platforms

Finally, in this chapter we focus on the role of online platforms in violence with an online component. The possibilities offered by online platforms provide both an opportunity and motivation for youth violence.

This chapter has already discussed the importance of status as a motive for committing violence and filming and sharing it. Various respondents point out that the wide reach of some online groups acts as an encouragement. The ability to reach many others very quickly, and thus gain more likes and views, is very attractive to young people. A youth worker says:

'There are large Snapchat groups that cover the whole country. That gives you a reach of a few hundred thousand or more followers. Sometimes more than a million.' (Youth worker)

Talking about the attractiveness of reach, a young person says:

'Everyone knows that if something happens, everyone will film it so they can show it to people who don't go to school here. And then it quickly spreads around the world.' (Young person)

In the conversations we often hear about the same platforms being used. In the first place, Snapchat is a frequently mentioned platform. This platform was already mentioned several times in various examples in Chapter 3. Respondents cite various reasons why Snapchat is attractive:

- Messages are deleted quickly and automatically.
- Senders are notified if a screenshot is taken.
- It is easy to add large groups.
- A person's location can be tracked.[31]

Telegram is also widely used. We hear about this platform less when it comes to videos of

30 And the police see this reflected in an increase in young people's involvement in stabbing incidents (Police, 21 January 2021, Government of the Netherlands, 20 March 2023).

31 Snapchat offers the ability to turn off location display. In Chapter 3 we saw that young people may be pressured not to do so.

forced apologies and abuse, but more with regard to exposure (including nude images and young people being beaten). A youth worker says: 'Telegram is anonymous and obscure.' It contains many graphic images of violence, including of a sexual nature. Since the Telegram server is located in Russia, the general assumption is that it is impossible to find out who posted the images. It also includes young people in groups with a large number of members, who can sometimes be searched by postcode area or by the name of a school.

The third most commonly used platform cited by respondents is TikTok. This also includes a lot of young people as well as many open accounts. Furthermore, young people also communicate in many other ways and the platforms they use also change. For example, a lot of communication takes place on in-game chat channels, while platforms such as Facebook or Instagram are becoming obsolete among young people.

5.5 Summary

This chapter has discussed various factors that influence violence with an online component and those involved in it. The factors mentioned do not operate in a vacuum, but influence each other or could influence each other indirectly. For example, the pursuit of status and the taboo on snitching can be seen as street values that are part of street culture. Rival groups can be a reason why violence escalates, but violence can also be influenced by street culture and vice versa. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 4, young people's socioeconomically disadvantaged position plays a role when it comes to being influenced by street values or the pursuit of status.

6. Identification and recognition

'Investigation is difficult without a police report,' says the community police officer: 'Reports aren't filed because the victim is often also a perpetrator.' 'He doesn't want to be a wimp,' he says. 'And then he retaliates against others.' (Van Essen, 16 October 2022)

In this chapter, which focuses on the approach to hybrid street violence, we look at the identification and recognition of offences, based on empirical findings from our study of hybrid street violence. It is outside the scope of this study to enumerate all the general initiatives or projects aiming to keep young people away from crime[32] or generally to get into contact (online or otherwise) with young people.[33]
The focus of this study is on how professionals like police, youth workers and school staff identify and recognise hybrid street violence and what role they have or might have in this. We also look at the obstacles and practical examples that have a prospect of success.

6.1 Awareness of incident from a police report or notification from victim

In the experience of police respondents, as stated previously, police are unaware of most incidents because of the scarcity of reports or notifications. An operations expert in a core team in the Randstad area explains that where a police report is filed, it is often because of encouragement from a parent. Police respondents also explain that even with a report it is difficult to take on a case. In many cases the images are not available to police and are shared in private groups which the police cannot access. Or the images were only temporary.
One example where a report was made and subsequently investigated is Case A, described above, where a 15-year-old youth was the victim of filmed apology (see box below). In this case the report was not filed by the actual victim but by his father, after consulting the relevant community police officer. His parents felt it was important to file a report, but they were also trying to protect him by not allowing him to file the report himself. The boy was also unwilling to make the report in person.

32 For example, in the context of the 'Preventie met Gezag' (Prevention with Authority) programme to prevent young people from becoming involved in organised crime.
33 Nor can we say whether these initiatives help in identifying and recognising hybrid street violence, or to what extent. However, initiatives that can be considered promising are referred to in this chapter.

Case A (continued): victim of forced apology

X is the victim of a filmed apology which was shared with students at his school and elsewhere. Although X says he is not really bothered that other students have seen it, his mother tells a different story. She says he came home crying from school on the day he was confronted with the images and only after much persuasion did he tell her about the threat. Under no circumstances would he allow his parents to go to the police; he says that was the reason he had not wanted to tell them about the incident in the first place. When we ask why he does not want to go to the police, he says: 'I wanted to shoot him myself.' His mother does not believe that. A little while later he says that he is not a snitch who talks to police.

After he had told her, his mother nevertheless contacted the community police officer and her contact person in the youth prevention team to discuss what to do. The community police officer said it was important to file a report so that action could be taken against the perpetrator. The mother says:

'We had to file an official police report. It was difficult, because in the back of our minds we were wondering what happens if a boy like this takes revenge or something? Or his family? Or anyone else? We have two other children and we don't want them to be put at risk. So we had a discussion about what we could do. Because you hear that the police report often contains an address and that the suspect gets to see it.'

However, after a discussion the family decide to file a report. X's father files a report on his behalf and asks for an 'agreement on location', so that if a call comes into the control room they know that agreements have been made for reports from this address. Working with crime officers, the community police officer arrests the perpetrator and the film is found on his phone. Unfortunately, the family receives a letter from the Public Prosecution Service a couple of months later informing them that the case has been dismissed for lack of evidence. An Article 12 appeal procedure is currently ongoing to have the Public Prosecution Service reverse the decision to dismiss.

In the case of F, who has been the victim of a filmed apology with violence more than once, several reports were made to the police. This was his experience.

Case F (continued): repeat victim of forced apology

Within a short time, F is the victim of apologies involving violence that are filmed and shared. The perpetrators are always different. We talk to F. at home with his mother. His parents are divorced and he usually lives with his mother.

F. was 14 when he was first threatened by an older boy. He was beaten, his telephone was taken and he was forced to his knees to kiss the other boy's shoes. He also had to say 'Sorry, boss'. The boy took ten euros off him, but gave his phone back. F. says the boy was around 16 years old and that he had never seen him before. A friend of his later says that the boy also did the same to him.

His mother says he came home 'shaking and shaken', clearly upset. An hour later he hears

from a friend that he was filmed and the film is on Snapchat. F. did not actually want to file a report, but his mother sent the film to the community police officer on WhatsApp. She says she did it because a month earlier she had seen on Facebook that a boy was causing a 'ruckus' in the neighbourhood and had been attacking boys. She thought it might be the same person. She says she filed a report and that the boy was arrested. And indeed, it turned out to be the same boy.
'The community police officer said it was important to file a report and so that's what we did.' His mother filed the report without F. because he did not want to talk to the police about it. His mother is satisfied with the community police officer's response. 'Things moved really quickly. The community police officer kept us informed and said they had arrested a suspect.' They do not know what happened to the case subsequently or whether the suspect faced punishment.

In both cases, the report was recorded by a community police officer who already knew the parents and youths involved before the incidents took place. This meant that the parents were able to talk to community police about their options and the importance of reporting before they filed their report. Hence the relationship and the contact with community police officers was a crucial factor. In hindsight, both parents say they were satisfied with their contacts with community police. They also had the impression that the community police had taken the matter seriously.
We hear from the various categories of respondents (police, youth professionals, parents) that a lack of awareness about violence with an online component plays a part in the failure to recognise victimhood. Lack of police awareness of the phenomenon can mean that information concerning the context of or background to a violent incident is missed. For example, we hear of a stabbing in North Holland, where those involved did not want to give any information. The respondent tells us:

> *'In the first instance, the team had not considered drill, but somebody had seen one of my presentations and asked me: "Could this be related to drill?" So we went and looked online and my colleague in digital forensics found the explanation and motivation for the stabbing online within three minutes. When that boy was confronted with this, he said he belonged to the rival gang and was wearing black clothes and carrying a knife, so was obliged to stab an opponent when he saw him. "Because I was with that gang".' (Operations specialist A, Police)*

The respondent explains that when stabbings occur they do not always consider looking online for information about conflicts or backgrounds that have played a role. Other respondents with experience of youth and online street culture stress the importance of expertise in properly interpreting comments made by young people online. That is not limited to the police. Schools, municipalities and even parents often lack the knowledge of street and youth culture, be it online or otherwise.

Where a youth comes to file a report at the station, often as a result of parental encouragement, there can be a lack of knowledge and awareness of violence with an online

component. An operations specialist category A (OS-A) and a youth support officer, whose joint responsibilities cover juvenile and cyber crime, say that in this type of case the colleague who records the report might not always know or understand why a young person is unwilling to say what happened to them. Even when a young person has come to the police station to file a report, anxiety about online or other reprisals can make it difficult for them to talk. In the experience of the operations specialist A and the youth support officer, colleagues sometimes mistakenly put this down to unwillingness or think he might also have committed an offence, without considering the possibility that he might actually be fearful of being exposed as a snitch.

6.2 Awareness of incident from other professionals or young people

There are also occasions when the police become aware of an incident through third parties. They might be other partners in the chain, or young people who had heard about an incident involving somebody else.

6.2.1 *Youth workers*

The youth work system is an important partner for the police. Youth workers, often closer to the young people than police personnel, are focused on building and maintaining relationships of trust with young people. Consequently they are more likely to see images of violence with an online component and/or hear from young people about such an incident. This makes them a potentially important source of information for the police, although several youth workers have indicated in interviews that it is sometimes difficult to strike a balance between passing on information and maintaining their bond of trust with young people. Approachability seems to work best in practice. For example, one youth worker states:

> *'I think the coffees are really important; being able to discuss things without taking immediate action. Youth work is sometimes placed in a difficult position between police and the youths themselves. I have to keep working on the contact, because I also have to share things. It's a back-and-forth between us that can sometimes get complicated.' (Youth worker)*

Although it appears from the conversations that youth workers often make their own professional decision on what they share with the police, we found several examples in which police were informed through casual, informal conversations. A youth worker who has good contact with the community police officers in his area says:

> *'The police know my job. We sometimes discuss what I see. In the case of a critical incident[34] I have to share the information – that's part of my job. For example, in the case of domestic violence or if a young person is at risk. I have to do something with*

34 Critical or serious according to their methodology.

the information.' (Youth worker).

One platform for youth workers to share information is the community engagement discussion at school. This is discussed in more detail in section 6.6

6.2.2 *School staff*

From our conversations it appears that both young people and youth workers often take teachers or pedagogical caretakers into their confidence to share their concerns about other young people. Several pedagogical caretakers that we spoke to for this study were well aware of filmed incidents of violence and forced apologies amongst students. Students show them images or let it be known that a young person has been victimised and is having problems. In contrast to the youth support officers and community police officers, pedagogical caretakers are also approached by the victims themselves. A pedagogical caretaker says:

'I always do something with the information and I tell them: "You know that if it's really life-threatening, I can't keep it to myself."' (Pedagogical caretaker)

What they do with the information will vary. Sometimes it will be discussed in the care team at school or with the parents of the victims. If they are working together with the police, it can be shared at that level. This is discussed in more detail in section 6.6.

Although the taboo on snitching prevents many young people from speaking, it does not prevent all of them. One secondary school student we spoke to said:

'If someone has done something, I tell the teacher. Straight away, I get the cold shoulder. Because I am the snitch. I don't care, it doesn't frighten me, but it does frighten some people.' (Young person)

Some young people also name their mentor or student coordinator as a person that they will tell about a fight or if a student has been beaten up.

6.2.3 *Young people*

We also came across examples of community police and youth support officers who were personally told by youths about filmed incidents of violence involving *other* young people. It appears from the conversations that these were often community police and youth support officers who invested in maintaining and building contacts with young people, without there being any incident. One youth worker told us about a community police officer in his area:

'The community police officer goes to the school once a fortnight; he is also the youth support officer. I might think I have something new to tell him, but it's old news to him. The young people share a lot with him. They don't share with the police surveillance officers, but they will with this community officer.' (Youth worker)

As already stated, when young people do approach a community police officer or youth support officer, it is not normally to speak about their own experience, but because they want to share something that happened to someone else. We did not hear of any examples where victims themselves contacted the police, only young people who did so to help others.
One youth support officer who has strong contacts in her area said that young people regularly send her clips or show her filmed apologies. Because of this she knows that something has happened and tries to trace the victim. The youth support and community police officers who invest in building contacts with young people stress the importance of approachability. For example, one core team in Rotterdam has opted to make the youth support officers contactable on WhatsApp, because this is accessible for young people and enables them to speak directly to their youth support officer.

6.3 The importance of knowing and being known

Our study shows that fear of repercussions amongst victims is an important obstacle to reporting. Closely linked to this is the fear of being seen as a snitch, potentially leading to further unpleasant consequences for the victim. The taboo on snitching is also an obstacle that prevents others from reporting a violent incident. Another factor is that victims and/or parents think there is no point in reporting.

In cases where victims did file a report, there was already good contact between the parent(s) of the victim and the community police officer. In those instances, the parents first contacted the community police officer informally to discuss the incident and find out what steps they could potentially take.

Although we found no examples of victims contacting the police of their own volition, young people do sometimes report the victimisation of others. This prompted us to speak to a number of young people about what in their mind makes a community police or youth support officer approachable; the – indicative – results are described below.

The interviews and examples we found demonstrate the importance of community approachability. Youth support officers who are familiar with the youths and gangs in their area can establish links more quickly when provided with images of violence, usually by somebody other than the victim. The community network of a youth support officer is also an entry point for conversations with the youths and their parents or guardians, for example together with the youth prevention officer or the school's care coordinator. An interview with a police social media expert who maintains contact with young people at a national level also indicated the importance of the community component. Although they were occasionally contacted by young people, it was difficult to find a colleague in a regional unit who was willing or able to do something with the information.[35]

35 In this context, we note that a social media worker operating at national level has numerous contacts with young people, for example informing them about what the police do, answering their questions and providing information on criminality

Community police and youth support presentations on social media

During a group discussion with a number of secondary school students, we present four young people with various social media profiles and images of community police and youth support officers. We then discuss with them which appeals to them the most and which one they would be most likely to contact. Included in the images are profiles of community police officers who are recognisable and unrecognisable on social media (perhaps with their back to the camera or their face covered), or who are pictured on their own or with children or an enforcement officer.

In the conversation that follows, the students say that it does not make a lot of difference, provided they know the person. One student says:

'Kim and Daan [the community police officers]. They aren't family, but they come around so often that it starts to feel that way and they find out about everything that happens and they come to the house straight away to ask what's wrong.' (Young person)

Another student says:

'I would also choose number 4 [photo with recognisable community police officer with children], because people who are often around children are okay. They can look at me too. What you want most is somebody who is good with children and young people. Familiarity also plays a role, and it shouldn't be a different person every time, because trust is very, very important.'

Another student would choose the image with the enforcement officers because he knows the community enforcement officers from a time when he was magnet fishing and found a bicycle and his experience of enforcement officers was 'positive'. He does not know the community police officers but does know the enforcement officers, which is why he would choose them. Another student adds:

'Familiarity is important for me too. The photo makes no difference. Familiarity is the most important thing of all.'

It emerges from the conversation that what is most important to the students is whether they know a community police or youth support officer in real life. Their profile presentation on social media is less important.

A community police youth operations expert sees this need in young people at first hand in his operating area in North Holland. During his regular shifts with colleagues, he does his best to show them that knowing and being known is what is important. He says:

'Knowing and being known is what works. If they know you, they will talk to you. If

and security.

something is going on, they will come to us.'

Alongside investing in building physical relationships with young people, various professionals who are active online stress that the police also have a lot to gain online. We have already referred to the decision to make youth support officers in a core team contactable on WhatsApp and other social media accounts, to minimise any barriers to contact. We also spoke to a social media coordinator from a police unit who is active on TikTok. He sees having an active online presence as a way of reaching young people who might want to share information about others. He says:

'As police, we are actually watching from the sidelines. Very little is done to come into contact with these people and start a conversation. I always say that the Internet provides that broad middle group. So as police, on the streets we often come face-to-face with troubled adolescents who are difficult for us to reach. But they have friends, many of whom have not yet taken the criminal path. So if we could reach them online, given that tips are often received from people who aren't criminals themselves, but know something about their friend and don't want their friend to start carrying a knife or be threatened or blackmailed by a gang. So they report it to me in the hope that the police will do something with the information.' (Police social media coordinator)

In the experience of the social media coordinator, police anxieties or reticence about recognisability on social media can form a barrier to online contact with young people. The many warnings within the police against risks of recognisability on private social media accounts can affect the willingness of police staff to present their profiles on work accounts. Another police respondent who is active in online and youth work recognises this and sees it in practice, such as when community police and youth support officers blur their photographs on social media. He thinks that potential ambitions for a future position in the observation team or the arrest unit might mean that they do not want to be recognisable on social media now.

According to the social media coordinator, the solution is to have agreements on this at team level. He explains:

'To repeat myself, your face doesn't even need to appear online. You can also provide information or in any event carry out online surveillance. So you agree as a team that Piet and Jan are happy to work online and Bert and Klaas will mainly answer questions or be the contact point for young people. Maybe you have someone who is an easy talker but doesn't want to see their face online? Let them start a chat with one of these guys. It has to be a team effort; that's the only chance of success.' (Police social media coordinator)

Another respondent thinks it is part of the job of a youth support officer to be recognisable for young people and to have an online presence.

6.4 Awareness of incident from police activities online

Lastly, incidents can be discovered by the police themselves in the course of online surveillance activities. Despite the fact that these offences involve violence with an online component and a victim, they can (at least to some extent) be categorised as a detected crime. These are offences that are discovered through extra efforts by the police (and partners) because victims will not report them of their own volition. Interviews with police staff show that active detection is still at a minimum. This appears to result in part from convergence of different focus areas in dealing with violence with an online component: youth and online. Conversations with community police and youth support officers show that they are rarely aware of the online behaviour of young people in their neighbourhood, nor do they know how they can find out more about it or who they can consult. Or sometimes they do know that things are happening, but cannot get close because it is shared in private groups or stories.

Digital community officers employed within the police are working on cybercrime. We spoke to a number of them for this study about violence with an online component, but it was clear from these conversations that they are not yet very active in this area and/or have not (yet) observed it themselves. There also seem to be significant variances in their job descriptions.

We did see that the 'digi-rooms' of the Rotterdam Unit had detected offences. We visited the digi-room at Capelle aan den IJssel in 2022, in the context of another study[36]. Although there are other digi-rooms and similar initiatives, the focus of this particular digi-room was on youth and excessive violence, because of multiple violent drill rap incidents in their area of operation. The digi-rooms are physical spaces where police staff have facilities for online surveillance and other digital searches. A legal framework for digi-room procedures was established locally in consultation with the Public Prosecution Service. The core team uses public online images to gain a better understanding of what is happening in the area. An example from this team is set out in the box below.

Example of online detection

In public online images the core team finds a clip that was recorded in the area. A girl (around 14 or 15) sitting on a step is approached by two other girls. One of them starts shouting at the girl on the step and hits her a few times. She has to say 'Sorry, [name of girl]', which she does, and then the two girls leave after some more shouting. Police traced the perpetrator in this incident from the name of the girl and the name of the school mentioned at the end as the place where they apparently have to go.

Although we cannot state on the basis of this study that police teams in other districts are not actively seeking to detect violence with an online component, we did not come across it in our conversations. We did, however, come across multiple examples, as discussed above, of community police and youth support officers who took action after an image was brought to their attention (for example having been sent by the parent of a victim or shown

36 Broekhuizen, J., S. Mehlbaum & K. van den Akker (2022).

to them by others).

6.5 Online detection: barriers and opportunities

In practice, there is a lot of uncertainty about what can and cannot be done in online surveillance. Several respondents and participants in the expert session said they had come up against legal restrictions in online surveillance because of a ban on systematic surveillance. Some respondents also think this can be assumed too quickly, when there might be potential. In addition, various respondents said online surveillance is difficult because much of the communication is not public to everyone (as many groups are closed). One example of an initiative by a core team to overcome these barriers is the Digihaven in Delfshaven (box below).

Online surveillance: Digihaven

The Delfshaven core team of the Rotterdam unit has a purpose-built 'digihaven'. The digihaven can be seen as an extension of the digi-room; it too is a physical space, manned by a digital operations specialist A, a digital community officer and a digital professional. Police staff call in here for help with digital issues, but such issues are also tackled independently. For example, issues such as online surveillance, proactive and preventive online action and OSINT[37]. Youth work is one of the focus areas and there is close cooperation with youth support officers.

The youth support officers in Delfshaven use the digihaven in this core team for online surveillance purposes in their area of operations. For example, a number of fake accounts have been set up from the digihaven as a means of accessing public stories and groups. They also have a number of logarithms which they use as a means of obtaining a feed of information on social media.

The youth support officers also use the digihaven to find concentrations of youth activity in the neighbourhood, using locations shared on Snapchat. The police can then check out the situation at the busy locations. Sometimes the youth support officers might choose one of these locations to organise an event (for example neighbourhood online gaming).

A legal framework for operation is agreed with the local prosecution service. It includes points like online searches and how frequently certain groups can be accessed without surveillance becoming systematic. The accounts used are only members of public communities and are used to watch, but not communicate.

In addition to the legal restrictions on online surveillance, professionals in the expert session also describe legislation on information-sharing as a barrier to sharing observations with partners like schools or youth work organisations. This is in spite of the fact that we have already seen that schools and youth work organisations may well be the first point of contact for reporting an incident. Participants from Rotterdam said in the expert session that a pilot had been started there recently to share online information between police, the Public Prosecution Service and youth work organisations, on the basis of a covenant. This initiative

37 OSINT stands for open-source intelligence.

is part of the Preventie met Gezag programme in Rotterdam.[38]

A community adviser on online street culture stresses the importance of building up a position in online information, within both the police and the municipality. In addition to active online surveillance, it is also important to observe and potentially intervene after an incident online. Based on a case study[39], the investigators involved stress the importance of an online presence after an incident of violence between rival gangs, because reprisal actions often take place online. They also stress the desirability of an environment in which community partners can conduct online monitoring together. In their experience, there is currently no legal framework for this.

6.6 Getting parents involved

There is also a lack of knowledge among parents and/or guardians of the online environment where their children spend time and the violence that can occur there. From conversations with mothers whose sons have been victimised, it appears that young people do not always, or perhaps never, report that they have been the victim of violence with an online component and many parents have no idea of what happens in their child's online world. As a result, parents will often not know if their child is either victim or perpetrator. A prevention worker in a youth prevention team says that although the school organises meetings to provide parents with information on social media use, they are often attended by parents who have already become involved. She says: 'the people we want to attract do not attend. Only the people who already know the importance of attending.' Respondents, both professionals and mothers, feel it is important to provide parents with as much information as possible on worrying developments. For instance, one community police officer tells us about a meeting for parents that was organised after a lot of forced apologies were filmed in the neighbourhood. This example is described in the box below.

Example of parent information meeting

In a village close to larger cities in the Randstad area, the community police officer notices a lot of apology videos where children are forced to their knees and compelled to say 'Sorry, boss'. To increase awareness amongst parents, the community police officers, together with the municipality, the youth prevention team and the municipal health service, organise an event for adolescents and pre-adolescents. The aim of the event is to increase awareness among parents of the problems of filmed apologies.

The event is held at the town hall and is opened by the alderman. Following a municipal health service presentation on how adolescent brains work, various youth trends are discussed, including the 'Sorry, boss' phenomenon. To show parents what is involved, actors are employed to act this out. Their performance is based on clips of incidents that

38 Preventie met Gezag is a national programme that aims to prevent children, teenagers and young adults from 8 to 27 years of age coming into contact with, or descending into, organised and subversive youth crime. (Government of the Netherlands, n.d.)

39 For the anonymised version see: [ANONYMISED] timeline 'chat on the net' (https://amsterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/document/11937649/1) (Mahdaoui & De Jong, 11 October 2022).

have taken place in the village. One of the community police officers involved says that the performance was an eye-opener for the parents: 'Parents were thinking: is this really happening?' After the performance, parents were given tips about signs that there is something wrong with their child. Examples included changes in behaviour, such as withdrawing from family activities, changes in appearance, obsession with their phone or problems at school. At the end of the session, parents could put their questions to the various partners, each of which had their own stand.

While this example is designed for the entire group of parents, there is also an example of a meeting designed for parents of a prioritised youth group (see box below).

Example of parent meeting for prioritised youth group
In a medium-sized town in South Holland there is a gang of youths who are responsible for very violent incidents, which they also film. This group is prioritised by the municipality and the police. Part of the integrated approach is to invite parents of the youths involved to a meeting. The town's security intervention officer and the community police officer invite the parents personally to emphasise the urgency of the meeting. Examples of an incident are shown at the meeting, making it clear to parents what their children are involved in.

In the example referred to above in this chapter, where parents received a letter from the municipality to inform them that their child had been spotted at sites of problem behaviour, the police officer found that many parents did not believe it because it was at odds with the image they had of their child. Respondents from the digi-room in Capelle aan den IJssel said that in such cases they would sometimes invite parents to come to the digi-room with their child so that they could look at the images on the child's phone together. They have a special electronic board for this. The phone is connected to the board, making it easy to search through the phone and display content.
Because both the phone and subscription are often paid for by the parent(s), they request consent from the parents, while the personal consent of the young person is not needed. Experience shows that the parent(s) are often amazed in such cases at their child's online world and their child's activities.

6.7 Summary

In this chapter we have looked at the current approach and the ways in which police and partners become aware of violent incidents with an online component, as well as the practical barriers to this approach. Although many incidents probably remain unknown to the police, partners and parents, we have seen many ways in which the police become aware of incidents and we have found various practical examples for identification and recognition.

7. Follow-up

'Two boys of eight and 12 years of age reported to the police station last week after threatening and filming their peers in Spijkenisse. The pair were suspected of involvement in an event where young victims were forced to their knees in front of the camera and compelled to say 'Sorry, boss'. If the children refused, they would be beaten up.' (Rijnmond, 20 November 2023)

This chapter focuses on the follow-up, after police have become aware of an offence. As in the previous chapter, we look not only at the police, but also at the role of the Public Prosecution Service, youth work organisations and schools. We also look at cases involving integrated follow-up. The findings in this chapter are based on the interviews and the expert session.
Various integrated initiatives, interventions or working methods described in this chapter were considered by those involved to be successful and therefore to have potential. However, it should be noted that we have not conducted our own evaluation of these initiatives and therefore cannot attest to their effectiveness.

7.1 Police follow-up

We have seen the police use various methods to follow up on violence with an online component.

7.1.1 *Talking to the perpetrators*

As a first step, the police – often the community officer or the youth support officer – will talk with the perpetrators. This happened, for example, in Case D, discussed above, where X was the victim of violence with an online component on several occasions and changed school several times and ultimately moved to a different area (see box below).

Case D (continued): repeat victimhood
After the first time that X was abused and filmed, his mother went to speak to the school and the school invited the youth support officer to attend the meeting. As a result of this meeting, the youth support officer talked with the perpetrators. Unfortunately, that meeting had unwanted consequences for X. His mother says:

'I came to this as a novice, I had no experience. You trust that they are professionals. They

spoke to the boys and then one day those boys challenged my son about it and beat him up.'

Talks between the boys and the school had no effect and the violence continued.

Problems are not limited to conversations with the perpetrators: talking to the victims can also be problematic because they are often unwilling to talk to the police. An example of a community police officer from the east of the Netherlands appears in the box below.

Example of talking with the victim
A youth counsellor sends a video clip from Snapchat to the community police officer. The clip shows a boy being beaten up and threatened by other boys. One of the boys has a knife. All the boys live in the same community and the community police officer goes to talk to the boys involved. He says:

'Initially the boys were unwilling to talk, so I went along a few times to gain their trust. And to explain that there wouldn't automatically be an official report [if you talk to the police]. The problem is that they are also getting up to things themselves. On the one hand they are being threatened, but it emerged that he [the victim] had also done things.'

The community police officer learnt that there were various rival gangs in the town:

'You find out that there are different gangs who challenge and humiliate each other on Snapchat.'

The boy victimised in the video did not file a report. Together with the youth officer, the community police officer identified the boys involved in the conflict between the gangs and paid them a home visit. This appears to have had an effect, because it is quiet on the street and he has not heard of or seen images of violence between the gangs. Although the community police officer is guarded: 'Or perhaps they are getting cleverer, that's a possibility too.'

7.1.2 *Investigations*

The digihaven in Delfshaven is also used for online youth-related investigations. The box below shows an example of how this is put into operation.

Example of follow-up after filmed group abuse
The youth support officer was sent a video clip of a boy of 14 or 15 years old who was beaten up in an alley by six other boys of the same age. All the boys who beat him up were dressed in black with black hoodies. The victim was beaten to the ground, where he was beaten again. It is interesting that one of the boys takes out a knife, still in its sheath, and makes stabbing movements (without actually stabbing the victim). The coordinator says that this has been seen in other images and thinks that the idea is to demonstrate that the perpetrator who is carrying a knife knows how to use it.
The OSINT specialist from the digihaven starts to study the video and tries to identify the

participants. He succeeds, thanks to his knowledge and expertise, and the police have their sights on the perpetrators and the victim.

A digital community officer says that the filmed images of the violence are gathered as extra evidence and that they also search for witnesses in the comments on a reported incident. We have seen and heard of multiple examples of the police using a case to increase awareness and to show that they are tackling this type of crime. For example, a 'regular' community police officer tells of a video of abuse that was prosecuted and where the images posted on social media helped the investigation and identification of the perpetrators. The arrest and prosecution of these perpetrators was deliberately shared on social media. The community police officer says:

> *'So it isn't limited to talking; sometimes we also demonstrate that we will really prosecute. It is also shared on social media that we will come down hard. We have to do this to show that it will be punished, otherwise things will get worse.' (Community police officer)*

He says there can nevertheless be a risk in sharing arrests because it can give the perpetrators status. We find another example, albeit not focused on youth street violence, in a police investigation that was started following a report of doxing, distribution of naked photos, child porn, libel and defamation and an exposure group on Telegram. In this investigation, the police confiscated a number of phones and shared a film about the criminal investigation in the relevant exposure group to raise awareness among the members.

7.2 Criminal prosecution

Violence with an online component can therefore be the subject of criminal prosecution and a perpetrator who is identified can be prosecuted by the Public Prosecution Service. We have already pointed out that few reports are received of violence with an online component. In practice, there do not appear to be many criminal prosecutions of perpetrators. Respondents who do have experience of this ascribe it in part to understaffing in the Public Prosecution Service. A community police officer says:

> *'Yes, because we are in local police stations, the lines are very short and a home visit can be organised quickly. What can be prosecuted is passed to the Public Prosecution Service and they have so many cases that even proven abuse will sometimes take a year. That's how it is.'*

A respondent from the Public Prosecution Service explains that gravity (seriousness) plays a significant part in the prosecution. According to the respondent, it is important to know the source of the information that started the investigation. If it is not known, for example if the source is an anonymous online account, attempts can be made to find an alternative source by other means (such as the school). Background reports from the police themselves

can also play an important role, for example to estimate the risk of recidivism. Prosecution of the role of third parties, as in the case of peer pressure or incitement, can also be problematic. Legal criteria for complicity must be met. Where there is a long-running conflict, it is important to establish this in an official report. Having recent information at the hearing about the suspect's circumstances online and offline can also affect the procedure and the sentence.

A number of the cases that we analysed did not proceed to prosecution. In the case described above of A., who was forced to his knees to say sorry, the Public Prosecution Service issued a conditional decision not to prosecute, in spite of the film found on the perpetrator's phone. In the case of D., according to his mother, it was agreed with the police that no report would be filed because it could further endanger D.'s safety. In the case of F. the mother never heard whether the perpetrators were prosecuted after the report was filed.

One respondent from the youth prevention team says that perpetrators are sometimes very young. She knows of multiple cases that involved 10-year-olds, meaning there can be no prosecution. And where there is no active police follow-up on a report, there is no case for the Public Prosecution Service.

Exceptions are where violence results in serious injury or death, where the consequences are visible to the public and serious and/or where bystanders have called the police. An example of this is the stabbing in which 15-year-old Joshua was killed, or the fatal stabbing on the Pier in Scheveningen as a consequence of rivalry between drill rap gangs in 2020. Nevertheless, even in this type of case, there is not always a prosecution if there are no other linking factors. For example, rapper Double-D was stabbed in Vlissingen in 2022. A respondent tells us about an online conflict that preceded the stabbing, but neither the victim nor witnesses were willing to talk to police about the incident.

7.3 Protecting victims during prosecution

As stated previously, fear of testifying or filing a report is an important obstacle to further criminal prosecution. It has proved difficult in practice to protect young people from the consequences of snitching. One respondent from the youth prevention team says:

> *'Where attempts are made in a case to persuade victims to file reports, it is still very difficult and a huge step, because snitching is taboo. They are fearful of the consequences and they [the victims] have already been assaulted once. So the threat of it happening again is very real.' (Prevention worker, youth prevention team)*

We saw in Chapter 4 how X in Case D suffered the consequences of a visit by the community police officer to the perpetrators, as a result of which he was forced to change schools several times and ultimately move to another town before he was left alone. Once in their sights, it is difficult for these young boys to get away. It is not easy to guarantee the safety of victims because providing information or filing an official report does not guarantee that the violence will stop or that there will be no reprisals.

And providing information or filing a report about the violence is no guarantee of a successful prosecution. A community police officer who has been involved with a lot of

filmed forced apologies in her area says that parents' reticence about filing a report is not only because they are fearful, but also because they doubt that action will be taken.
In her experience, provability makes it difficult to prosecute perpetrators for this phenomenon. That applies particularly where violence is not filmed, but the victim is simply on his knees saying sorry. She explains:

> *'What is provable then? Sometimes young people will tell you things, but they won't make an official statement. Try to make something provable of that. But if I think it's possible, I will try my best. As in the case of [X in Case A]; he was clear and I thought we had a good chance. But I'm disappointed by the decision from the Public Prosecution Service.' (Community police officer).*

The respondent speaks here about the victims in Case A. In this case an apology was filmed and the film was found on the perpetrator's phone. By agreement with the case officer, the decision was to go for 'coercion' in accordance with Article 284 of the Penal Code,[41] possibly in combination with threat (Article 285 of the Penal Code). Ultimately, the case was dismissed. Without visible violence, many of the incidents are thought to have little prospect of prosecution.

Nevertheless, this sometimes succeeds. For instance, we find an Instagram message in which the community police officers and youth officers talk about suspects arrested for making and distributing 'Sorry, boss' videos. The social media message is cited (redacted in places) in the box below.

We stand with you! Suspects arrested
A few weeks ago we shared a message that a group of very young suspects had forced peers to their knees and made them say 'Sorry boss'. If they did not, they would be beaten up. One of these incidents was filmed and shared on social media. This had a significant impact on the victim.
During our investigation we were asked whether filming violence was a prosecutable offence. Remember this question – you will soon have the answer.

Various victims filed reports and an investigation led to the arrest of three suspects last week, with two further suspects being summoned and questioned. During one of the interviews it was explained that one incident of abuse had been filmed and subsequently shared on Snapchat. One thing followed another... The clip went viral.
The Public Prosecutor will later determine what penalty or community punishment the suspects will receive. They will be in court in the near future. In addition, Veilig Thuis was

41 1. A term of imprisonment of not more than two years or a fine of the fourth category is imposed upon: 1°. a person who by an act of violence or any other act or by threat of violence or threat of any other act, either directed against another person or against others, unlawfully compels that other person to act, to refrain from acting or to submit to anything; 2°. a person who by the threat of slander or libel compels another person to act, to refrain from acting or to submit to anything.
2. In the case defined in 2°, prosecution of the serious offence will take place only upon complaint of the person against whom the serious offence has been committed.

notified to see whether assistance was necessary.

So is filming a prosecutable offence? ABSOLUTELY! Filming and then sharing is also A PROSECUTABLE OFFENCE!!! Our message: 'Stop this. We in the police will never accept this and we will find you if we can!'

(Source: Instagram, 19 November 2023)

Although criminal prosecution is sometimes successful, respondents say that what is wanted is a comprehensive view of the perpetrators. Often these are underage perpetrators with multiple problems that require support from youth work organisations, the community police or a youth prevention team.

7.4 Restorative dialogue

As noted before and in this chapter, violence with an online component can also be discovered by another partner in the chain. These partners can pass the information to the police, but they can also follow up on their own without involving the police. We came across several examples of this in our study. For example, two youth workers talk about a boy who was the victim of a filmed apology with violence. There was no police involvement in the following example. In a similar situation, youth workers did bring the community police officer into the discussion. They did so to highlight the seriousness of the situation to those involved (both the perpetrators and the victim who wanted revenge).

Restorative dialogue with youth workers
The youth workers describe an incident where a boy was beaten up, forced to his knees and compelled to say 'Sorry, King'. The boy decides not to take revenge, but goes to the youth work service.

That boy came to us saying: this has happened and I want to resolve it. And so we organised restorative dialogue.'

The youth workers knew the perpetrators and asked whether they were open to a dialogue because the victim wanted to resolve the situation. The perpetrators agreed and they came to a meeting. One of the two youth workers involved says:

'But I think the main point here is: what are you doing? What do you want to do to each other and are you aware of the consequences? And to work around that.'

The boys reach an agreement and say that they will leave each other alone.

Other youth workers we spoke to said they do not always involve the police, or not normally, but they do talk to young people if they hear about such incidents. The reason for not involving police is usually that they don't want to damage the relationship of trust with the young people: they don't want to be known as a 'snitch'.

7.5 Integrated approach

Lastly, we came across examples where partners in the chain coordinate their actions and work together to combat violence with an online component. This is done, for example, in four municipalities where multiple youth groups were actively committing and filming violence, against each other and against passers-by. How the chain partners work together is described in the box below.

Example of integrated approach to police and municipal collaboration
Various gangs of youths are active in several town centres, where they can move around quickly on fat bikes and e-bikes. Sometimes they are rival gangs, although the same youths can be seen in different groups, which makes the gangs seem fluid. They film forced apologies where the victims are compelled to say 'Sorry, King'. The community police youth operations expert says that if they do not comply, they will be beaten up. Knives make an appearance, as does pepper spray.
Police and municipalities are receiving increasing reports of the gangs of youths assaulting bystanders (and filming and sharing the assaults). The police respondent says that the 'community call for action' was an important reason for the mayor's decision to act, after initially holding back. The municipalities sent letters to parents whose children had been seen at sites of problem behaviour, and an arms amnesty with an information meeting was organised. Enabling a cease-and-desist order for possession of weapons under a General Municipal Ordnance is also being considered.
Together, the police and the Public Prosecution Service are seeking to make as many cases as possible 'provable' when they become aware of them or when a report is filed. This phenomenon is also discussed in briefings, with the idea of alerting colleagues and encouraging them to look into it. The operations expert regularly does a shift alongside them as an informal way of passing on background information.
At the time of our conversation, the parties were working with the municipalities where these groups are active on a covenant for a person- and group-oriented approach. They prefer to see a single covenant because these youths are extremely mobile and can cross municipal boundaries.

This example concerns a problem that is tackled at municipal level. Although the municipality is not always involved, we did come across such involvement on a couple of occasions. In those cases, the decision was to take a group approach, as in the above example where the municipality played a steering role. Where a group approach has already been agreed, it can also be deployed for groups committing violence with an online component. In this context, a local authority adviser on online street culture tells us about mediation support from the municipality in multiple cases, where the perpetrator and the victim (and family) were brought together to talk things out. In his experience this is a powerful tool that can achieve great successes.
Another example of a group approach under the direction of a municipality is described in the box below.

Examples of group approach under municipal direction

We speak to those involved from the municipality, the police (community support officer) and youth workers about a gang that is committing violence against passengers on public transport in a major city, which they film and post online. This gang has been prioritised by the municipality and the police and a joint approach has been agreed. The partners hold weekly meetings to discuss actions aimed, for example, at disrupting the gang, contacting the youths and their parents and deploying youth workers on public transport.

Once the police and municipality have identified the youths, their parents receive a letter stating that their children are on the their radar and have been prioritised. A discussion is held with the parents and they talk to the child about it. Individual problems are also targeted and some of the youths receive educational or employment coaching. This approach does not focus specifically on the online component. A 'standard' group approach was chosen.

This approach was scaled down after six months because the youths were rarely seen as a gang on public transport and had ceased to cause a nuisance. Those involved from the municipality and police think that actively involving the parents and getting them on side was an important factor in this success.

Another instrument discussed in the conversations is the imposition of a safety zone injunction. One respondent from a medium-sized municipality says that the forced apology problem prompted this in his own municipality. Although it did not work at the time, the respondent still thinks it offers possibilities. It can be imposed by the mayor where there is a serious fear of public disorder. This requires collaboration with the police, to enable timely delivery of the administrative report. Several mayors have since tried to impose a digital safety zone injunction, but these were reversed by the court.

We have also heard of several examples of chain partners collaborating on a smaller scale. One example of integrated follow-up on a smaller scale is the VIOS dialogue[42] at a secondary school in Arnhem. This dialogue involves discussion between the community police officer, youth worker, school care coordinator, pedagogical caretaker and coordinator of school safety case studies, including violence with an online component.

Although VIOS provides a structure for integrated collaboration from the school, this can also take place in other ways. For example, one youth worker tells us about collaboration with school on measures taken against youths involved in fights:

> *'The films are used not just to find the ones doing the beating, but also those doing the filming. Both are punished: for instance a suspension, a week's detention, a talk with their parents, an entry on their school record, with a second entry leading to stronger measures. If something else happens, the youth must unfortunately move to another school or to special education. Although we do try to consider the background and situation of these youths, we have to set boundaries.' (Youth worker)*

In Case A above, where a forced apology was filmed and shared, the community police officer called on the youth prevention team). In addition to judicial follow-up by the police,

42 VIOS stands for Safety In and Around Schools.

the youth prevention worker looks at a possible request for help from the youth. After talks with him show that he has aggression management problems, he receives the relevant support.
We see in examples where partners involved in youth and safety already know and collaborate with each other that this extends to their work on violence with an online component.

7.6 Possible courses of action

Participants in the expert session were asked about possibilities for follow-up and reactions to perpetrators. One of the things mentioned by a number of participants was more frequent deployment of the online safety zone injunction and other options to deal with online disturbances.[43] Although municipalities are in desperate need of instruments, they have come up against uncertainties relating to powers and legal possibilities.[44] While an online safety zone injunction is regarded as an effective intervention, participants point out that it must form part of a larger package of interventions. Also mentioned were possibilities for imposing an online contact injunction, whether combined with a physical restraining order or otherwise. One participant knew of an example of a boy who had been punished for violating an online injunction and stressed the importance of effective communication with the Public Prosecution Service for this to succeed.

In addition to online possibilities, the participants were also enthusiastic about more traditional (preventive) interventions, such as linking perpetrators with role models. One participant referred to the 'Credible messengers' project in Amsterdam, a network of practical experts, criminologists, psychologists and professionals that young people can call on. Other participants anticipated the benefits of using role models who are close to the youths in their everyday life, such as family members or youth workers.[45]
Because many of the perpetrators have problems in multiple areas and they are often still young or even very young, participants also stressed the importance of a care process in combination with repressive interventions. The background should be taken into consideration and any behavioural disorders must be diagnosed.
Lastly, the participants shared the need to have more insight into interventions that have proved effective for vulnerable youths.

43 See, for example, the fact sheet from NH Samen Veilig (2022) with a possible course of action for online disturbances: Interventiekaart online orde NHSV.pdf (https://vng.nl/sites/default/files/2022-02/Interventie-kaart%20online%20orde%20NHSV.pdf). Or the Phenomenon Map of online-driven public disorder from the Central Netherlands Security Coalition (2024): Fenomeenkaart-OAOV.pdf (https://hetccv.nl/app/up-loads/2024/06/Fenomeenkaart-OAOV.pdf).
44 See also the roundtable report from the VNG (11 April 2023) on this: Online Safety Zone Injunction (https://vng.nl/sites/default/files/2023-04/20230406-brief-parlement-online-gebiedsverbod.pdf).
45 For example, the municipality of Arnhem uses intensive counselling for vulnerable young people to prevent them moving towards or descending into crime. This counselling is provided by youth workers in the municipality.

7.7 Role of online platforms

In the interviews and the cases analysed, it appears that online platforms that are used to share images played barely any role in the strategy for dealing with this. Professionals would like to see accounts and messages being taken down more quickly and more often. Furthermore, it is easy for users to set up a new account and/or to redistribute images. Experience has shown that it is not a simple thing to take down messages, because not all platforms are always willing to cooperate. In particular, respondents describe collaboration with Snapchat and Telegram as difficult.

7.8 Summary

In this chapter we have looked at the methods of follow-up when an incident of violence with an online component is discovered. There are different forms of follow-up, ranging from a verbal warning and mediation to criminal prosecution. Participants in the expert session felt that further development and exploration of online interventions would be useful. They also stressed the importance of more traditional prevention.

8. Conclusion and recommendations

8.1 Introduction

This study focuses on hybrid street violence among young people. It concerns perpetrators and victims of violence with both an offline and an online component. Examples include abuse, threats and extortion, which are filmed and then shared on social media, or conflicts that start online and end in a physical confrontation. Previous research shows that serious violence increasingly has an online component and that young people are increasingly becoming victims of online threats and intimidation (CBS, 2023; Van den Broek & Roks 2023), although the actual extent is unknown. Although this type of crime can have a major impact on victims, it is by no means always reported to the police or other partners in the chain.
The purpose of the present exploratory study is twofold. The aim is on the one hand to gain more insight into the nature of the phenomenon and on the other hand to examine what the current approach is and what options exist for the police and chain partners to improve or further develop the approach. The central research question in this study is:

What is the nature of hybrid street violence among young people and what courses of action are open to the police and chain partners to combat it?

To answer the research question, exploratory, qualitative empirical research was conducted in the period from May 2023 to April 2024. The majority of the fieldwork consisted of interviews with police officers (n = 16), other experts and professionals (n = 32) and mothers and young people (n = 15). In addition, online observations of drill rap groups took place and respondents' images of hybrid street violence among young people were viewed. The findings of the study were assessed in an expert session with fifteen professionals, in which they jointly examined possible ways of improving the approach.

8.2 Nature of hybrid street violence

Below we answer the research questions relating to the nature of the phenomenon.

8.2.1 *Manifestations of hybrid street violence*

In our research we found different manifestations of hybrid street violence. Unlike previous taxonomies (Leukfeldt et al., 2013; Spithoven, 2020), this is not a single crime in which

ICT is used as a means, but a chain ('track') of related violent incidents at multiple times with both online and offline components. These tracks vary in terms of duration, the number of offline and online offence times and locations, severity and the number of perpetrators and victims involved. In line with previous research, the study shows a continuum and continuous influence (Van den Broek & Roks, 2023; Van 't Hoff-de Goede & Janssen, 2024). Figure 8.1 shows an example of a hybrid street violence track.

In its simplest form, it involves a physical incident preceded or followed by an online incident. The number of variants is not finite, however, and may involve multiple consecutive and related online and offline incidents. The period in which this takes place is also unlimited. Threats may continue online for months and eventually escalate into physical violence. Occasionally, conflicts can also flare up over a longer period or start with a physical incident, followed by online threats and subsequently another physical incident. Another characteristic is that part of the 'track' often takes place secretly and in a closed online environment.

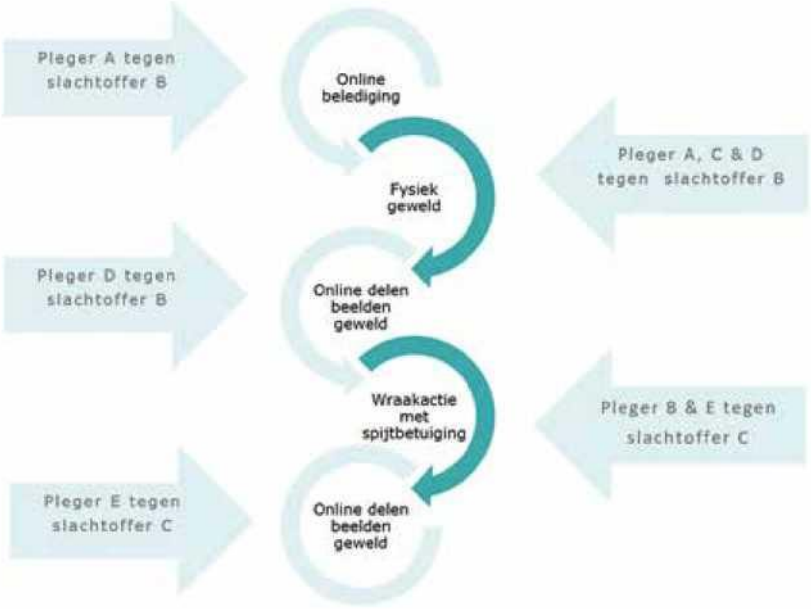

Figure 8.1 Example of a hybrid street violence track.

The empirical findings of this study show that threats and/or abuse are often filmed, after which the images are distributed. Another variant involves threatening to distribute the images in order to blackmail the victim. The severity can range across the entire spectrum of violence, from threats to deadly violence.

Another characteristic is the existence of diffuse victimhood. A perpetrator may be a victim at another time and vice versa. In our study we came across several examples of victims who later became (or wanted to become) perpetrators out of revenge for a previous violent

incident. Sometimes it is only after a violent incident has occurred that it becomes clear who is the perpetrator and who is the victim. This is the case when young people agree to fight out a conflict physically and it is only possible to label one the perpetrator and the other the victim after it has been resolved (sometimes with fatal consequences). The fear of becoming a victim can also be a reason for young people to join perpetrators and participate in, for example, group abuse.

In addition to diffuse perpetratorhood, there may be transferred perpetratorhood. Perpetrators who are not initially involved in the conflict may take it over or join in. We came across an example of the first variant in which a victim was abused and the images were shared online; an unknown person made an offer to this victim to take over the conflict and take revenge (which also enabled him to receive the status-enhancing 'credits'). We have come across examples of the second variant where victims were exposed online as a snitch, for which they were physically punished by others.

8.2.2 *Perpetrators and victims*

Little is known about the background characteristics of young people involved in hybrid street violence. The 2022 Youth Crime Monitor, based on recorded data for minors and young adults suspected of crimes in the broad sense, shows that boys are more often involved in youth crime than girls, more often live in one of the large cities and more often come from a family with a low socioeconomic status (Kessels, 2023). Respondents who have experience with hybrid street violence see many young people who come from a disadvantaged background, grow up in poverty and have to contend with problems in their home situation. They say the young people involved are usually sensitive to peer pressure and want to prove themselves. Professionals also see – or, in the absence of testing, suspect – that these are often people who can be classified as having mild intellectual disabilities (MIDs) and who have one or more behavioural disorders. These characteristics are consistent with previously identified risk factors (Beerthuizen et al., 2019), although the findings of our study should be seen as indicative. To a lesser extent, we also encountered perpetrators and victims of hybrid street violence (in the cases and interviews) whose profile appears different from that outlined above, at least to the extent that they have a better socioeconomic situation.

When it comes specifically to victimhood, it appears that perpetrators deliberately look for an easy target: young people whom they see as weaker than themselves and who are often younger. Young people can also become victims by association because they are seen as belonging to a particular group or person. As a result, they may become victims of violence as a result of an ongoing conflict. Status can afford protection against victimisation, but it can also provoke new conflicts. We mentioned earlier that young people also switch between roles as perpetrators and victims and that victimhood can lead to perpetratorhood.

Although this study indicates that hybrid street violence mostly involves boys, respondents are finding that girls are increasingly becoming involved in it. Often both the perpetrators and victims are girls, but we have also encountered mixed groups. Girls may also play a role in 'luring' a boy to a certain location, after which he is subjected to humiliation or

abuse. Finally, girls are victims of sexual exposure, which is used as a means of humiliating a rival group or a person with whom there is a conflict (e.g. a brother or cousin).
When it comes to the impact on victims, the online component means that victims are repeatedly victimised as a result of the violent incident because they are confronted with it again and again by others who have seen the images. The images can also result in new victims of physical violence. The types of impact found are behavioural changes, continuous feelings of insecurity and anger. The incident can also have an impact on the other members of the family. For example, we came across an example where parents had installed cameras at the front of the house due to feelings of insecurity and another family moved to another area. On the basis of the findings, we cannot make any statements about the longer-term effects of traumatic experiences on victims.

8.2.3 *Criminogenic factors*

Various factors have been identified that play a role in the occurrence of hybrid street violence among young people. These are shown schematically in Figure 8.3. These factors are largely consistent with the previously mentioned research into risk factors for committing violence or for involvement in drug crime (Beerthuizen et al., 2019; Peeck et al., 2021; Servaas et al., 2021; De Boer et al., 2022). The possibilities of online platforms play an additional facilitating role. Also in line with previous research, the need for status or 'street credibility' is an important reason for young people to present themselves with violence or violent messages both offline and online (Moors et al., 2019; Van den Broek & Roks, 2023; Wolsink & Ferwerda, 2024). Previous research also shows that an online community that encourages violence can have an influence (Moors et al., 2019). In our study, we came across examples in which the pressure from the online community can make young people feel that they 'have to' show that they will not let others walk all over them or that they want to 'score credits' in their online and offline community. It appears to be difficult for young people to escape the spiral of violence once they are in it, including online.

Table 8.1 Overview of criminogenic factors

Environment/family	Individual	Facilitating
Growing up in poverty Problems at home Anti-snitching culture Existence of street culture Existence of rival groups Encouragement from online community	Behavioural problems Need for status Feeling of insecurity Susceptibility to peer pressure	Possibilities of online platforms

The study also shows that the anti-snitching culture is widespread among young people, which means they are less likely to report incidents. Victims fear that reporting will only make the situation worse for them and we also came across examples where this was the case. At the same time, online images of violence can lead to feelings of insecurity among young people in general, making them feel they need to protect themselves. This has also emerged from recent research into knives and young people (Wolsink & Ferwerda, 2024).
Of a very different nature is the facilitating role of the online platforms used to share images

and expose victims. Social media platforms make it easy to quickly share images with large numbers of followers in order to see where someone is going and make threats online.

8.3 Approach

As well as exploring the phenomenon, this study examined the current approach to hybrid street violence. In general, tackling cybercrime and digitalised crime is still a focal point of the core teams (Terpstra et al., 2019; Kort & Spithoven, 2021). There are also many police initiatives in the context of digital capability and the digital transformation (Broekhuizen et al., 2022). These initiatives are aimed at increasing employees' digital skills. They often focus on tackling property crimes with an online component, but less so on street violence (Boelens & Landman, 2021; Schiks et al., 2022).

Hybrid street violence also receives little attention. The violence often takes place outside the view of adults, meaning that parents, police and other chain partners are often unaware of it. Online violence often takes place in closed environments, making it difficult to see.

The combination of digital and youth expertise to combat hybrid street violence is still in its infancy. Digital initiatives within community policing are often aimed at identifying cybercrime or using digital resources for common crimes (Broekhuizen et al., 2022). Initiatives that do actually combine the digital and youth domains are usually aimed at reaching young people[46] online in general or at combating cybercrime among young people.[47]

There is still much progress to be made in tackling hybrid street violence. Reporting an incident is often the starting point for further investigation, but many incidents are not reported and it is unlikely that the police will discover them. The situation is that in most cases there is no response from the police or partners in the chain, simply because the violent crimes remain under the radar.

If an incident does become known, it is because other parties have reported it (mainly youth workers, young people and school staff or due to the police's own online efforts). When an incident is followed up, the approach appears to be no different or more specific than that adopted for other violent incidents among young people.

Since violent incidents often become known to the police through professionals who are close to young people or through other young people (other than the victims themselves), maintaining a good network with chain partners and with young people themselves (and their parents) is important in order to have visibility on violent incidents. It was not found that contact with young people necessarily needed to take place digitally, but rather that young people need a familiar person they can turn to, such as their youth support or community police officer, regardless of the online or offline form.

The study also shows that few hybrid violent crimes are discovered through online efforts by the police themselves. Actual examples where crimes were discovered in this way involved teams that invest in such detection methods, prioritise them locally and free up

46 For example, through online gaming, an online consultation with a youth support officer or a so-called challenge.
47 See, for example, the teaching and educational materials developed by the police on 'Teaching and educational materials for cybercrime' (https://www.politie.nl/onderwerpen/les--en-educatiematerialen-cybercrime.html).

capacity for them.
A major barrier that professionals encounter in practice concerns legal restrictions on both online surveillance and the sharing of signals with chain partners. In addition, it is found that parents often know little about their child's online world and activities, so they do not notice what their child is involved in.
Looking at the way in which known incidents are followed up, the police adopt three distinct approaches: talking to the perpetrators (verbal warnings), a group approach in collaboration with the municipality and other chain partners, and carrying out investigative activities. Although the latter is not yet common, a criminal case can be established on the basis of filmed images and online background information (for example about the causes of a conflict). Police respondents do nevertheless find it difficult to prosecute cases under criminal law and pursue them to a conclusion. It is also difficult to protect victims against possible reprisals after an incident is reported.
In addition to criminal prosecution, other interventions are also possible, such as restorative dialogue or mediation. We came across examples of this in cases of filmed and shared apologies and humiliation. This restorative dialogue took place through youth work organisations and/or municipalities, and were deemed a success by those involved. There are also examples of integrated follow-up that are considered to be a success by those involved. The municipality often has a coordinating role in a group approach and prioritises a group of young people, together with the police and the Public Prosecution Service. On a smaller scale, an integrated approach can take place around signalling meetings in schools, in which the key players are schools' care coordinators, pedagogical caretakers, youth support or community police officers and youth prevention team employees. Good cooperation between partners at local level is crucial for both monitoring and identifying incidents.

8.4 Recommendations

The study shows that hybrid street violence can take serious forms, but that tackling it is complex. It concerns violence that takes place in a chain with characteristics such as a longer time span with multiple offences at different times and diffuse perpetratorhood and victimhood. Furthermore, given the low propensity to report incidents and the fact that they take place in closed online environments, additional effort is required to comprehensively combat this type of violence.
Based on the findings, we have formulated recommendations for various target groups that can contribute to the approach. We have focused on government bodies. Our recommendations are of a preventive or repressive nature and aimed at both perpetrators and victims.

8.4.1 *Police strategy and policy*

The following recommendations are intended for police strategists and policymakers. In the first place, this would include the national representative responsible for the community policing portfolio.

Approach based on a track rather than an incident
Approaching a violent incident as part of a longer violence track with offline and online components requires a different approach within the police on many fronts. For Intake & Service staff, this involves, for example, asking specific questions about previous offline and online incidents when a report is received and understanding the entire track before proceeding with the investigation. It is also useful to continuously record signals or other information associated with a track in the same place, making it clear that different separate incidents belong together.

Positioning and using safety and welfare partners to stop a track Hybrid street violence, consisting of a track of violence, is a social problem where not all behaviour is punishable or where a criminal law intervention is not always the most appropriate. The police therefore rely heavily on their local safety and welfare partners, both for information to gain a clearer picture of a track and to determine the most useful intervention strategy to stop it. This involves a customised approach at local level, with the municipality being the most logical coordinator.

More priority for young people and violence
In recent years, the focus of the police and chain partners when it comes to young people has often been on limiting so-called young recruits. This refers to young people, often from vulnerable neighbourhoods, who are at risk of moving into organised crime. However, in the case of hybrid street violence there is not always a link with organised crime. Given their severity and impact, these incidents nevertheless merit more attention and priority. The additional focus is also necessary because there is a low willingness to report incidents. Without additional effort, the violence will remain largely under the radar.

Close connection between youth support officers and digital expertise
In order to gain sufficient insight into hybrid street violence and the context in which it takes place, close cooperation between youth support officers and employees with specialist digital expertise is crucial. This forms the basis for bringing together and interpreting offline and online information in preparation for subsequent intervention. We came across several examples of this in our study, but many youth support officers still receive little digital or specialist support. On the other hand, a lot of digital expertise in core teams is not focused on young people (whether or not violence is involved). Since young people live in a world that largely exists online, with all the attendant risks, specialist knowledge is required to gain sufficient understanding of it and combine this with offline knowledge and signals.

8.4.2 *Intelligence organisation*

The actual extent of hybrid street violence is unknown. Although, as stated earlier, it involves multiple related incidents whereas police records concern individual incidents, it would be possible to gain more insight into this phenomenon than is currently the case. This would make it possible to monitor at least the incidents that are reported to the police and to identify developments. It would also help implementation professionals to gain a better

understanding of more general developments in youth culture that could impact incidents of violence or other issues.

Table 8.2 Overview of recommendations for the intelligence organisation

Recommendation	Who for	How
Exploring the possibility of records based on tracks	Intelligence organisation	To be examined
When violent incidents are recorded, establishing whether there is an online component.	Intelligence organisation	Creating a project code that can be linked to an incident record. Actively bringing the incident to the attention of the core teams (possibly focusing specifically on the youth support officers and online community police officers).
Gathering and disseminating more knowledge of the phenomenon of hybrid street violence and other relevant trends in youth culture.	Police officers who deal or may have to deal with young people, such as emergency response workers, community youth support officers, intake & service staff	Drawing up an information sheet. Setting up a periodic youth panel.

8.4.3 *Core police teams*

As previously concluded, the police are devoting a lot of attention to increasing the digital knowledge and skills of their employees (so-called digital proficiency), but there is still much to be done to combat hybrid street violence among young people. The role of the police is also reflected in the comprehensive recommendations in section 8.3.4.

Organising knowledge and skills at local level

Although some police professionals have extensive knowledge of hybrid street violence, it is still a relatively new and/or unknown phenomenon for many professionals in community policing. Previous research shows that many community police officers keep their distance from digitalisation (Kort & Spithoven, 2021; Terpstra et al., 2021), so additional effort is needed to focus more attention on crime with an online component.

Since developments in youth culture can occur in rapid succession and it is difficult for police officers to maintain up-to-date knowledge in all fields, products could be developed to support them in this. In order to gain greater understanding of the nature and context of the phenomenon, it is advisable, for example, to enquire about a possible online component when processing the report or during questioning and to consider the context and the chain in which the violent incident took place. For example, were there any previous online conflicts with the perpetrator and were they preceded by any incidents? Knowledge about the fear of being seen as a snitch could also contribute to the way the victim is treated. The findings from this study could provide an initial impetus in this regard. Including these types of questions in a handy checklist for reports and questioning on violent incidents among young people could help provide more context and insight into the issues (and help improve the recording of incidents).

In practice, there may also be reticence and unfamiliarity when it comes to the potential of online surveillance. The experiences of a promising example, such as the 'digihaven' initiative of the Delfshaven core team, could be used to develop national instruments and guidelines for police officers in the core teams.
Table 8.3 shows the recommendations aimed at improving knowledge and skills by developing practical tools.

Table 8.3 Overview of recommendations for core police teams

Recommendation	Who for	How
Providing information and support for reports and questioning.	Intake & Service, community and youth support officers, detectives.	Checklist/guidelines for reporting and questioning following violent incidents.
Mapping the context to identify all parties involved and previous offences.	Employees who follow up on a violent incident in collaboration with intelligence personnel.	Analysis of known information (if possible on an integrated basis).
General knowledge and training on the possibilities of online surveillance.	Emergency assistance, community and youth support officers.	Checklist/guidelines for online surveillance after a violent incident among young people. On-the-job training and support for employees in the workplace. Making regional working methods and successful experiences available nationally.
Gathering more specialist knowledge and skills relating to the possibilities of online surveillance.	Designated digital employees (such as online community police officers, key task holders, OSA digital). Basic knowledge for youth and community police officers.	Developing a national legal framework (in collaboration with the Public Prosecution Service). Guidelines/training method. Facilitating necessary software and hardware.

When increasing digital knowledge and skills among community policing personnel, it is advisable to take into account overall lessons from previous studies of digital projects in community policing (Broekhuizen et al., 2022):

- Maintain digital expertise in the workplace, both by training professionals and by providing practical support on digital matters.
- Make the added value visible in the workplace.
- Take a customised approach to match the knowledge level and needs of the employees.
- Maintain continuous digital expertise and keep it updated.

Building relationships with young people

Although young people are reluctant to tell the police about their own victimisation, the study shows that they are sometimes willing to talk about other victims. Building relationships with young people is therefore a crucial factor in identifying hybrid street violence.
The findings of this study show that what matters most is that a young person knows a police officer and that this person is approachable and accessible. Offline and online activities can then complement each other. For example, youth support officers who received reports of hybrid street violence made regular visits to schools and the wider neighbourhood. An example of easy online accessibility that we came across concerned a youth support officer who could be contacted on WhatsApp and shared that in her Instagram

profile.
In relation to hybrid street violence, it appears that the various online police activities and projects can make a positive contribution to awareness and approachability, particularly when they are used in a targeted way to build or improve contacts, including at local level. Promising examples that we came across include the targeted use of online gaming with the youth support officer at school or in a neighbourhood square frequented by many young people. It appears useful to invest additionally in building relationships with young people and chain partners (such as youth workers) in neighbourhoods where young people are unlikely to go to the police.
We have recorded the recommendations on this point in Table 8.4.

Table 8.4 Overview of recommendations on building relationships with young people

Recommendation	Who for	How
Investing in both physical and online contact with young people.	Youth support and community police officers.	Being physically present in places frequented by young people (school, neighbourhood locations).
Being approachable and accessible.	Youth support and community police officers.	Online activities on platforms that are popular among young people and are also accessible here.
Connecting online and offline activities.	Youth support and community police officers.	Linking initiatives, such as online gaming in the neighbourhood or at school.
Local key figures for young people, such as youth workers.	Youth support and community police officers.	Within regular work activities.

8.4.4 *Local chain partners*

Information position and collaboration
In addition to focusing on more reporting by young people who are aware of a violent crime, local chain partners are important suppliers of signals and information about hybrid street violence that would otherwise not reach the police. In our study we came across a number of promising collaborations. Close collaboration at local level between the police, municipalities, schools, youth work organisations and – if available – youth prevention teams and school safety practitioners ensures that signals are made known more quickly and that joint intervention can take place. Programmes such as Preventie met Gezag[48] can serve as a catalyst to strengthen local collaboration aimed at combating hybrid street violence.

48 This is a broad approach financed by the Ministry of Justice and Security to tackle organised and subversive youth crime in 20 municipalities.

Table 8.5 Overview of recommendations for chain partners [47]

Recommendation	Who for	How
Strengthening local collaboration and joint knowledge position.	Police, municipality, schools, youth workers, youth prevention teams etc.	Positioning the municipality as the coordinator, including as a knowledge/expertise point.[49] Strengthening local collaboration, e.g. in municipal youth policy, by means of a group approach or through school partnerships (such as VIOS (Safety In and Around Schools)).
Building a basic knowledge position.	Employees of organisations frequented by young people, such as schools, sports clubs, youth centres.	Developing an information sheet and guidelines on responding to incidents.

Prevention

Local chain partners can make an important contribution in the field of prevention. In general, the recommendations on this point are more effective when they are implemented jointly. The following recommendations focus on information, support, training and accessible reporting points for both parents and young people.

Table 8.6 Overview of prevention recommendations

Recommendation	Who for	How
Jointly organising information for parents and young people at local level.	Local chain partners, such as the municipality, police, municipal health services, youth prevention team, youth work organisations.	Information meetings, tailored to the local situation and issues.
Organising/facilitating parenting support for parents.	Municipalities	Accessible support programme for parents whose child is a perpetrator and/or victim.
Setting up an information point for parents.	Municipalities	Embedding in existing structures, for example in social neighbourhood teams
Making young people more resilient to peer pressure.	Under the supervision of the municipality, this can take place at school, in a youth work setting or through the social neighbourhood team.	Use of evidence-based interventions for young people.[48]
Bringing easily accessible reporting points to the attention of young people.	Local chain partners, such as the municipality, police, municipal health services, youth prevention team, youth work organisation.	Through the channels made available by chain partners.

In addition, evidence-based interventions focused on reducing risk factors or strengthening protective factors are useful. According to the – indicative – empirical findings, these largely correspond to risk factors for high-impact crimes and drug crime. Interventions that have already been developed and/or implemented for other types of youth crime can therefore also contribute to combating hybrid street violence.

49 We recognise that municipal online monitoring is still very much under development. See the research by Bantema, Westers, Hoekstra, Herregodts & Munneke (2021) on this subject.

50 For effective elements, see: S. Kovacs, S. Noor, E. Cankor & J. Geerlings (2021). *Wat werkt bij het versterken van weerbaarheid van jongeren.* Movisie/Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

Follow-up

When it comes to following up a hybrid violent incident, promising examples of restorative dialogue between perpetrator(s) and victim(s) were found. Since the young people involved often continue to encounter each other often both physically and online, this seems a sensible way to halt further violence. In addition, in the case of a violent incident involving a young person, it is important to determine to what extent it is an isolated offence or a hybrid form of violence possibly involving multiple parties and whether there were previous offences.

Table 8.7 Overview of recommendations for follow-up of a violent incident

Recommendation	Who for	How
Investing in restorative dialogue between perpetrators and victims.	Youth work organisations or municipalities, HALT (in case of prosecution) and other parties (e.g. schools).	Drafting guidelines and sharing experiences.
Mapping the context to identify all those involved and any previous offences (and possibly initiating a group approach).	Municipality, in collaboration with police, Public Prosecution Service and other partners (such as youth work organisations).	Analysis of known information held by various chain partners. If possible, through existing structures and covenants, such as care homes and safety houses.[51]
Use of administrative instruments, such as safety zone injunctions.	Municipalities	In integrated consultation based on an administrative report.

8.4.5 *Central government*

Although violence with an online component is approached on a local basis, central government has an important role to play when it comes to developing tools and legal frameworks. Entering into agreements with social media platforms so that young people can stay safer online[52] is also a central government responsibility. The experience of professionals is that social media platforms do not always take sufficient responsibility in preventing the exposure and sharing of violence on their platforms. There are currently insufficient internationally binding agreements with such platforms to combat hybrid violence and protect young people against it. Finally, it would be useful to explore the possibilities for anonymous, easily accessible reporting channels for young people where they can share images of violence.

Table 8.8 Overview of recommendations for central government[51]

Recommendation	Who for	How
Developing a toolbox with information on the phenomenon and potential preventive and repressive measures.	Local chain partners, parents and young people.	Collecting and making available legal frameworks, guidelines and tools.[53]

51 For example, Amsterdam has the Care and Safety Action Centre, which invests in knowledge and advice concerning the online world of young people.

52 We note that there are increasing calls to restrict the use of social media by children. In the state of Florida, a law was recently enacted that bans children under the age of 14 from having social media accounts.

53 The Centre for Crime Prevention and Safety (CCV) has already developed a toolbox that sets out possible actions for

Development of guidelines for parents.	Parent(s)/guardians(s) of young people.	Drawing up guidelines for parents on how to recognise violence or signs of violence with an online component and what to do if they suspect that their child is a perpetrator or victim.
Drawing up a national legal framework for digital surveillance.	Police and municipality.	Drawing up a national legal framework for digital surveillance.
Developing legal agreements for online platforms concerning the removal of accounts and images.	Police and Public Prosecution Service.	Legal agreements on operation of platforms and enforcement.
Exploring anonymous reporting channels for young people.		

8.5 Reflection on the study

This study was initiated in response to an empirical phenomenon that at that time, mid-2022, occasionally appeared in the media, but about which little was known. Since it was a relatively unknown phenomenon, we used various search channels and the snowball method to find respondents who had experience of these issues and could provide more insight into them. In the search for respondents it became clear that the primary need was for more insight, but also that the related knowledge and experience was still very limited. Compared to other studies, many of the 'lines' put out to potential respondents came to nothing.
In order to understand the phenomenon in a broad sense, many different types of potential respondents were approached throughout the country: various police officials, professionals in schools, municipalities, youth workers, journalists, media experts etc. We were often referred on to others and gradually gained greater insight into the phenomenon. At the same time, the methodology used, which specifically sought respondents with experience in this area, has consequences in terms of representativeness. This is explicitly an exploratory study. More structured research is needed, for example into the scale of the problem and the characteristics of perpetrators and victims.

each actor. This could serve as an example or could be expanded. See: https:// hetccv.nl/themas/high-impact-crimes/wapens-en-jongeren-toolbox/interventiematrix-wapens-en-jongeren/.

When we ourselves observed online images of violence, we encountered the same problems as police professionals. Many images are shared in closed environments on social media. We were still able to see many images through other parties, but there was no systematic selection of these images. It should also be noted that in this study we confined ourselves to hybrid street violence, but that this type of violence does not occur in a vacuum. In our study we came across examples of victims who were also recruited online for criminal acts or perpetrators who were also involved in other forms of crime. In addition, hybrid street violence can be an extension of offline and/or online bullying (and some subforms of cyberbullying fall under the definition of violence).

When it came to determining the approach to hybrid street violence, this was also something of a quest. Many of the projects known to the study team from previous research did not address it and the potential respondents we approached who had digital roles, such as online community police officers, had so far had no experience of it or had other internal priorities. To understand better which interventions are actually effective, there is a need for a more structured evaluation of the various initiatives and pilots taking place regionally.

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K. van Wingerde, C. Hofman, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Erasmus School of Law, 2022.

117. ***Ooggetuigenidentificaties: het verband tussen subjectieve zekerheid en accuraatheid. Een experimentele studie en her-analyse van bestaand onderzoek volgens Nederlandse confrontatieprotocollen***

M. Sauerland, N. Tupper, A.G. van Amelsvoort, Maastricht University 2022

118. ***Het fenomeen vechtafspraken: vier jaar later. Onderzoek naar de profielen van de deelnemers, kenmerken van de vechtgroepen en - nieuwe ontwikkelingen ten aanzien van - het fenomeen vechtafspraken***

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119. ***Strip- en omkatfabrieken. Een fenomeenstudie als basis voor inzicht, awareness en aanpak***

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120. ***Bestuurlijke rapportage bij sluitingen van drugspanden. Onderzoek naar het succesvol opstellen, aanbieden en opvolgen van bestuurlijke rapportages in artikel 13b Opiumwet-zaken***

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121. ***Mismatch. Een verkennend fenomeenonderzoek naar het plegen van zedendelicten na contact via een datingsite of datingapp***

J. Wolsink, J. Kuppens, N. Brouwer, H. Ferwerda, Bureau Beke, Arnhem 2023

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I. van Duijneveldt, S. Nafie, M. van Tooren, A. Visser, Andersson Elffers Felix, 2024

125. ***Bloemen op de begraafplaats***

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