

Risks of Abstractness in Policing Honour-Based Violence

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7 RISKS OF ABSTRACTNESS IN POLICING HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE

Janine Janssen

7.1 THE TANK CASE

On the evening of Saturday, 28 February 1976, a number of people gathered in a living room at an address in Leiden at around 10.45. Four of them belonged to a Turkish family, called B. There were three other people of Turkish origin, as well as two autochthonous Dutch mechanics who had been tinkering with the cars belonging to the head of the household. In addition, there were two other people present. Later, two youths aged 19 and 15, equally of Turkish descent, dropped by. They hoped to get some money from their father who happened to be visiting the family, B. After a brief discussion, the two youths were given some money. When they were about to leave, the oldest youth suddenly drew a gun and shot a man called Memis Tank, another visitor. The mechanics later claimed that the shooter came across as cold-blooded and appeared to be totally unmoved while shooting the victim three times in the head at close range. Soon after the shooting, rumours were spreading, rumours that had been simmering among the Turkish community in Leiden, which even the local police had been aware of. It was alleged that the victim had raped the perpetrator's sister. Sometime before the murder, the woman in question had travelled to Turkey, as had her husband. Apart from raping the woman, Tank had also tried to murder her husband on two occasions. Furthermore, he was involved in a relationship with Mrs B, the occupant of the premises where Tank had so violently come to his end. Van Dijken and Nauta, who published an article about this case in 1978, found that “[d]espite the fact that the evidence, both technically [traces at the crime scene] and tactically [looking for punishable offences and suspects] was straightforward enough to solve the crime, the case brought a great deal of confusion about the motives of the crime” (Van Dijken & Nauta, 1978: 228).

As far as regular police operations were concerned, it was not a difficult case to solve even though the witnesses of the crime contradicted one another on a number of occasions. The mechanics who happened to be nearest to the crime scene were able to provide a clear account of what had transpired on that fateful evening. That said, over the years the police officers in charge have had quite a struggle establishing motives for a crime like the Tank

case. An important reason was that at the time, officers were generally unfamiliar with the cultural characteristics of immigrant communities. In some of those communities family members see it as their legitimate right, under certain circumstances, to carry out a killing to preserve the good name of the family. Dutch police have come a long way since the Tank murder. During the last two decades the Dutch police have developed a method to more effectively detect and deal with cases of violence related to family honour (Janssen, 2018a). However, they have also faced some major changes: a national police was formed, causing considerable reorganisations in the force, while at the same time relevant partner organisations within the social domain underwent a process of intense decentralisation. Terpstra et al. (2019) have described how the ‘abstract police’ as a concept refers to, often unintended, changes within the police organisation. In this chapter we deal with the following central question: what are the consequences of all the changes the police have to deal with in relation to honour-based violence in the Netherlands?

In the first paragraph we deal with the question of what actually constitutes family honour-based violence, while the second paragraph dwells on the kind of tools the Dutch police have at hand in dealing with this form of violence and helping vulnerable groups in society who suffer from violent honour codes.¹ The intriguing concept of the ‘abstract police’ raises interesting questions about the way the Dutch police are handling honour-based violence.

In the third paragraph three questions are addressed that may help to answer the central question: (1) What are the implications of the introduction of the abstract police when it comes to the relationship between the police and their (internal) partners in the field of safety and security in dealing with honour-based violence? (2) How does this new style of policing affect the relationship between the police, the general public and communities with honour codes? (3) What are the effects of the set-up of the abstract police who will be more focused on the volume of data sets than on qualitative data used to analyse honour-based violence? In the last chapter an answer to all these questions is formulated. In addition, the concept of the abstract police is also about core tasks and good quality police work. The last section of this contribution briefly addresses the (rhetorical) questions of whether or not handling honour-based violence should be regarded as an important task of the police force and how it affects the quality of police work.

1 The first two paragraphs are based on previous publications by the author on the approach of the Dutch national police force regarding dealing with honour-based violence (especially Janssen, 2018a, 2020a; LEC EGG, 2020).

7.2 WHAT IS HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE?

From Honour Killings to Honour-Based Violence

At first, the Tank case presented at the beginning of this chapter turned out to be quite a challenging task for the police to unravel. Although the officers in charge saw plenty of motives for the murder, it had many aspects that still made the case rather complicated; a considerable number of people involved were related to one another, and thereby aspects such as sexuality, violence and the family's reputation played an important part. In this case Van Dijken and Nauta (1978) used the term 'honour killings'.

In general, the term 'honour killing' should be interpreted as a purification or cleansing ritual that symbolises the removal of a stain and is supposed to be carried out ceremoniously and rather dramatically. But among experts there are a wide range of views on how honour killings exactly come about. Some experts argue that the ritual of honour killing must be carried out according to several clearly defined features: there must always be a physical violation of honour (e.g. loss of virginity), the physical stain must be publicly known, the person guilty of losing honour must be killed, the killer must be a relative or acting on behalf of the family and the revenge must be planned (Nauta & Werdmölder, 2002). Other experts claim that these criteria are not always met. Sometimes a girl may still be a virgin, but with extreme gossiping among family members and friends, the family may decide that the family honour has been violated. Furthermore, there are cases where one family member alleges that the family honour has been compromised and feels that action must be taken even though other family members or members of the community are unaware of the alleged violation. Then there are also cases where the victim survives a murder attack and the ritual is dispensed with. Often the perpetrator is not a relative. There are known cases where the girl's boyfriend may be the target of lethal violence committed by the girl's family. Then there are cases of unpremeditated murder where, for example, a husband kills his wife after catching her in flagrante delicto. This is referred to as a crime of passion (Van Eck, 2003a, 2003b). Over the years, it has become clear that not all cases involving the shaming of the family have a lethal outcome. Other forms of violence, for example, threats, assault and kidnapping, occur more frequently. Therefore, it is more appropriate to use the term 'honour-based violence' (Janssen, 2018a).

Many classical anthropological studies have focused on the function of honour in rural communities (Blok, 1974; Bourdieu, 1965; Campbell, 1964; Jamous, 1992). The general idea is that in those communities, located at the periphery of state influence, locals are highly independent (Peristiany, 1966). When trouble arises, the community concerned is unable to rely on the state and thus has to deal with the issues themselves. Marriage politics play an important role in the formation of local strategic networks of allies. Ideas of honour

related to sexuality facilitate these politics. Owing to migration, these ideas have also found their way into cities and local communities (Janssen, 2020a). As a consequence, in Western countries like the Netherlands, honour-based violence is often regarded as a ‘migrant problem’ on the assumption that honour violence does not occur in so-called native communities. However, in close-knit orthodox protestant Dutch communities (Bakker & Felten, 2012), there are examples of fierce forms of social control, social exclusion and repudiation related to concepts of reputation and the good name of families and the community involved. However, extreme forms of physical violence such as honour killings seldom occur in these communities. The beginning of the new millennium experienced a surge in the number of very serious cases of honour violence in the family sphere within immigrant communities. This attracted considerable attention in the media as well as in the political world (Van der Zee, 2006). Violence used by families in order to punish and/or straighten out dissident family members is regarded as a form of vigilantism that is unacceptable under the rule of law (Janssen, 2017).

The family honour can get sullied in many ways. As mentioned previously, in certain groups, sex outside marriage is not acceptable. If so, then issues such as choosing a partner, condemning extramarital sexuality and pregnancies, and problems when relationships break up become difficult. The key question in this instance is what makes a good partner? In certain groups women are required to be circumcised. Many communities regarded it as vitally important that females enter matrimony as virgins. In cases of rape, the unfortunate women themselves are blamed for losing their virginity. In order to do what is regarded as safeguarding a child’s decent upbringing, in particular girls, observance of family rules is seen as paramount. Choosing a partner is not entirely up to the individual concerned. In many families it is obligatory for the suitor to have the same religious and/or cultural background as the family he or she is marrying into. Extended families too may play an important role in arranging or even forcing marriages and can be a force to be reckoned with when the groom or bride or both wish(es) to get a divorce. Extended families may also be a source of influence in regard to the upbringing of the children of a divorced couple (Janssen, 2018a, 2018b, 2020a).

7.3 DUTCH POLICE AND HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE

Founding a Centre of Expertise for the Dutch National Police Force

The occurrence of some fatal cases of honour-based violence brought increased awareness in the Dutch political world. Initially, a pilot project was launched in the police regions of Haaglanden as well as in the rest of the province of South Holland. It was commissioned by the former minister of immigration and integration, Rita Verdonk. The project, which

was carried out between 2004 and 2006, had two objectives: (1) to ensure the best possible prevention of honour-related violence and protection of potential victims and (2) to provide insight into the backgrounds and the nature of honour-related cases confronting the police in practice. Encouraged by the outcome of the pilot project, Parliament urged the cabinet to implement a far more active approach towards honour-based violence. Subsequently, in 2006, a five-year interdepartmental policy programme was launched and was coordinated by the minister of immigration and integration policies. The programme was later assigned to the department of justice. The policy programme covered four areas: social prevention, protection and containment, criminal prosecution procedures and local administrative procedures. Based on the programme, three subprojects were set up: social prevention, protection and a criminal prosecution strategy. The aim of the projects was to improve the resilience of victims, risk communities and care workers; provide more alternatives to identify honour-related violence or/and threats thereof as well as ensure more effective support to people involved in honour-based violence and improve mutual cooperation and contact between relevant institutions and communities where these problems occur; provide adequate shelters for victims; develop proficient tools for police and judicial authorities to investigate and prosecute; generate insight into honour-related violence on the basis of sound and factual research; and establish a system for clearly defined registration of honour-related cases and integrated collaboration between the police, the Public Prosecution Service and other relevant bodies and government institutions (Janssen, 2018a; Loef & Van Aalst, 2012). The conclusions of this programme have since been integrated into the working methods applied by the organisations in question. In 2007, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports commissioned two national pilot projects for girls and young women who were subjected to honour-based violence (Brekelmans and De Groot, 2014; Van Dijke & Terpstra, 2010).² Protocols to establish collaboration between the police and these specialised shelters have been submitted. The police played a leading role in incorporating the criminal law process in the interdepartmental programme. Once the pilot project among the police had been completed, a start was made to set up the National Expertise Centre for Honour-Related Violence [*Landelijk Expertise Centrum Eer Gerelateerd Geweld*, LEC EGG] (Janssen, 2018a).

Method and Tasks of the National Centre of Expertise on Honour-Based Violence

The 'LEC EGG method', which was developed during the pilot period, is now the standard procedure employed by the Dutch police force in violent honour-based cases. The method is to be applied in three steps: the first step is to recognise cases that may involve honour

² See for more information on these shelters: www.sterkhuis.nl and www.fier.nl.

issues using so-called ‘red flags’. Some flags represent conflict triggers (provocation, threats and so on), others refer to (presumed) consequences of restoring honour (for instance, murder, homicide, suicide but also missing persons) and, yet others focus on social backgrounds and cultural codes that can be used to deduce the extent to which individuals are dependent on their community. These red flags are processed in an electronic search, which is run every day to browse through police information systems in various units of the National Police Force. This electronic dragnet brings to the surface cases in which honour is a suspected motive. The second step in the process is to complete a checklist, that is, a list of open questions used to gather essential information on the social backgrounds of those involved.³ On the basis of the information collected, the LEC EGG may engage an external expert, for instance an anthropologist, to get some clarity of the motive for the aggressive and/or threatening behaviour of the assailant(s). The third step involves the drafting of a plan of action (Janssen, 2018a). The method was not developed by external scientists and then parachuted in but was designed in collaboration with operational, scientific and, especially, anthropological and criminological expertise (Janssen, 2020c).

The LEC EGG was assigned five tasks: the core task is providing operational advice and support on the basis of the ‘LEC EGG method’. The ten local units of the Dutch National Police Force are responsible for the first two steps in the procedure: early recognition of possible honours by identifying red flags and gathering information with the use of the checklist. In each local unit, designated contact persons related to honour-related violence can turn to the LEC EGG for advice and support when faced with a complex case to be tackled. It is the LEC EGG’s job to analyse information, draw up a plan of action and engage experts. This does not mean that the LEC EGG centre will at a certain stage ‘take over’ the case in question. Its job is strictly to provide advice and support; in the process the units and/or institutions dealing with the case remain responsible for the further handling of the case. In addition, there are also external institutions who can call on the LEC EGG for advice and support, such as the Immigration and Naturalisation Service

3 The checklist consists of four parts, making use of the acronym AIDA: (1) Accepting a case; when a case comes in, it is essential to establish how the case was brought to the attention of the authorities and which professionals are involved in handling it. (2) Identifying the problem; what is the key issue in this particular case? Which problem has to be tackled? Is this a task for the police only? Or are other professionals involved? (3) In-depth analysis; in order to respond to a problem properly, a thorough analysis must be made, one that also delves into the socio-economic backgrounds of those involved. (4) Approach; understanding and analysing the problem should lead to an approach for handling it. What is the objective of an approach? Is assistance from LEC EGG required? Is mediation an option? And which safety and security aspects play a role? The use of the instrument is not limited to the police (Janssen, 2018a). Other professionals and interested parties outside the police can download the list via: www.politie.nl/themas/eergerelateerd-geweld-voor-professionals.html.

[*Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst (IND)*], the shelters for victims of honour violence, the Dutch Centre of forced Marriage and Abandonment [*Landelijk Knooppunt Huwelijksdwang en Achterlating*]⁴ and Safe at Home [*Veilig Thuis*].⁵ Besides assisting local units of the police in their operational work, the LEC EGG is also responsible for four additional tasks, namely carrying out scientific research into backgrounds of honour-based violence and working out methods for detecting and tackling this phenomenon; advising government authorities; developing material for training purposes (particularly for training programmes for police officers, judges, district attorneys and other professionals in the judicial chain); and constructing and maintaining networks among (migrant) communities, policymakers, scientists and other relevant partners (e.g. the judicial chain) (Janssen, 2018a).

Some Characteristics of Cases Dealt with by the National Centre of Expertise

In 2019 the LEC EGG handled 546 cases, the bulk of which (74%) it received from the local police forces. The following characteristics of the cases have been recorded: the category into which the police have placed a particular case (e.g. whether it concerns a threat or a missing person) and the ethnic background of the people involved. Most honour-related cases (32%) were categorised as threats. In some of these cases threatening statements have been made by the relevant suspect. However, this category also contains cases where people feel threatened because they fear repercussions from their social environment if a secret, such as a pregnancy or an extramarital affair, is revealed. In 2019, the LEC EGG handled 12 cases involving 12 fatal victims. Of the people who were killed, two were male and ten female. One of the victims was a minor. Three of these fatal cases took place prior to 2019. Most cases handled by the LEC EGG concern people with a Turkish, Moroccan or Syrian background. In 18% of the honour-related cases in 2019, more than one ethnic group was involved. About a fifth included people of autochthonous Dutch descent (LEC EGG, 2020).

4 The Dutch Centre of forced marriage and abandonment is set up in January 2015. Its main purpose is information, advice and support for professionals dealing with cases of forced marriage and abandonment. See: www.huwelijksdwangenachterlating.nl/about-us.

5 Since 1 January 2015, municipalities in the Netherlands have been responsible for various kinds of care. People who have problems themselves, or are concerned about someone else in their circle, can turn to the 'Veilig Thuis', i.e. safe at home, hotline and advisory service. These problems could involve issues related to child abuse, elder abuse, domestic violence and also honour-based violence. Veilig Thuis is a regional organisation and can be reached at a toll-free phone number. The police alarm number should be dialled if there is immediate danger. See: www.veiligthuis.nl.

7.4 THE ABSTRACT POLICE AND HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE

Characteristics of the Abstract Police

Terpstra et al. (2019) describe that the abstract police as a concept refers to – often unintended – changes within the police organisation. Both relations between police officers and those between officers and their chiefs have become less personal, less companionable and less direct. Furthermore, they have become increasingly formalised and governed by ‘systems’. In addition, as a result of the installation of the abstract police, there have been similar changes in the relations between the police and members of the public and between the police and (external) partner agencies: more at a distance, less personal and less direct. It is also expected that in future the abstract character of the police in the Netherlands will gain in importance and have far-reaching implications for the relations between members of the police services, for the volume of police work and for relations between the police and citizens and/or local communities. It will possibly also have an impact on dominant views on core tasks and answers to the question of what is ‘good’ policing, professionalism and leadership. The shift towards a more abstract police organisation is attributed to changing views on the police and police organisations: new public management (NPM), information-led policing and changing views on the core tasks of the police. Incidentally, the NPM leads to scale enlargement, centralisation of specialist units and a stronger reliance on IT. Intelligence-led policing assumes that police work should be based on systematic information and analysis of problems. This view of police work has resulted in the gathering and analysis of huge volumes of data, the proliferation of new specialists in the police focused on intelligence and crime analysis, and in more risk-focused perspectives in policing.

The Abstract Police and the Relationship Between the Police and (Internal) Partners

Organisational changes have had a serious impact on the way the LEC EGG maintains relationships with important partners inside and outside the police. The LEC EGG is a specialised centre that offers support to the local divisions of the Dutch police. Before the police reform took place the Dutch police was made up of 25 individual police forces. At that time the LEC EGG could rely on a contact person as a middleman/-woman in each local force. These contact persons play a vital role. They function as an umbilical cord between the centre and the local police divisions. In 2013, all 25 regional forces were merged into the National Police Force, and since then the LEC EGG only has to do with ten local contact persons, one in each local division. It is relatively easy to do the maths: the centre of expertise on honour-based violence have only half of their team of intermediaries to

rely on. In addition, the local divisions of the national force have grown into larger units (numbers of personnel and catchment area). That means that at present an increasing number of local police officers working on cases of honour-based violence have to rely on a mere ten LEC EGG contact persons. So the centralisation of the Dutch police has an immediate impact on the communication between the LEC EGG and local police divisions, which thoroughly reorganised the entire workforce.⁶ As a consequence, police officers who had been dealing with honour-based violence had moved to other divisions within the newly created National Police Force. There is the argument that it is a good thing to spread knowledge and experience on a complex phenomenon as honour-based violence through the organisation. However, the removal of officers with years of experience on honour-based violence means that newcomers, who are assigned to deal with this complex theme, need to be trained as well because they need to develop essential experience in this field, and this takes time. Over the years the LEC EGG has developed educational materials, set up training courses for the police academy and organised training sessions for the academy teachers. Unfortunately, the police academy was also rigorously reorganised, and as a result, the LEC EGG is regularly called on to bring newcomers in the field of honour crimes up to speed.⁷

It goes without saying that the police cannot be expected to handle a complex phenomenon like honour-based violence single-handedly. They are often dependent on members of the public who alert them of such violence taking place or where it is likely to take place. In addition, they rely on various organisations to deal with honour violence in a professional and responsible way. They are professional organisations in the judicial sphere such as the Public Prosecution Service, judges, lawyers, the prison service and probation services, professional organisations in the social domain (e.g. municipalities, institutions and professionals who offer care and refuge to victims and assist organisations such as the municipal health service and shelters, educational and medical institutions and non-governmental organisations (e.g. NGOs that work to help refugees and other migrants, and there are those that support the interests of ethnic minorities or religious groups)) (Janssen, 2018a).

This segment of the paragraph focuses on the social domain. While the Dutch police have been transformed into a more centralised organisation, institutions in the social domain underwent a process of decentralisation with the objective of saving costs and securing

6 www.politie.nl/binaries/content/assets/politie/jaarverslag/jshfg/jaarverslag-2013-nationale-politie.pdf.

7 See for an overview of the activities of LEC EGG their annual reports. They all contain an English summary and can be downloaded via the site of the Dutch national police: www.politie.nl/themas/eergerelateerd-geweld-voor-professionals.html#alinea-title-meer-informatie-over-het-lec-egg-en-haar-publicaties.

closer proximity to members of the public. In recent years the Netherlands have implemented three important decentralisation programmes that focused on social care and support. The programmes came into being through the Social Support Act (*Wet maatschappelijke ondersteuning, WMO*), the Youth Act (*Jeugdwet*) and the Participation Act (*Participatiewet*). The acts came into force on 1 January 2015. There are several reasons for this shift. The idea was that transferring responsibility for social support, youth services and support for labour participation (Participation Act) to local government would make it easier to offer early (non-intensive) help, potentially avoiding the need for more intensive – and more expensive – help. Furthermore, local authorities would be better equipped to take an integrated approach and facilitate cooperation between services involved and citizens. The underlying assumption is that local authorities are closer to members of the public than the central government is. Decentralisation would offer local authorities opportunities to tailor services to the needs of their communities (Janssen, 2016b). The decentralisation of these organisations also plays an important role with regard to the handling of violence within the family context.⁸ ‘Safe at Home’ [*Veilig Thuis*] is an institution created in line with the transformation in the social domain on a local level.⁹ Organisations in the social domain are essential partners for the local police forces dealing with various forms of violence committed in intimate relationships. In the process of intervening in acute and dangerous situations, collaboration with partners in the social domain is vital for the police in order to obtain information about (pending) cases where civilians might need help from the police. Once the situation in a particular case has been stabilised in the sense that there is no acute danger, matters may pass further through the judicial chain, while from that point assistance from an organisation in the social domain is required to get families back on their feet and prevent further damage by the experience of a violent episode (Vogtländer & Van Arum, 2016).

Although the LEC EGG did not conduct any research into the collaboration between the police and the social domain on a local level, the centre did make a number of relevant observations. Owing to fundamental changes in the population in the last few decades, violence in the name of honour is not likely to disappear from Dutch society soon. There has been an influx of migrants and asylum seekers in recent years from regions where honour codes and related rituals as depicted in overview 1 are normal practice (Janssen & Sanberg, 2017), and it is expected that honour violence will still continue in the relevant communities in the Netherlands. Over the years the number of cases reported by the local police forces and external partners to the LEC EGG remained fairly constant (450 and 550

8 See, e.g., www.movisie.nl/sites/movisie.nl/files/publication-attachment/Factor-Veiligheid-De-rol-van-het-sociaal-wijkteam-bij-huiselijk-geweld%20%5BMOV-3960708-1.1%5D.pdf.

9 See also note 6.

cases on a yearly basis). But during the time that the national police was set up, reorganisational changes within the police were put through and relevant partner organisations in the social domain underwent a process of decentralisation, the centre observed that the number of cases suspected to have been related to the honour motive declined considerably: in 2013, local divisions of the police reported 2,869 cases where offence of honour was the possible motive for violence. In 2014 there were 2,705 such cases, in 2015 2,595, in 2016 2,344 and in 2017 an absolute low was achieved: the local police divisions registered a mere 1,496 cases related to possible honour violence either committed or threatened.¹⁰ Needless to say, these figures do not necessarily suggest a causal relationship between organisational changes and the drop of the influx of cases on a local level while demand for support of the LEC EGG stayed the same. But one cannot help wondering whether the foundation of the abstract police has an unintended effect on honour-based violence.

The Abstract Police and the Relationship Between the Police and Members of the Public

It is not easy for civilians to have a comprehensive view of the implications that the changes previously discussed have on safety and security in the Netherlands. Although there are at present more channels for civilians to contact the police (online or by telephone), communication with police officers at the local precinct has become far more difficult owing to managerial measures related to cost-effectiveness. Over the years many precincts have been closed. Currently, members of the public who wish to speak to a police officer are required to make an appointment. At first glance, one would assume that as a result of the modifications of the police, civilians have a wider range of opportunities at hand to contact the police, but closer scrutiny suggests that the changes were carried out to help the police manage their own workload instead of optimising access for members of the public (Welch et al., 2004). This situation is particularly troublesome when it involves honour-based violence and may create for those concerned a threshold to contact the police. One should keep in mind that honour-based violence often takes place within an extended family setting, and in many cases intimate family secrets such as (forbidden) relationships and (sexual) behaviour is involved. It takes a great deal of courage for those involved to reach out for help. As in all forms of violence taking place within intimate relationships, people often feel ashamed and are bound by a strong sense of loyalty. Generally, in cultures all over the world, the general idea is that the family should be

10 See the annual reports of LEC EGG for the years 2014 till 2017 on: www.politie.nl/themas/eergerelateerd-geweld-voor-professionals.html#alinea-title-meer-informatie-over-het-lec-egg-en-haar-publicaties.

regarded as a safe haven. Whenever there have been occurrences considered as dirty laundry they have often been scrupulously kept within the family. To come forward and tell strangers, even individuals in a professional capacity, that we are living in fear of members of our own family, would be very painful for most of us. Then there is the hesitancy of people who are confronted with honour violence towards the police on the basis of negative past experiences with police officers in the country of origin (Janssen, 2015). There are also cases where civilians have had bad experiences with Dutch police officers, thus making them look for help elsewhere. Debates about racism and the police are not unfamiliar in Dutch society (Janssen, 2020b). One of the most important tips featuring on the checklist on honour-based violence, an important part of the method developed by LEC EGG, is: do not send people away when they come to talk about complex family matters like honour-based violence (Janssen, 2018a). ‘Make time’ is the urgent advice. Otherwise, the relevant contact and the opportunity to prevent an awful crime is lost forever.

To get a clear perspective of what sort of effect the organisational changes in the social domain have is not easy either. One of the results of the transformation in the social domain is low-threshold access to services through (community) social care teams (*Sociale wijk teams*).¹¹ The organisation and working methods of these teams vary (e.g. referral only or providing help to the client). Some of them provide an integrated service across all three areas covered by the Decentralisation Acts. In many municipalities people are unable to have access to these teams in person. One of the suggestions in evaluation studies of this transformation is that they should try to reach out more to the public (Den Draak & De Boer, 2014; Van Echtelt et al., 2019; Friele et al., 2018; Kromhout et al., 2020). In addition to decentralisation, an important part of this paradigm shift in the social domain is that people who are involved in honour violence are asked to use their own abilities and social networks before seeking help from local authorities. The mantra was that clients should rely on their ‘own strength’ (*eigen kracht*), even when it relates to violence in intimate relationships.¹² The evaluations mentioned previously and other studies (see e.g., Azghari et al., 2020; WRR, 2017)¹³ emphasise that appealing to clients to rely on their own capacities and networks is in some cases asking for the impossible and/or has its limits. There is only so much that people in trouble can do to take care of themselves using their own network. The LEC EGG is also interested in networks of people involved in honour conflict but in a different way. An important part of the checklist is to gather information about extended family members who are involved in the conflict and to make an analysis of possibilities within that social group that might be or might not be of help to the victim and the police

11 See also footnote 9.

12 www.movisie.nl/sites/movisie.nl/files/publication-attachment/Zelfregie-en-huiselijk-geweld%20%5BMOV-2453963-1.0%5D.pdf; see also: Janssen, 2016a.

13 See also: www.socialelvraagstukken.nl/participatiesamenleving-belemmert-integratie-gezinnen-met-niet-westerse-culturele-achtergrond.

in finding peaceful solutions. The checklist is aimed at collecting information on group dynamics and moral beliefs and attitudes of those involved (see also: Janssen, 2013). People who are fearful of violence that may be committed by a fellow family member want to prevent or stop that violent behaviour. Usually, they do not wish to cut the bonds with their family entirely. But this qualitative analysis should not be used as an excuse to let people in trouble sort out the problems for themselves. It should be emphasised that it a basis for collaboration between the police, partners and, first and foremost, the individuals who are involved. What the LEC EGG is aiming for is a tailor-made approach for families in need of help.

The Abstract Police and Qualitative Methodology

So far so good: the formation of the national police and the changes in the social domain were all presented as better ways of assisting the population at a lower price tag. Striving for tailor-made solutions by making an analysis of the social background and beliefs of people involved does not necessarily contradict the rhetoric of politicians and policymakers. But there is a contrast with the described qualitative approach of dealing with honour-based violence developed by the LEC EGG. Terpstra et al. (2019) note that an important feature of the abstract police is being reliant on information found on computer databases. But as far as honour-based violence is concerned, the computer, unfortunately, often ‘says no’, i.e. the popular catchphrase immortalised by Carol Beer, the receptionist from hell, portrayed by David Walliams in the TV show *Little Britain*. The kind of data that is looked for with the use of the checklist cannot be found in these systems, because of their qualitative nature and because historical data about the families involved – if registered – are laid down in the files of institutions in countries where the relevant families lived before migrating to the Netherlands. In the second paragraph of this chapter it is stated that networking is one of the core tasks of the LEC EGG. It goes without saying that it is indeed an important task because without a reliable network the centre would not be able to complete other tasks such as operational police work, academic research, developing policies and providing education and information. Insight into and access to national and international networks and communities that are faced with problems related to violence in the name of honour or that have some other kind of social and intellectual capital that can contribute to tackling this type of violence is essential for the LEC EGG to be able to do its work. More specifically, the LEC EGG is committed to maintaining a national and international network of relevant persons and groups that can play an important role in addressing violent cases involving honour (Janssen, 2012). In this day and age of intelligence-led policing the LEC EGG is often asked whether maintenance of networks is not very time consuming. Can that process be facilitated by making use of social media

and apps? And how can a distinction be made between ‘nice to know and need to know’? Does not that ‘old school’ work lead to a lot of superfluous information? This optimistic belief in the efficiency and possibilities of social technology seems to get merged with a lack of understanding of the complexities that occur in multi-ethnic societies: out there are supposed to be key figures that represent complete communities. Communities, however, are not static; they change all the time. The anthropologist Vertovec (2007a, 2007b), however, has coined the term ‘super-diversity’ to refer to ethnic and cultural backgrounds turning into progressively less accurate indications of the capacity to integrate since (descendants of) immigrants differ increasingly from one another in terms of education, work and income and in which groups mix with one another to an ever-increasing degree (see also: Janssen, 2020b). To keep up with the changes taking place in communities is hard work. The job is never ‘done’. It took years for the Dutch police to comprehend fully the context and backgrounds of complex cases such as the Tank case at the beginning of this chapter (see also Janssen, 2018a; Van der Zee, 2006). It would be very unfortunate not to safeguard that knowledge by not investing in contacts with different communities.

As explained, the abstract police is associated with an affinity with big data and quantitative analysis. Qualitative data is not perceived as efficient. Questions about the difference between ‘nice to know and need to know’ and efficient use of time are also often outed with regard to the use of the checklist. It can cost inexperienced police officers or partners outside the police hours to come up with all the information that is needed. It speaks for itself that all professionals deserve an instrument that is as user friendly as possible. But open and vital questions about group dynamics and interdependency in extended families cannot and will not be replaced by more ‘convenient’ multiple choice questions. The checklist is not meant to be used as a measuring instrument but as an instrument that helps police officers to come up with a good file that can serve as the basis for analysis by an expert (Janssen, 2018a). In other words, there is tension between maintaining the quality of the instrument and adapting it to serve the needs of more police officers and other professionals. Recently, the checklist has been slimmed down and made to fit into computer systems frequently used by the police. In addition, in educational programmes and in presentations of members of LEC EGG in support of local divisions, it is repetitively explained why these detailed questions in the checklist are extremely important and helpful. Without insight into the social fabric and dynamics of the extended families involved, it is simply impossible to oversee the extent of the conflict. Without that knowledge good police work is impossible. The LEC EGG is not opposed to the use of modern technology, but one should choose wisely and analyse possibilities and limits thoroughly.

7.5 FINALLY: IS THIS (GOOD) POLICE WORK?

The central question of this contribution is, what are the effects of the installation of the abstract police on dealing with honour-based violence in the Netherlands? In the previous paragraphs three consequences were discussed. The LEC EGG has established a guideline to assist the Dutch police in dealing with these cases. But while this method was established, the Dutch police and partner organisations in the social domain underwent important changes that may be related to the notion of 'abstract police'. Important features of the abstract police are less personal relations within the police force as well as between the police and members of the public. Furthermore, relying on systems and quantitative analysis of big data is seen as an important trademark of the abstract police. In this chapter we set out how organisational changes have had a serious impact on the way the LEC EGG maintains relationships with important partners inside and outside the police. The centralisation and reorganisation of the Dutch police force have an immediate impact on the LEC EGG in the sense that the contact lines between the centre and the local divisions have changed: there are fewer contact persons available, and experienced colleagues have been replaced. Meanwhile, relevant partner organisations in the social domain also experienced a process of reorganisation. While these organisational changes were implemented, the LEC EGG saw a drop in cases attributed to these changes. Then another important feature of the abstract police has become apparent, namely that contacts between the police and civilians have become more distant. In addition, there are serious concerns about civilians finding it increasingly difficult to keep up to date with the ever changing organisational landscape in the field of safety and security in the Netherlands. Although people are able to contact the police through the internet or by telephone, trying to get hold of police officers at the local precinct has become increasingly difficult as very many precincts have been closed down. This is a particularly worrying development for victims and other people who are involved in honour-based violence. It takes a lot of courage to come forward and talk about intimate and fragile family issues, and it is certainly a sorry state of affairs, to say the least, that those involved find it increasingly difficult to have access to the police and/or partner organisations. In order to come up with a tailor-made approach to help families involved in conflicts about honour, the Dutch police now rely on a qualitative approach. Tension is felt between this labour-intensive form of analysis and dealing with complex and (potentially) lethal cases and the demand of the police to work 'cost-effectively' and to make use of existing police information systems. A key feature of the abstract police seems to be that the design of the organisation and its systems influences the way professionals should work. In order to continue to let the police make use of the previously mentioned checklist, it has been decided to modify it slightly so that it can fit into the existing systems.

In this contribution we have explained that cases of violence committed to defend the honour of the family are complex and labour intensive when they are to be dealt with properly. But over the years the LEC EGG has demonstrated that these complex cases occur every day in Dutch society. That is the sad reality. These victims deserve a police force that has an open eye for their trouble. Honour-based violence is an affront to (international) human rights and to Dutch national (penal) law. We cannot put a price tag on it. Long before the concept of 'abstract police' was introduced, Oscar Wilde said it beautifully: some know the price of everything and the value of nothing.

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