

Using Myths: Former Yugoslav Perpetrators and Violence

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1. Introduction

There has been a striking change in the crime figures in recent years. Up until not too long ago, it was mainly Antillean and Moroccan youngsters who were cited as ethnic groups over-represented in the crime rates. It has recently become clear though that the problem of ethnic minority juvenile delinquency and crime is not confined to these more or less traditional migrant groups. In the new post-1989 Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain and the wars that tore Yugoslavia apart, there has also been a change in the flows of international migration. In Europe growing numbers of people have been migrating westwards from the east. The Netherlands witnessed a sharp rise in the number of residents from Former Yugoslavia including numerous war refugees.¹ The arrival of these new migrant groups seemed to be accompanied by the emergence of a new crime problem.

There are indeed indications of a growing Former Yugoslav crime problem. Firstly, the relatively strong criminal involvement of Yugoslav youngsters and young men is evident in the police figures. In one year, more than one in ten of the youngsters and young men in the 18 – 24 age group from Former Yugoslavia are suspected by the police of some criminal offence. We assume it is mainly young asylum-seekers and former asylum-seekers who are involved in crime in the Netherlands. They mainly commit robberies and burglaries (cf. Snel et al. 2000, Van San, Snel and Boers 2002). Secondly, there is growing concern about the role of Former Yugoslavs in more serious, partly organized forms of crime. They are thought to play a prominent role in such criminal activities as international arms smuggling, trafficking in migrants and prostitution, and the “violence market.” In making their mark there, Former Yugoslav perpetrators are thought to have taken ample advantage of their reputation for being extremely violent.

In this article we start by describing how this reputation of violence has been constructed in criminology studies as well as the media and police investigations. After all, a recurrent picture emerges from the literature on Former Yugoslav crime of a group that is “unprecedentedly violent” and “cold and ruthless.” Based on our own study among prison inmates from Former Yugoslavia, we go on to demonstrate that they themselves make every effort to further the construction of this reputation for violence. They sometimes account for it by alluding to the history and culture of violence in Former Yugoslavia. The most striking aspect of our interviews with Former Yugoslav perpetrators is however not so much their innate or acquired tendency towards violence. It is far more the fact that they seem to use this reputation for violence in an *instrumental* fashion to conquer a position for themselves on the crime and violence market.

2. The social construction of a reputation

Criminologists are well aware that ethnic groups each have their own criminal specialisms. Antilleans for example frequently commit violent offences (Van San 1998), Turks specialize in the heroin trade (Bovenkerk and Yesilgöz 1998) and Colombians in smuggling cocaine (Zaitch 2002). Former Yugoslavs do not have criminal resources of this kind, though it is often assumed that during the warfare in their homeland they were linked to in the international arms trade. For lack of any specific resources, all these perpetrators have going for them in their efforts to gain a position in the Dutch

underworld is their *reputation* for violence. This reputation as specialists in violence is thought to have enabled them to build up a market of their own (Bovenkerk 2001: 92).

The Netherlands is not the only country where Former Yugoslav offenders have a reputation for violence. In Germany the “extremely erratic and criminal Yugo-Mafia” is cited by crime journalists Roth and Frey as “one of the most violent organizations” in the country:

Whether it is in Hamburg, where there has been a rise in recent few months in the number of murders by Yugoslavs and rivaling Yugo-gangs have been shooting at each other in the middle of the street, or in Frankfurt where rivals are simply gunned down without further ado – the Yugo-gangs have developed into a gangster organization that even threatens police officers (Roth and Frey 1994: 203-204).

A comparable account of the violent nature of the Yugo-scene is given in the Dutch media and by the Dutch police. A Dutch police report on crime among Former Yugoslavs that was leaked to the press notes that “an extraordinary amount of violence is used by Yugoslav offenders.” It also notes that more or less professional killers are flown in from Former Yugoslavia to do a “job” in the Netherlands.

The liquidations are often the result, or so it appears, of a battle for power within and between criminal groups. Individuals are also liquidated who break the oath of secrecy and thus become too much of a hazard for the criminal organizations. Liquidations are often carried out in public, for example on a busy street or in bars or restaurants. Once the decision is made (...) to liquidate someone, individuals are often hired who are flown in from Former Yugoslavia especially for the job. (...) The hired killer in question, who generally has no relation at all with the victim, then disappears again soon after completing the job and receiving the payment for it (Inter-Regional Criminal Investigation Team 1996, quoted in Snel et al. 2002: 112).

In the descriptions of crime among Former Yugoslavs, the recent wars in the Balkans are often alluded to as the cause of their ruthless violence. Youngsters who grew up with the continuous violence in their country turn into violent adults. In the mid-1990s when the warfare in Former Yugoslavia was at its worst, there were recurrent items in Dutch newspapers about the alleged violence among youngsters in Yugoslavia.

To the youngsters of Belgrade, violence is a very everyday occurrence. According to Belgrade police figures, youngsters are involved in a quarter of the murders, robberies and shootings. (...) They have grown up with Serb self-aggrandizement, economic chaos and atrocities on tv and find it all quite normal (*De Volkskrant*, 19 November 1994).

In daily and weekly papers, a direct link is drawn between the acts of violence on the part of Yugoslavs in the Netherlands and the atrocities the people of Yugoslavia experienced during the war there. It is widely felt that the fact that they grew up with violence made it only logical that in the Netherlands, it is easier for them than for members of other groups to engage in violence.

You could give him an address and a photograph and send him (a Former Yugoslav hit man) out to do a job and he would get it done. The Dutch are not so good at that kind of thing. They might like to brag and put on a show, but when it comes down to that kind of job getting done, they get jittery or they panic. The Yugoslav does not have that problem. He is cold as ice. After all those wars where they come from, they are accustomed to killing. And even before they police start looking for them, they are out of the country for a couple of months. They can't be caught and they are not very expensive (a Dutch police inspector quoted in *Algemeen Dagblad*, 2 December 2000).

Observers note though that the source of the Former Yugoslavs' violent reputation is not just the recent warfare, it goes much further back in history. Van de Port (2001) holds that the ideas in the media and in academic articles on Former Yugoslav perpetrators are completely in keeping with the

century-old discourse picturing the Balkans as a primitive, uncivilized and violent remote corner of Europe. According to Belgian Eastern Europe expert Detrez (2000), the negative connotation the word “Balkans” now has mainly dates back to the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913. The word has come to be synonymous with “barbarian” and “savage.” Detrez does not see any reason to think of the Balkans as particularly violent. The other battles, civil wars and massacres taking place in the rest of Europe at the time were pretty bloody too. The old discourse on the “wild Balkans” was however revived by the recent wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo, as is also clear from the articles in Dutch newspapers in the 1990s. In *NRC-Handelsblad*, P. Michielson wrote the following in a series on the Balkans:

Balkan is a dirty word. The Balkans and balkanization are terms that stand for primitive religious or tribal violence. (...) How did the region get such a barbarous reputation? How did the Balkans always come to be linked to violence and war in our minds? Even in the region itself, these negative associations are recognized and acknowledged. Never say to Slovenes or Croats that they live in the Balkans, they don't want anything to do with it. Don't say it to Rumanians either, because to them the Balkans begin to the west and south of the Donau. They are Europeans, and the Balkans don't have anything to do with Europe (*NRC-Handelsblad*, April 1999).

Croatian author Dubravka Ugresic, who spent quite a bit of time in the United States in the early 1990s but was constantly confronted with images of her country at war, describes it as follows:

I see (...) how the Balkan myth gradually emerges from photographs in the newspapers and the news on television. The shots of desperate, disheveled and uprooted people with that wild look in their eyes coincide completely with the stereotype image people have of the Balkans (Ugresic 1993: 74).

In Van de Port's opinion, the revived conception of the Balkans as primitive and violent is not solely based on images of this kind. After all, many of the people of Former Yugoslavia have lost their homes and all their possessions and the community they were part of for good. The devastating effect of the war on the Former Yugoslavs' sense of justice, norms, world view and view of humanity, their attitude to life and faith in the future has been very real. He feels it is important though to examine how images and reality affect each other. In an earlier study conducted in Serbia, Van de Port (1994) concludes that many Serbs have internalized the Balkan discourse. In fact the Balkan discourse gave the Serbs an interpretative framework as it were for addressing their concrete experiences with violence, destruction and murder in the wars. *Balkanaci smo* is what they often say to explain the bloody events in Former Yugoslavia, which roughly means: We are the people of the Balkans and that is just the way it is there.

Van de Port (2001: 141-144) does not however agree that the people of Former Yugoslavia are culturally predisposed as it were to violent conduct. He feels a notion of this kind only demonstrates an essentialist conception of culture that might be quite commonplace in criminology but is viewed in cultural anthropology as being obsolete. This essentialist conception of culture is based on two assumptions. One is that there is a certain cultural unity in a population, and the other is that this alleged cultural identity determines behaviour, in other words that culture is a kind of codified steering programme for human behaviour. Van de Port does not feel either of these assumptions are tenable.² After all, people do not behave in a certain way *because* they are Turks or *because* they are Former Yugoslavs or *because* they have had certain experiences. Wartime violence and traumas might induce some people to engage in further violence, but others will be propelled in precisely the opposite direction towards total non-violence. This is why Van de Port (2001: 160) proposes examining each individual case to see whether and in what way the Balkan discourse might apply to violent Former Yugoslavs. The interviews in our study on crime among young Former Yugoslavs are a good opportunity to gather this kind of information.

3. Interviews with prison inmates from Former Yugoslavia

In our study (Van San, Snel and Boers 2002), forty qualitative interviews have been conducted with Former Yugoslav prison inmates in the Netherlands. All of them are in the 18 to 30 age group and most were born in Former Yugoslavia and came to the Netherlands as migrants.³ Two thirds came to the Netherlands as refugees or asylum-seekers. Some fled as young children with their parents, but most came as young adults as single asylum-seekers. Fifteen respondents have a formal residence permit or the Dutch nationality, another fifteen, some of whom have unsuccessfully applied for asylum, are in the Netherlands without a valid residence permit, and four are still in the process of applying for asylum.

This information about the respondents' official status in the Netherlands might shed some light on the reasons why they resort to crime. Coming from a situation of extreme deprivation, some of the respondents have to cope with life as asylum-seekers or illegal aliens in the Netherlands and manage to make ends meet here by engaging in "survival crime." This does not hold true for others, either because they have long completed the asylum procedure or because they already engaged in criminal activities in Former Yugoslavia and merely continued doing so after their arrival in the Netherlands. This category can be referred to as "imported crime" (Van der Leun 1999).

The interviews with prison inmates mainly focus on gaining insight into underlying reasons for their criminal activities and the meanings they themselves attribute to them. First however we had to find out what offences the respondents had committed or were suspected of. We asked the respondents themselves what criminal offences they had ever committed in their lives (self-reports), and in many cases we also had access to their prison files, so we could see what crimes they were suspected of or had been convicted for. However, both these data sources presented incomplete pictures of reality. On the one hand, it was frequently the case that though some of the respondents were suspected of or had been convicted for certain offences, they themselves denied having committed them. On the other, the respondents themselves sometimes referred to offences that were not officially known, sometimes because we also asked about offences they had committed before coming to the Netherlands.

Table 1 The respondents' registered and self-reported offences

	Prison files	Self-reports
<i>Minor offences</i>		
Theft	27	25
Other property crimes	10	17
Public order	3	0
<i>Major offences</i>		
Robbery involving violence	4	10
Homicide or manslaughter (attempted or actual)	10	11
Possession of firearms	9	10
Gross maltreatment	7	2
Threatening and insulting	4	7
Hostage-taking, kidnapping	5	5
Opium Act	8	8
Trafficking in people	2	2
Smuggling people	4	0
Member of criminal organization	4	3
Rape	2	0

The above listing of criminal offences confirms the existing impression that perpetrators from Former Yugoslavia are often involved in property crimes. Two thirds of the respondents are suspected of or have been convicted for theft. It is clear from their stories that it often entails breaking into and entering homes. In addition, other property crimes such as fencing, smuggling, forgery and extortion are listed in the files of thirteen respondents. It is clear from the self-reports that at some point in their lives, half the respondents committed property crimes such as fencing, embezzlement, forgery, extortion or smuggling goods. In sixteen of the forty cases, the criminal conduct is confined to misdemeanors of this kind.⁴ These respondents are considered “small guys” in the criminal circuit.

Twenty of the forty respondents are however “big guys” in the sense that they have committed at least one major crime and have contact with the world of serious crime. Our distinction between “small guys” and “big guys” is in keeping with the distinction our respondents often draw themselves when we discuss the criminal conduct in their circles. In their perception, the distinction between small and big guys not only depends on the kind of crime people commit, it also has to do with the contact they have with professional criminals in the former Yugoslav or Dutch underworld. “Big guys” have these contacts, and “small guys” do not.⁵

It is clear from the number of crimes they have committed that we are dealing with serious offenders here. At a relatively early age (up to 30), some of them have already committed felonies such as armed robbery, threatening, maltreatment, kidnapping, murder, dealing in drugs, smuggling people or trafficking in women. What is more, ten of the twenty-two major players among our respondents, or a quarter of the total population, are suspected of or have been convicted for attempted or actual homicide or manslaughter. Seven respondents are suspected of or have been convicted for gross maltreatment and nine for the possession of prohibited firearms. We should note though that these offences are not representative of *all* the suspects from Former Yugoslavia. The very fact that we interviewed our respondents in prison virtually automatically means an over-representation of serious offenders.

4. Stories about violence

Subjects that come up in the interviews with the “big guys” among our respondents include their experiences with violence and their opinion about Former Yugoslavs’ reputation for violence in the Netherlands. It is clear from the interviews and files that the violent offences of some of the respondents certainly should not be played down. The question remains though as to whether the offences they committed justify the claim that Former Yugoslav crime is characterized by extreme violence. It was important at any rate to find out how the respondents view their own conduct. It soon became clear at the interviews that they generally are not very secretive about the violence they use now and then. Many of them comment that Former Yugoslavs are known for being into serious crime, and usually do not hesitate to use violence.

Yugoslavs have a bad reputation. They are known for it. If people know you are a Yugoslav, then you are one step head of the game. I know top criminals here in the Netherlands. Dutch guys. Once they know you are a Yugoslav, they are not exactly scared but still. In principle they don’t want anything to do with you. If you are in jail and they ask if you are a Yugoslav, they know you are not there for nothing (r 14).

We asked the respondents how they themselves explain the alleged violence among their own people. Many of them say Yugoslavs are just “different” than most Western Europeans. At least three different motifs can be distinguished in the stories they tell to explain the violence of Former Yugoslavs. Some feel the reason many of their compatriots are so willing to engage in violence mainly has to do with their recent war experiences. Others think that “by nature,” Former Yugoslavs, or some of them, exhibit a lack of self-control and are consequently quick to become violent. Various respondents mention that Former Yugoslavs are “quick on the trigger.” This they feel was not only expressed in the recent wars in Former Yugoslavia, it had been there throughout history. The numerous bloody wars fought in the Balkans were thought to have influenced the society as a whole there. Due to the continuous vicious warfare, according to the respondents, at any rate some of the people in Former Yugoslavia have become “aggressive” and “bloodthirsty.” Lastly, they sometimes refer in our

conversations to explicit notions of honour and respect, reputation and masculinity that might also explain their tendency towards violence. Some of the respondents note that no matter what it costs, they are determined to defend their reputation. If anyone else witnessed their being attacked, for example, they would experience it as extremely humiliating. This mechanism has also been observed among perpetrators from other ethnic groups (see e.g. Van San 1998). In a number of ways, various reasons and explanations are given in the following quotations for the alleged violence on the part of Former Yugoslav perpetrators:

They are a violent race, Albanians, it is in the blood. But you ought to look at the source, what the reason is that people are violent. I can be very violent myself. But everyone has to know his own limits and I know mine. That is what we say in Yugoslavia
You say it is a violent race, it is in the blood, what do you mean by that?
 Maybe it is because ... if you know the history of the Balkans, you know there isn't anyone there who you can trust. And that causes a lot of stress (r 3).

People are scared of Yugoslavs. They are too quick to shoot. They say Yugoslavs shoot first and talk later, but that is not always necessarily the case. But you know, a lot of those Yugoslavs have been through a war like the one in Croatia and Bosnia, and those people come to Europe and they are used to shooting every day where they come from (r 8).

We are not such intelligent people. You Dutch are different. In Yugoslavia you have a lot of young people who buy a gun for a hundred, two hundred euros. And then you go out and kill someone just to make a name for yourself. To us a name is important. I am Fadil and don't fuck with me. And in Yugoslavia, respect is a big thing. I used to be like that too, I did a lot of fighting. If anyone looked at me wrong, I would go up to him. For example if I was with a girl, I would want to fight. Because you have a name. My name is Fadil, that is who I am, and my name is important (r 22).

Yugoslavs are very sharp, they're tough, they don't have any trouble with guns ... it is normal ... they are fighting people ... they don't let anyone step all over them. They had enough of that in the war. That is why they opt to use violence (...) in Yugoslavia there is a poverty now and decay ... and that leads to violence. There are the haves and the have nots, and that makes the have nots pretty frustrated (r 25).

... but we really are a little ... I am more sensitive when it comes to my family or my group. For example if you were to hit me, you are Dutch and no one sees, I would forget about it. I would say "that's fine with me, you are stronger, I'm leaving." But if a Yugoslav hit me in front of other Yugoslavs, I would never forget it (r 32).

In addition, mention is often made in the interviews of liquidations in the Netherlands that are rumoured or known to have been committed by Former Yugoslavs. The war is almost always given as a reason why. The people of Former Yugoslavia are thought to have been hardened by all the violence of the war, and they don't think twice about killing people for money in the Netherlands or anywhere else. For the rest, liquidations are a form of crime that most of the respondents seem to dissociate themselves from. They say they don't want anything to do with murder for money, which many of them see as a primitive form of crime. In their opinion, it is just irrational creatures hardened by the violence of war who stoop to these primitive forms of crime.

The war did that. People become specialized in guns, those people got to be that way, they get an idea in their heads: this is something I can do well. And the mafia is always connected to people who supply arms and stuff like that. If you have been in a war for ten years and I am from the mafia and I want to have someone killed and I know you, then who am I going to call? It just goes like that automatically. And the mafia and the military people and men like that, they all know each other. So they automatically go to that man and ask him: you want to do this for me? (...) In Kosovo or in Serbia, if people have the money to live a normal life, they

don't start with things like that. But people need money there. Those people who kill, they are doing it for the money. Not for any other reason, you come, you do it, you leave and that is that (r 2)

Former Yugoslavs who are hired to come to the Netherlands for liquidations are thought to have “nothing to lose.” References are often made to the horrific circumstances they live under in Former Yugoslavia, which have made them so insensitive to the suffering of others that they do not hesitate to commit acts of extreme violence. What is more, the respondents note that the people who come to the Netherlands to commit these liquidations do not have much at stake. Since they do not have any relatives living here, so do not have to be afraid of reprisals. According to the respondents, this might explain why Former Yugoslavs are more willing than Dutch perpetrators to commit acts of violence. In this sense, they do not feel it is the “vicious nature of the Balkan people” that explains why Former Yugoslavs are relatively more often involved in liquidations, but merely a rational consideration of the risks.

But what happens nowadays is that if a Dutch guy has a problem, he will hire a Yugoslav. Just imagine, you know me petty well and you want to kill somebody. And you know I could fix it for you. If you give me the money, then somebody will come from Yugoslavia or Rumania or Bulgaria, it doesn't matter where. And within an hour, they will be on their way again to Germany, to Yugoslavia. So there is no way that person can get caught. (...) But you also have to know that Yugoslavs like that do not have anything to lose. If you have a business here and you have a family, you have a wife and children, you are not going to do certain things. Because then people can threaten you, they can say they are going to drop in on your mother at home and they are going to do this or that. But if you don't know a guy and he doesn't live here, he could turn up anywhere because he doesn't have anything to lose (r 16).

Some of the respondents also refer to the influence of the press in magnifying the violent reputation of Former Yugoslavs in the Netherlands. In their opinion, there is often a tendency for Dutch newspapers to exaggerate the problems with Former Yugoslavs in the Netherlands. They mainly attribute this to the picture that has emerged of Former Yugoslavia and its population as a result of the successive wars there.

You shouldn't always believe everything you read in the papers. I am not saying Former Yugoslavs never do any bad things. But before the war, for Europeans Yugoslavs were nice quiet people. Ever since 1992, refugees have been coming here. But they just got a bad name because of that war. Everyone could see the war in Yugoslavia on television, people killing each other there. Then here they start thinking: what kind of people are those Yugoslavs? And then when we come here they said: Oh, you are a Yugoslav, and we have a bad name when we come before a judge. Or reporters say: Yeah, we know all about those Yugoslavs. You get a doubly long sentence because you come from some place where there is a war. You are making war there, so you are making war here too, they think. Because you have got a gun. (...) Look, half of it is true. Because whatever it says in the newspaper, there is a reason for it. But they do turn some little thing into something really big (r 9).

5. Using myths

Remarkable in our findings is not so much the way respondents try to make the alleged violence among their ranks plausible, but that they seem to be using their reputation for violence in an instrumental way. The conclusion can be drawn from their stories that for various reasons, it is convenient to have other people afraid of them. In other words, it is not important whether or not the story of the ‘violent Yugoslav’ is true, but what the story brings about. Bovenkerk has made the same observation (2001: 94-95). According to Bovenkerk, the reputation Former Yugoslav perpetrators had in the Belgrade underworld is what makes them so suitable as specialists in violence. He describes how Former Yugoslavs have used their reputation as specialists in violence to conquer their own market, making very deliberate use of the Balkan discourse in the process.

The stories told by our respondents provide numerous concrete examples of the kind of logic Bovenkerk describes. Various of them state that they did not really feel successful in the underworld here until they built up contacts with “big Dutch criminals,” who like to use them to do their dirty work because of their “reputation.” They also mention that big Dutch drub barons regularly use their services as bodyguards. And respondents who worked as bouncer or bodyguard say they were hired because of their reputation for violence. Even in prison, Former Yugoslavs have a special status because of their reputation for violence.

They write a lot about what Yugoslavs do in the Netherlands. Murder, drugs, mafia, that is what they say. That is why people are afraid of us. Here (in prison, MvS) they also say Yugoslavs are tough guys. (...) I don't tell anyone I am a Yugoslav. As soon as you tell people, they ... keep their distance (r 7).

Guys like me are attractive for the underworld. So I would mainly do protection work. But not for Yugoslavs, for Dutchmen. (...) I would protect dealers. If there was a problem, I would solve it. I made sure they didn't get ripped off. I built up a fine name for myself, a reputation. If you do something, then people tell each other and that is how you get a reputation. People are always talking in the underworld. Every so often I would do things and people would pass on the information (r 14).

He (employer, MvS) would always say to people, “Look those two guys are Yugoslavs, they don't have any family left, if I tell him to he'll shoot you.” I would be laughing inside, but he was completely serious (r 32).

In other words, Former Yugoslav perpetrators who earn a living this way in the criminal circuit *benefit* from their reputation for violence. This reputation is instrumentally used in their efforts to conquer their own part of the criminal market. The point we are trying to make here is not so much that the reputation for violence is not based on reality, since various of the respondents have indeed committed acts of extreme violence. The point is more that some Former Yugoslavs make instrumental use of their reputation for violence. In general one might say ethnically specific crime such as the real or alleged violence of Former Yugoslavs is frequently the result of a social construction and the manipulation of ideas. As is witnessed by our interviews, the respondents use and manipulate their own “culture” in a creative way to achieve certain aims (Bovenkerk 2002). There is a very shadowy blend of images and reality here, and the possibility should not be excluded that at certain moment the images might well turn into reality simply because all the parties treat them as such (cf. Van de Port 2001).

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Notes

¹Prior to 1990, there was already a small, well-integrated Yugoslav community in the Netherlands, predominantly consisting of labour migrants and their children.

²In part Van de Port (2001: 144) bases his stance on a statement by contemporary anthropologist Gerd Bauman that “culture is not a real thing, but an abstract and purely analytical notion. It does not cause behaviour, but summarizes an abstraction from it, and is thus neither normative nor predictive” (Bauman, 1998: 11).

³This does not hold true of five of the respondents. The parents of two of them did come from Former Yugoslavia, but the respondents themselves were born in the Netherlands (second-generation migrants). Two others were born in Germany and are still officially German residents, though they happened to be arrested in the Netherlands for committing an offence here. A fifth respondent is a resident of Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, who was arrested in the Netherlands for smuggling arms.

⁴Of course this is a value judgement not everyone will agree with. It is quite plausible that the victims of burglary or extortion would not perceive these offences as “minor.”

⁵Another two young men did commit a relatively serious crime (one was convicted of threatening and extortion and the other was a burglar who was also convicted of the maltreatment and rape of his girlfriend and ex-girlfriend, but they are still only considered minor players because they did not have contact of any kind with the world of serious crime.